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BOUGAINVILLE FALLS, PRINCE REGENT'S GLEN
(WENTWORTH FALLS, BLUE MOUNTAINS) (DETAIL) ABOUT 1830
BY AUGUSTUS EARLE

National Library of Australia



CHARLES DARWIN: AN
AUSTRALIAN SELECTION

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DARWIN'S BEAGLE DIARY: AN EXTRACT



Charles Darwin was a young man of 22 years when he joined HMS *Beagle* as naturalist and companion to the ship's captain Robert FitzRoy. The *Beagle* departed England in December 1831 on a voyage that would take in South America, the Falkland and Galápagos islands, Tahiti, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa before returning to England almost five years later. Throughout his travels Darwin kept a diary, as well as various field notebooks. The following extract comprises the diary entries he made during his brief travels in Australia.

The *Beagle*, a small brig with three masts, sailed into Sydney on 12 January 1836, more than four years after leaving England. From Sydney, Darwin ventured inland as far as Bathurst before sailing to Hobart Town. They then headed westward, arriving in King George's Sound on 6 March. From here they left Australia on 14 March, bound for the Cocos (Keeling) Islands in the eastern Indian Ocean.

The original manuscript of *Darwin's Beagle Diary* is kept in Down House, Kent, the home of Charles Darwin and family, and now the property of English Heritage. In transcribing the diary, Kees Rookmaaker added to the running text of the page any corrections, additions and dates entered in the diary's margin.

CHARLES DARWIN (DETAIL) 1840

BY GEORGE RICHMOND

English Heritage

NEW SOUTH WALES 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 mind the ~~shores~~ coast of Patagonia. A solitary lighthouse, built of white stone, alone told us we were near to a great & populous city. — Having entered the harbor, it ~~was~~ appeared fine & spacious ~~appearance~~; but the level country, showing on the cliff-formed shores bare & horizontal strata of sandstone, was covered by woods of thin scrubby trees that bespoke useless sterility. — ~~Approaching~~ Proceeding further ~~onwards~~ inland, ~~patches~~ parts of the country improved; ~~everywhere~~ beautiful Villas & nice Cottages were here & there scattered along the beaches; and in the distance large ~~white~~ stone houses, two or three stories high, & Windmills standing ~~along~~ on the edge of a bank, pointed out to us the neighbourhead of the Capital of Australian civilization. ~~which had not yet come into view.~~

At last we anchored within Sydney Cove; we found the little basin, containing many large ships & surrounded by Warehouses. ~~on one point stood an insignificant little fort.~~ — In the evening I walked through the town & 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 ~~as~~ more than centuries in South America. — My first feeling was to congratulate myself that I was born an Englishman: — Upon seeing more of the town on other days, perhaps it fell a little in my estimation; but yet it is a good town; the streets are regular, broad, clean & kept in excellent order; the houses are of a good size & the Shops ~~excellent~~ well furnished. — It may be faithfully compared ~~with full [illegible]~~ to the large suburbs which stretch out from London & a few other great towns: — ~~But~~ but not even near London or Birmingham is there an aspect of such rapid growth; the number of large houses just finished & others building is truly surprising; ~~& with this~~ nevertheless every one complains of the high rents & difficulty in procuring a house. — In the street gigs, Phaetons phaetons & Carriages carriages with livery servants are driving about; of the latter ~~vehicles~~ many are ~~as neat as those in London~~ extremely well equipped. Coming from S. America, where in the towns every man of property is known, no one thing surprised me more, than not readily being able to ascertain to whom this or that carriage belonged. —

SYDNEY HAS A POPULATION OF
... TWENTY-THREE THOUSAND,
& IS AS I HAVE SAID RAPIDLY
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FAIL TO MAKE A LARGE FORTUNE ...

Many of the older ~~Residents~~ 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 23,000 twenty-three thousand, & is as I have said rapidly increasing; it must contain much wealth; it appears a man of ~~Business~~ business can hardly fail to make a large fortune; I saw on all sides ~~large~~ fine houses, one built by the profits from steam-vessels, another from building, & so on. ~~A convict~~ An auctioneer who was a convict, it is said intends to return home & will take with him 100,000 £ pounds. — Another ~~convict~~ who is always driving about in his carriage, has an income so large that ~~nobody~~ scarcely anybody ventures to guess at it, the least assigned being fifteen thousand a year. — But the two crowning facts are, first that the public revenue has increased 60,000 £ during this last year, & secondly that less than an acre of land within the town of Sydney sold for 8000 £ pounds sterling. — There is

one advantage which the town enjoys in the number of pleasant walks in the Botanic Garden & Government domain; there are no fine trees, but the walks wind about the Shrubberies & are to me infinitely more pleasing than the formal Alamedas of S. America.

I hired a man & two horses to take me to Bathurst, a village about 120 one hundred & twenty miles in the interior, & the centre of a great pastoral district; by this means I hoped to get a general idea of the appearance of the country. —

{JANUARY} 16th

In the morning of the 16th I set out on my excursion; the first stage took us through Paramatta, a small country town, but second to Sydney in Australia importance. — The roads were excellent & made on the Macadam principle; The whinstone with which they are made is being brought from the distance of several miles for this purpose; There are nor had turnpikes been forgotten. — The road appeared much frequented by all sorts of Vehicles carriages. — I met two Stage Coaches. — In all these respects there was a most close resemblance to England; perhaps the number of Port Ale-houses was here in excess. The most novel & not very pleasing object, is The Iron gangs, or parties of convicts, who have committed some trifling offence in this country, appeared the least like England: they were dressed in yellow & grey clothes, closer on & were working in irons on the roads; they are guarded by under the charge of sentrys with loaded arms.

— I believe one ~~great means~~ chief cause of the early prosperity in these Colonies is government thus being able to send large party's at once to make good means of communication between the Settlers by means of forced labour to open at once good roads throughout the country. —

I slept at night at a very comfortable Inn at Emu ferry, which is ~~35~~ thirty-five miles from Sydney & ~~not far from~~ near the ascent of the Blue Mountains. — This line of road is ~~of course~~ the most frequented & has longest been inhabited of any in the Colony. — The whole land is enclosed with high railings, for the ~~Farmers~~ farmers have not ~~having~~ been able to rear hedges. — There are many substantial houses & good cottages scattered about; but although considerable pieces of the land are under cultivation, the greater part yet remains as when first discovered. — Making allowances for the cleared parts, the country here ~~precisely~~ resembles all that ~~which~~ I saw during the ten succeeding days. — The extreme uniformity in the character of the Vegetation, is the most remarkable feature in the landscape of ~~all~~ the greater part of New S. Wales. — Everywhere we have an open woodland, the ground being partially covered with a most thin pasture. The trees nearly all belong to one ~~peculiar~~ family; the foliage is scanty & ~~of a rather peculiar light green tint; it is not periodically shed~~ & have the surface of their leaves are placed in a vertical instead of as in Europe a nearly horizontal position; This fact & their scantiness makes the woods light & shadowless; although under the scorching sun of the summer this is a loss of comfort, it is of importance to the farmer, as it allows grass to grow where it otherwise could not. —

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 & tolerably straight & stand well apart. It is singular that the bark of some ~~of them~~ kinds annually falls, or hangs dead in long shreds, which swing about with the wind; &

hence the ~~trees look~~ woods appear desolate & untidy. — Nowhere is there an appearance of verdure or fertility, but rather that of arid sterility: — I cannot imagine a more complete contrast in every respect, than the forest of Valdivia or Chiloe, with the woods of Australia. — Although ~~this is such a~~ this country flourishes ~~country~~ so remarkably, the appearance of infertility is to a certain ~~extent the truth~~ degree real; the soil without doubt is good, but there is so great a deficiency in rain & running water, that it cannot produce much. — The Agricultural crops & indeed often those in gardens, are estimated to fail once in three years; & it has ~~so~~ even thus happened ~~more than one~~ on successive years: — ~~So that New S.~~ ~~Wales~~ hence the Colony cannot supply itself with the bread & vegetables which its inhabitants consume. — It is essentially pastoral, & chiefly so for sheep & not the larger ~~animals~~ quadrupeds: the alluvial land near Emu ferry is some of the best cultivated which I have seen; & certainly the scenery on the banks of the Nepean, bounded to the West by the Blue Mountains, was pleasing even to the eye of a person thinking of England. —

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IT IS VERY CURIOUS THUS TO SEE
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PEOPLE, A SET OF HARMLESS
SAVAGES ... WANDERING ABOUT
WITHOUT KNOWING WHERE THEY
WILL SLEEP, & GAINING THEIR
LIVELIHOOD BY HUNTING
IN THE WOODS.

At Sunset by my good fortune a party of a score of the Aboriginal Blacks passed by, each carrying in their accustomed manner a bundle of spears & other weapons. — By giving a leading young man a shilling they were easily detained & they threw their spears for my amusement. — They were all partly clothed & several could speak a little English; their countenances were good-humoured & pleasant & they appeared far from such utterly degraded beings as usually represented. — In their own arts they are admirable; a cap being fixed at thirty yards distance, they transfixed it with the spear delivered by the throwing stick, with the rapidity of an arrow from the bow of a practised Archer; in tracking animals & men they show most wonderful sagacity & I heard many of their remarks, which manifested considerable acuteness. — They will not however cultivate the ground, or even take the trouble of keeping flocks of sheep which have been offered them; or build houses & remain stationary. — Never the less, they appear to me to stand some few

THE DECREASE IN NUMBERS MUST
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EXTINCTION OF THE WILD ANIMALS.

These were rather more numerous & not so well clothed. — I should have mentioned that in addition to their state of independence of the Whites, the different tribes go to war. In an engagement which took place lately the parties, very singularly chose the centre of the village of Bathurst as the place of engagement; the conquered party took refuge in the Barracks. — The decrease in numbers must be owing to the drinking of Spirits, the Europae^an diseases, even the milder ones of which such as the Measles are very destructive, & the gradual extinction of the wild animals. It is said that from the wandering life of these people, great numbers of their children die in very early infancy. When the difficulty in procuring food is ~~checked~~ increased, of course the population must be repressed in a manner almost instantaneous as compared to what ~~can~~ takes place in civilized life, where the father may add to his labor without destroying his offspring.

{JANUARY} 17th

Early in the morning we ~~crossed~~ passed the Nepean in a ferry boat. The river, although at this spot it ~~was~~ both ~~broad~~ broad & deep, has a very small body of ~~moving~~ running water. Having crossed a low piece of land on the ~~other~~ opposite side we reached the slope of the Blue Mountains. The ascent is not steep, the road having been cut with much care, ~~though along~~ on the side of ~~some~~ the Sandstone cliffs; at no great elevation we come to a tolerably level plain, which ~~garden~~ almost imperceptibly rises to the Westward, till at last its height exceeds three thousand ft feet. By the term Blue Mountains, & hearing of their absolute elevation, I had expected to see a bold chain crossing the country; instead of this a sloping plain presents merely an inconsiderable front to the low country. — From this first slope, the view of the extensive woodland towards the coast was interesting, & the trees grew bold & lofty; but when once on the sandstone platform, the scenery became exceedingly monotonous. On each side the road was bordered by a scrubby wood of small trees of the never-failing Gum Eucalyptus family; with the exception of two or three small Inns there were no houses or cultivated land. The road was likewise 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 Weather-board. The country here is elevated 2800 feet above the sea. About a mile & a half from this place there is a view exceedingly well worth visiting; following down a little valley & its tiny rill of water, ~~suddenly & without any preparation, through the trees, which border the pathway~~ an immense

gulf is suddenly ~~seen beneath~~ & without any preparation seen through the trees which border the pathway at the depth of perhaps 1500 ft. ~~beneath ones feet~~. Walking a few yards farther, one stands on the brink of a ~~great~~ a vast precipice, & 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 it were at the head of the ~~Bay~~ bay, for the line of cliff diverges away on each side, showing headland behind headland, as on a bold Sea coast. These cliffs are composed of horizontal strata of whitish Sandstone; & so absolutely vertical are they, that in many places a person standing on the edge & throwing a stone can see it strike the trees in the abyss below: so unbroken is the line, that it is said to be necessary to go round a distance of sixteen miles in order to reach the foot of the waterfall ~~of~~ made by this little ~~rill~~ stream. — In front ~~of the gulf~~ & about 5 five miles distant another line of cliff ~~runs~~ extends, ~~& so it had~~ thus having the appearance of completely encircling it the ~~great~~ valley; hence the name of Bay is justified as applied to this grand amphitheatrical depression. — If we ~~may~~ imagine & ~~I believe~~ such a tour nearly the actual origin that a winding harbor ~~& its various~~ arms with its deep water surrounded by bold cliff shores ~~suddenly to be~~ was laid dry, ~~let~~ and that a forest sprung up on the sandy bottom, ~~& we shall~~ we should then have the appearance & structure which is here exhibited. The class of view was to me quite novel & ~~exceedingly~~ extremely

magnificent. In the evening we reached the Blackheath; the Sandstone plateau has here attained the elevation of 3411 ft, & is covered as before, covered with one monotonous wood. — On the road, there were occasional glimpses of a profound valley, of the same character as the one described; but from the steepness & depth of its sides, the bottom was scarcely ever to be seen. — The Blackheath is a very comfortable inn, kept by an old Soldier; it reminded me of the small inns in North Wales. I was surprised to find that here, at the distance of more than 70 seventy miles from Sydney, ~~they could make up 15 beds~~ fifteen beds could be made up for travellers. —

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following pages

KING'S TABLE LAND, BLUE MOUNTAINS, NEW SOUTH WALES:
THE APPEARANCE OF THE NEW ROAD ABOUT 1826
BY AUGUSTUS EARLE

{JANUARY} 18TH

Very early in the morning I walked about three miles to see Govett's Leap; a view of ~~the~~ a similar, but even perhaps more stupendous character than that of 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 of the forest below, from the country on which we ~~were standing~~ stood. Mr Martens who was formerly in the Beagle & now resides in Sydney, has made striking & beautiful pictures from these two views. —

A short time after leaving the Blackheath, we descended (~~about 800 ft~~) 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 & its manner of execution would have been worthy of a line of road in England, even that of Holyhead. — We now entered upon a Granite country less elevated by nearly a thousand feet & consisting of granite: with the change of rock the vegetation improved; the trees were both finer & stood further apart, & the pasture between them ~~slightly~~ was a little greener & rather more abundant plentiful. —

At Hassan's walls I left the high road & made a short detour ~~from the road~~ to a place farm called Walerawang; to the superintendent of this which I had a letter of introduction from the owner in Sydney. ~~I found~~ Mr Browne a sensitive well informed Scotchman had the kindness to ask me to stay the ensuing day, which I had much pleasure in doing. This place is ~~a specimen~~ offers an

CONRAD MARTENS 1840

BY MAURICE FELTON

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

example of one of the large farming or rather sheep grazing establishments of the Colony; it would however be more appropriately called one for sheep-grazing, at this site. They have here rather more cattle & horses than what is common on account of cattle & horses are however in this case rather more numerous than usual, owing to some of the valleys being swampy & producing ~~some right sort~~ a coarser pasture. The sheep is were 15,000 in number, ~~for the~~ of which the greater part ~~of them are~~ were feeding under the care of different shepherds on unoccupied ground, at the distance of more than a hundred miles ~~under~~ 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 value of ~~a quantity~~ the average produce of wool from 15,000 sheep would be more than 5000£ sterling. Two or three flat pieces of ground near the house were cleared & cultivated with corn, which the ~~Harvest~~ harvest men were now reaping. No more wheat is sown than sufficient for the annual support of the labourers; the general number of assigned convict servants being here about ~~40~~ forty; but at present there were rather more. Although the farm is well stocked with every requisite, there was an apparent absence of comfort; & not even one 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 ~~surrounding this retired farm-house~~ 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.

{JANUARY} 19TH

Early on the next morning Mr Archer, the joint superintendent, (~~the only other free man about the farm~~), ~~took~~ had the kindness to take me out Kangaroo hunting. We continued riding the greater part of the day; but ~~my usual ill fortune in sporting followed us & we did~~ had very bad sport, not seeing a Kangaroo or even a wild dog. — The Grey-hounds pursued a Kangaroo Rat into a hollow tree out of which we dragged it ~~out~~: it is an animal as big as a ~~Rabbit~~ rabbit, but with the figure of a Kangaroo. A few years since this country abounded with wild animals; now the Emu is banished to a long distance & the Kangaroo is become scarce; ~~To~~ to both ~~of them~~ the English Greyhound is ~~most~~ utterly destructive; it may be long before these animals are altogether exterminated, but their doom is fixed. The Natives ~~blacks constantly are trying~~ are always anxious to borrow the dogs from the farmhouses; their use ~~of them~~, offal when an animal is killed, & milk from the cows, are the peace offerings of the Settlers, who push further & further inland. — The thoughtless Aboriginal, blinded by these trifling advantages, is delighted at the approach of the White Man, who is ~~doomed~~ seems predestined to ~~rob him of his country~~ inherit the country of his children.

following pages

MACRUPUS MAJOR (KANGAROO)

BY JOHN GOULD

FROM THE MAMMALS OF AUSTRALIA, J GOULD, LONDON, 1863, VOL. 2

HYPSIPRYMNUS MURINUS (KANGAROO RAT, LONG-NOSED POTOROO)

BY JOHN GOULD

IN THESE WOODS THERE ARE NOT
MANY BIRDS ... I SAW, HOWEVER,
SOME LARGE FLOCKS OF THE WHITE
COCKATOO ... FEEDING IN A CORN
FIELD; & A FEW MOST BEAUTIFUL
PARROTS ... CROWS, LIKE OUR
JACKDAWS, WERE NOT UNCOMMON
& ANOTHER BIRD ... SOMETHING
LIKE THE MAGPIE.

Although ~~with~~ 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 & free from trees; in such spots the scenery was like that of a Park & pretty. — In the whole country I scarcely saw a place without the marks of fire; whether these ~~be~~ may had been more or less recent, whether the stumps were

more or less black, ~~is~~ was the greatest change which ~~treat the universal~~ varied the monotony so wearisome to the ~~eyes of~~ traveller's eye. In these woods there are not many birds; ~~although certainly some of the Parrots are excessively beautiful.~~ I saw, however, some large flocks of the white Cockatoo ~~which was~~ feeding in a Corn field; & a few most beautiful parrots; & ~~plenty of~~ crows, like our jackdaws, were not uncommon & another bird ~~not quite~~ something like the magpie.

following pages

CACATUA GALERITA (LATHAM) (SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO) 1998

BY WILLIAM T COOPER

FROM WT COOPER & J FORSHAW, COCKATOOS: A PORTFOLIO OF ALL SPECIES,

{JANUARY 19TH}

The English have not been very particular in giving names to the productions of Australia; trees of one family (Casuarina) ~~of trees~~ are called Oaks, for no one reason that I can discover without it is that there is no one point of resemblance; animals are called tigers & hyenas, simply because they are Carnivorous, ~~& so on~~ 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 represent the course of a river, & had the good fortune to see several of the famous Platypus or Ornithorhyncus paradoxicus. They were diving & playing about the surface of the water; but showed very little of their bodies ~~were visible~~; so that they ~~only appeared like~~ might easily have been mistaken for many water

Rats rats. Mr Browne shot one; certainly it is a most extraordinary animal; the ~~mounted~~ stuffed specimens do not ~~convey a proper idea~~ give at all a good idea of the recent appearance of the head & beak; the latter becoming hard & very contracted & ~~hardened~~. —

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I TOOK A STROLL ALONG A CHAIN
OF PONDS, WHICH IN THIS DRY
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THE FAMOUS PLATYPUS ...

following pages

THYLACINUS CYNOCEPHALUS (TASMANIAN TIGER, THYLACINE)

BY JOHN GOULD

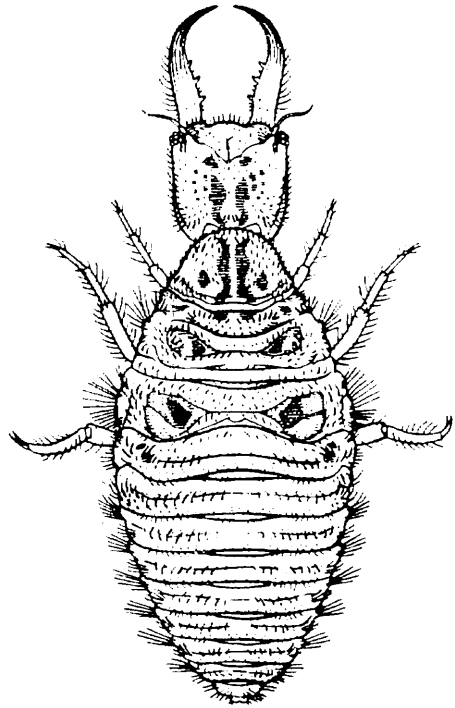
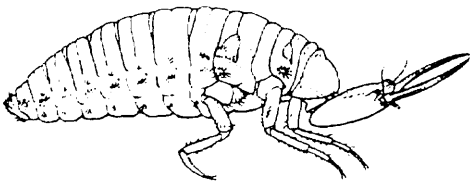
FROM THE MAMMALS OF AUSTRALIA, J GOULD, LONDON, 1863, VOL. I

~

ORNITHORHYNCHUS ANATINUS (PLATYPUS)

BY JOHN GOULD

T M A I G V C



Earlier in the evening A little time before this, I had been lying on a sunny bank & was reflecting on the strange character of the Animals of this country as compared to the rest of the World. An Disbeliever unbeliever in everything beyond his own reason, might exclaim "Surely two distinct Creators must have been [at] work; their object however has been the same & certainly the end in each case ~~the~~ end is complete". — Whilst thus thinking, I observed the conical pitfall of a Lion-Ant: — A fly fell in & immediately disappeared; then came a large but unwary Ant;

MYRMELEONTIDAE (ANT LION)

BY M QUICK

FROM THE INSECTS OF AUSTRALIA, VOL. I, MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1991

Australian National Insect Collection, Division of Entomology, CSIRO

his struggles to escape being very violent, the little jets of sand described by Kirby (Vol. I. P. 425) were promptly directed against him. — NB The pitfall was not above half the size of the one described by Kirby. His fate however was better than that of the poor fly's:— Without a doubt this predacious Larva belongs to the same genus, but to a different species from the European one. — Now what would the Disbeliever say to this? Would any two workmen ever hit on so beautiful, so simple & yet so artificial a contrivance? It cannot be thought so. — The one hand has surely worked throughout the universe. A Geologist perhaps would suggest, that the periods of Creation have been distinct & remote the one from the other; that the Creator rested in his labor. —

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following pages

BATHURST FROM THE WEST ABOUT 1838
BY CONRAD MARTENS

{JANUARY} 20th

A long days ride to Bathurst; before joining the high road we followed a mere path through the forest; the country with the exception of a few squatters huts ~~the country~~ was very solitary. A "squatter" is a freed or "ticket of leave" man, who builds a hut with bark in unoccupied ground, buys or steals a few animals, sells spirits without a license, ~~bags~~ receives stolen goods & so at last becomes rich & turns farmer: he is the horror of all his honest neighbours. — A "crawler" is an assigned convict, who runs away & lives how he can by labor or petty theft. — The "Bush Ranger" is an open villain, who subsists by highway robbery & plunder; generally ~~they are~~ he is desperate & will sooner be killed than taken alive. — In the country it is necessary to understand these three names, for they are in perpetual use. —

This day we had an ~~specimen~~ instance of the ~~Sicomo~~ sirocco-like wind of Australia; it which comes from the parched deserts of the interior ~~of the continent~~. While riding, I was not fully aware, as always happens, how exceedingly high the temperature was. — Clouds of dust were travelling in every part, & the wind felt like that which has passed over a fire. — I afterwards heard the thermometer out of doors stood at 119° & in a room in a closed house 96°. — In the afternoon we came in view of the downs of Bathurst. These undulating but nearly level plains are very ~~conspicuous~~ remarkable in this country by being absolutely destitute of a single tree: they are only covered by a very thin, brown pasture. We rode some miles across this kind of country, & then reached the township of Bathurst, seated in [the] middle of what may be ~~called~~ described as a very ~~board~~ broad valley, or narrow plain. I had a letter of introduction to Capt. Chetwode who commanded the ~~troops there~~ the commandant of the troops, & with him I staid the ensuing day. —

{JANUARY} 21ST

Bathurst has a singular & not very inviting appearance; groups of small houses, & a few large ones, are scattered ~~pretty~~ rather thickly over ~~2 or 3~~ two or three miles of a bare country which is divided into numerous fields by lines of ~~Rails~~ rails. A good many gentlemen live in the neighbourhood & ~~to some have good~~ possess very comfortable houses. ~~There is a~~ A hideous little red brick Church stands by itself on a hill & there are ~~Barracks~~ barracks & government buildings. — I was told not to form too bad an opinion of the country ~~from~~ by judging of it ~~by~~ on the road ~~way~~ 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, & that the country ~~does~~ did not ~~at present~~ wear a favourable aspect; although I understand two or three months ago it was incomparably worse. The secret of the rapidly growing prosperity of Bathurst is that the pasture, which appears to the stranger's eye wretched, is for sheep grazing ~~the most~~ excellent. The town stands on the banks of the Macquarie: this is one of the rivers whose waters flow into the vast unknown interior. The North & South line of watershed which divides the inland streams from those of the coast has an elevation of about 3000 ft., (Bathurst is 2200) & runs at a distance of about ~~80 or 90~~ eighty or a hundred miles from the seaside ~~shore~~. — The Macquarie figures in the maps as a respectable river, & is the largest of those ~~belonging to~~ draining this part of the inland slope: — yet to my surprise I found it a mere chain of ponds ~~in who~~, separated from each other by spaces almost dry; ~~land one from the other~~ generally a little water does flow, & sometimes there are high & ~~most~~ impetuous floods. Very scanty as the ~~quantity~~ supply of water is in all this district, it becomes, further in the interior, still scarcer. —

The Officers all seemed very weary of this place & I am not surprised at it: it must be to them a place of exile: Last year there had been plenty of Quail to shoot, but this year they have not appeared; this resource exhausted, the last tie which bound them to existence, seemed on the point of being dissolved. — Capt. Chetwode had attempted gardening; but to see the poor parched herbs was quite heart-breaking. Yesterday's hot wind had alone cut off many scores of young apples, peaches & grapes. —

{JANUARY} 22nd

I commenced my return, taking a new road called Lockyer's line, in which the country ~~was~~ is rather more hilly & picturesque. At noon we baited at a farm house ~~further being no inns~~; the owner had only come out two years before, but he appeared to be going on very well; he had two pretty daughters, who, I suspect, ~~will~~ would not remain long on his hands. — This was a long day's ride & the house where I ~~meant~~ wished to sleep was some way off the road & not easy to find. — I ~~observed~~ met on this, & indeed on all other occasions, ~~the~~ a very general & ~~very~~ ready civility amongst the lower orders; when one considers what they are & what they have been, this is rather surprising. — The farm where I passed the night, was owned by two young Englishmen, who had only lately come out & were beginning a settlers life; the ~~picture of~~ total want of all almost every comfort (~~& in this instance felt~~) was not very attractive; but future prosperity was certain & not far distant.

{JANUARY} 23RD

The next day we passed through large tracts of country in flames; volumes of smoke sweeping across the road. — ~~Early in the day~~ Before noon we ~~came into~~ joined our former ~~road~~ track and ascended Mount Victoria: I slept ~~at night~~ at the Weatherboard, & before dark took another walk to the grand Amphitheatre.

{JANUARY} 24TH

In the morning I did not feel well, & I thought it more prudent not to set out. — The ensuing day was one of steady drizzling rain; all was still, excepting the dropping from the eaves; the horizon of the undulating Woodland was lost in thin mist; the air was cold & comfortless — it was a day for tedious reflection. —

{JANUARY} 26TH

Escaped from my prison; Having crossed the wearisome Sandstone plain, descended to Emu ferry. A few miles further on I met Capt. King who took me to his house at Dunheved. I spent a very pleasant afternoon walking about the farm & talking over the Natural History of T. del Fuego.

{JANUARY} 27TH

Accompanied by Capt. King rode to Paramatta. Close to the town, his brother in law Mr MacArthur lives & we went there to lunch. The house would be considered a very superior one, even in England. — There was a large party, I think about 18 in the Dining room. — It sounded strange in my ears to hear very nice looking young ladies exclaim, “Oh we are Australian, & know nothing about England”. — In the afternoon I left this most English-like house & rode by myself into Sydney. —

{JANUARY} 28TH & 29TH

Before we came to the Colony, the things about which I felt most interest were the state of Society amongst the higher & Convict classes, & the degree of attraction to emigrate. Of course after so very short a visit, our one's opinion ~~must rank as vague conjecture~~ is worth little more than a conjecture; but it is as difficult not to form some opinion, as it is to form a correct judgment. —

{JANUARY} 29TH

On the whole, from what I heard more than from what I saw, I ~~am~~ was disappointed in the state of Society. — The whole community is rancorously divided into parties on almost every subject. Amongst those who from their station of life ought to ~~be amongst the best rank~~ with 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 ~~or their children~~ & the free settlers; the former being pleased to consider honest men as interlopers.

The whole population poor & rich are bent on acquiring wealth; the subject of wool & sheep grazing amongst the higher orders is of preponderant interest. The very low ebb of literature is strongly marked by the emptiness of the ~~Booksellers~~ booksellers shops; these are inferior to the shops of the smaller country towns of England. — ~~To families~~ There are some very serious drawbacks to the comforts of families, the chief of ~~which~~ these is perhaps being surrounded by convict servants ~~must be dreadful~~. How disgusting to be waited on by a man, who the day before was ~~perhaps~~ by your representation flogged for some trifling misdemeanour? The female servants are of course much worse; hence children acquire the use of ~~such~~ the vilest expressions, & fortunately if not equally vile ideas. I heard of one instance where the dear little innocent must have perfectly astounded its Mama. — On the other hand, the capital of a person will without trouble produce him treble interest as compared to England: & with ~~trouble~~ care he is sure to grow rich. The luxuries of life are in abundance, & very little dearer, as most articles of food are cheaper, than in England. The climate is splendid & most healthy, but to my mind its charms are lost by the uninviting aspect of the country. ~~One~~ Settlers possess one great advantage is that it is the custom to send in making use of their sons, when very young men from 16—20 sixteen to twenty years of age, ~~to~~ in taking charge of remote farming stations ~~hence they directly provide for themselves~~; this however must happen at the expence of their boys associating entirely with convict servants. — I am not aware that the tone of Society has yet assumed any peculiar character; but with such habits & without intellectual pursuits, it can hardly fail to

deteriorate. — ~~& became like that of the people of the United States.~~ The balance of my opinion is such, that nothing but rather severe necessity should compel me to emigrate. —

The rapid ~~growth of~~ prosperity of this colony is to me, not understanding ~~Political Economy~~ such subjects, very puzzling. — The two main exports are Wool & Whale Oil, — ~~now to both of these~~ which productions there is a limit. The country is totally unfit for Canals; therefore there is a not very distant line beyond which the land carriage of wool ~~will not render it worth while to~~ repay the expence of shearing & tending sheep: The pasture everywhere is so thin that already settlers have pushed far into the interior; moreover very far inland the country appears to become extremely poor. — I have before said agriculture can never succeed on a very extended scale. So that, as far as I can see, ~~Sydney~~ Australia must ultimately depend upon being the centre of commerce for the Southern Hemisphere; & perhaps on her future

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Manufactories: from the habitable country extending along the coast, & from her English extraction she is sure to be a maritime nation: possessing coal, she always has the moving power at hand. — I formerly imagined that Australia would rise into as grand & powerful a country as N. America, now it appears to me, as far as I can understand such subjects, that such future power & grandeur is very problematical. —

With respect to the state of the convicts, I had still fewer opportunities of judging than on the other points. The first question is whether their state is at all one of punishment; no one will maintain that it is a very severe one. But this, 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 & comfort is not distant & on good conduct certain. A "ticket of leave", which makes a man, as long as he keeps clear of ~~crime~~ & suspicion as well as crime, 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, & overlooking the previous imprisonment & wretched passage out, I believe the years of assignment are passed with discontent & unhappiness: as an intelligent man remarked to me, they know no pleasure beyond sensuality, and in this they are not gratified. The enormous bribe which government possesses in offering free pardons, & the deep horror of the secluded penal settlements, destroy confidence between the convicts & so prevents crime. — As to a sense of shame, such a feeling does not appear to be known; of this I witnessed some singular proofs. — It is a curious fact, but I was universally told that the character of the convict population is that of arrant cowardice, — although not unfrequently some become desperate & quite indifferent of their lives, yet that a plan requiring cool or continued courage was seldom put into execution. — The worse feature in the whole case is, that although there is exists what may be called a legal reform, or that very 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 the other assigned servants; — his life would be one of intolerable misery & persecution. — Nor must the contamination of the Convict ships & prisons both here & in England be forgotten. — On the whole, as a place of punishment, its object is scarcely gained; as a real system of reform, ~~this~~ it has failed as perhaps would every other plan ~~explicitly failed~~. —

{JANUARY} 30TH

The Beagle made sail for Hobart Town: Capt. King & some other people accompanied us a little way out of Harbour. — Philip King remains behind & leaves the Service. —

HOBART TOWN — VAN DIEMEN'S LAND

FEBRUARY 5TH 1836

After a six days passage, of which the first part was fine & the latter very cold & squally, we entered the mouth of Storm Bay: the weather justified this awful name. — This Bay should rather be called a deep Estuary, which receives at its head the waters of the Derwent. — Near its mouth there are extensive ~~Basaltic~~ basaltic platforms, the sides of which show fine façades of columns; higher up the land becomes mountainous, & is all covered by a light wood. — The bases of these mountains, following the edges of the ~~Bay~~ bay, are cleared & cultivated; the bright yellow fields of corn & dark green ones of ~~Potato~~ potato crops appear very luxuriant. Late in the evening we came to an anchor in the snug cove on the shores of which stands the capital of Tasmania, as Van Diemen's land is now called. — ~~The number of Ships was not very considerable.~~ — 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 & broad; but the houses rather scattered: the shops appeared good: The town stands at the base of M. Wellington, a mountain 3100 ft high, but of very little picturesque beauty: from this source however it receives a good supply of water, a thing ~~which is~~ much wanted in Sydney. — Round the cove there are some fine warehouses; & on one side a small Fort. — Coming from the Spanish Settlements, where such magnificent

FEB 6th

care has generally been paid to the fortifications, the means of defence in these colonies appeared very contemptible. — Comparing this town to Sydney, I was chiefly struck with the comparative fewness of the large houses, either built or building. — I should think this must indicate that fewer people are gaining large fortunes. The growth however of small houses has been most abundant; & the vast number of little red brick ~~houses~~ dwellings, scattered on the hill behind the town, sadly destroys its picturesque ~~effect~~ appearance. — In London I saw a Panorama of a Hobart town; the scenery was very magnificent, but unfortunately there is no resemblance to it in nature. — The inhabitants for this year are 13,826; in the whole of Tasmania 36,505. — The Aboriginal blacks are ~~entirely~~ all removed & kept (in reality as prisoners) in a Promontory, the neck of which is guarded. I believe it was not possible to avoid this cruel step; although without doubt the misconduct of the Whites first led to the Necessity. —

FEB 10TH

During these days I took some long pleasant walks examining the geology of the country. — The climate here is ~~much~~ damper than in New S. Wales & hence the land is more fertile. Agriculture here flourishes; the cultivated fields looked very well & the gardens abounded with the most luxuriant vegetables & 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 & ~~cherful~~ cheerful & the pasture between the trees rather more abundant. — One ~~of my~~ long walk ~~lay~~ which I took was on the opposite side of the Bay ~~or river~~; I crossed in a Steam boat, two of which are constantly plying backwards & forwards. — The machinery of one [of] these vessels was entirely ~~made here~~ manufactured in this Colony, which from its very foundation only numbers 33 three & thirty years!

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{FEBRUARY} IITH

I ascended Mount Wellington. I made the attempt the day before, but from the thickness of the wood failed. — I took with me this time a guide, but he was a stupid fellow & led me up by the South or wet side. Here the vegetation was very luxuriant & from the number of dead trees & branches, the labor of ascent was almost as great as in T. del Fuego or Chiloe. — It cost us five & a half hours of hard climbing before we reached the summit. — In many parts the gum trees grew to a great size & the whole composed a most noble forest. — In some of the dampest ravines, tree-ferns flourished in an extraordinary manner; — I saw one which must have been about 25-ft twenty five feet high to the base of the ~~leaves~~ fronds, & was in girth exactly six feet: — the foliage of these trees forming so many most elegant parasols created a shade ~~approaching to darkness~~ gloomy like that of the first hour of night. — The summit of the mountain is broad & flat & is composed of huge angular masses of naked greenstone; its elevation is 3100 ft above the level of the Sea. — The day was splendidly clear & we ~~had~~ enjoyed a most extensive view. — To the Northward the country appeared a mass of wooded mountains of about the same ~~height & rounded~~ elevation & tame outline as the one ~~we were standing on~~ on which we stood. To the South the intricate outline of the broken land & water forming many 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} 12TH - 15TH

I had been introduced [to] Mr Frankland, the Surveyor General, & during these days I was much in his Society. — He took me two very pleasant rides & I passed at his house the most agreeable evening since leaving England. There appears to be a good deal of Society here: I heard of a Fancy Ball, at which 113 were present in costumes! I suspect also the Society is much pleasanter than that of Sydney. — They enjoy an advantage in there being no wealthy Convicts. — If I was obliged to emigrate I certainly should prefer this place: the climate & aspect of the country almost alone would determine me. — The Colony moreover is well governed; in this convict population, there certainly is not more, if not less, crimes, than in England.

. . . .

{FEBRUARY} 16TH

The weather has been cloudy, which has prolonged our stay beyond what was expected. — I went this day in a Stage Coach to New Norfolk. This flourishing village contains 1822 inhabitants. It is distant 22 miles from Hobart town; the line of road follows the Derwent. — We passed very many nice farms & much Corn land. — Returned in the evening by the same Coach.

. . . .

{FEBRUARY} 17TH

The Beagle stood out with a fair wind on her passage to K. George's Sound. The Gun-room officers gave a passage to England to Mr Duff of the 21st Reg:

. . . .

{K. GEORGE'S SOUND}

MARCH 6TH {- 10TH}

In the evening came to an anchor in the mouth of the inner harbor of King Georges Sound. Our passage has been a tolerable one; & what is surprising, we had not a single encounter with a gale of wind. — Yet to me, from the long Westerly swell, the time has passed sufficiently with no little misery.

We staid there eight days & 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 & there a few rounded & partly bare granite hills standing up hills of granite. — One day I went out with a party in hopes of seeing a Kangaroo hunt, & so walked over a good many miles of country. — Every where we found the soil sandy & very poor; gave it either supported a coarse vegetation of thin low brushwood & wiry grass, or a forest of stunted trees. — The scenery resembled the elevated sandstone platform of the Blue Mountains: the Casuarina (a tree which somewhat resembles a Scotch fir) is however in greater proportion as the Gum trees eucalyptus is rather less smaller in proportion. There are very great numbers In the open parts there are great numbers of the grass-tree, a plant these have nearly the aspect of Palm trees which in appearance has some affinity with the palm, but instead of the crown of noble leaves, there is a it can boast merely of a tuft like of coarse grass rushes. The wiry grass like plants & The general bright green color of the brushwood & other plants & to a stranger at a viewed from a distance would seems to bespeak fertility; a single walk will however quite dispel such an illusion; & if he thinks like me, he will never wish to take another walk again in so uninviting a country.

SYMS COVINGTON (CHARLES DARWIN'S SERVANT ON THE BEAGLE)

ARTIST UNKNOWN

THE BEAGLE'S VOYAGE TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN, 1841-45.

The settlement consist [of] from 30 — 40 small white washed cottages, which are scattered on the side of a bank & along a white sea beach. — There are a very few small gardens; with these exceptions all the land remains in the state of Nature & hence the town has an uncomfortable appearance. — At the distance of a mile over the hill, Sir R. Spencer has a small & nice farm, & which is the only cultivated ground in the district. The inhabitants live on salted meat & of course have no fresh meat or vegetables to sell; they do not even take the trouble to catch the fish with which the bay abounds: indeed I cannot make out what they are or intend doing. — I understand & believe it is true, that thirty miles inland there is excellent land for all purposes; this is already granted into allotments & will soon be under cultivation. The settlement of King George's Sound will ultimately be the Sea port of this inland district. — Certainly I have formed a very low opinion of the place; it must however be remembered that only from two to three years have elapsed since its effectual colonization, & for this great allowances must be made. Whether, however, it will ever be able to compete with the Colonies which possess the cheap labor of convicts, time alone will show. — They possess here some advantages, the climate is very pleasant, & more rain falls than in the Eastern colonies. I judge of this from the fact that all the broad broad flat bottomed valleys which are covered over with the rush-like grasses & brushwood, are in winter so swampy as scarcely to be passable. — The second grand advantage is the good disposition of the aboriginal blacks; it is not easy to imagine a more truly good natured & good humoured expression than their faces show: Moreover they are quite willing to work & to make themselves very useful; in this respect they are very different from those in the other Australian colonies. — In their habits, manners, instruments & general appearance they resemble the natives of New S. Wales. —

SIR RICHARD SPENCER ABOUT 1810

ARTIST UNKNOWN

Albany Historical Society

Like them, they are very remarkable by the extreme slighthness of their limbs, especially their legs; yet without, as it would appear, muscles to move their legs, they will carry a burthen for a longer time than most white men. — Their faces are very ugly, the beard is curly & not at all deficient, the skin of the whole body is very hairy & their persons most abominably filthy. Although true Savages, it is impossible not to feel an inclination to like such quiet good-natured men. —

During the two first days after our arrival, there happened to be a large tribe called the White Cooatoo men, who come from a distance paying the town a visit. — Both these men & the K. George's Sound men were asked to hold a "Corrobbery" or dancing party near one of the Residents houses. — They were tempted with the offer of some tubs of boiled rice or sugar. As soon as it grew dark they lighted small fires & commenced their toilet, which consisted in painting themselves in spots & lines with a white colour. — As soon as ~~the dance commenced the~~ all was ready, large fires were kept blazing, round which the women & children were collected as spectators. — The Cockatoo ~~of~~ and King George's men ~~kept great~~ formed two distinct parties & danced ~~some~~ generally in answer to each other. The dancing consisted in the whole set running either sideways or in Indian file into an open space & stamping the ground as they marched all together & with great force. — ~~These were~~ Their heavy footsteps were accompanied ~~each time with~~ a by a kind of grunt ~~or sigh~~, & by beating their clubs & weapons, & various other gesticulations, such as extending their arms ~~or~~ & wriggling their bodies. It was a most rude barbarous scene, & to our ideas without any sort of meaning; but we observed that the women & children watched the whole proceeding with ~~much interest~~ the greatest pleasure. — Perhaps these dances originally represented some scenes such as wars & victories; there was one called the Emu dance ~~when the~~

set in which each man extended ~~one~~ his arm in a bent manner, so as to imitate ~~the movements of~~ movement of the neck of a ~~flock of Emus~~ one of those birds. In another dance, a one man took off all the motions of a Kangaroo grazing in the woods, whilst ~~another man~~ a second crawled up & pretended to spear it him. — When both tribes mingled in one dance, the ground trembled with the heaviness of their steps & the air resounded with their wild crys. — Every one appeared in high spirits; & 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. — I imagine from what I have read that similar scenes may be seen amongst the same coloured people, who inhabit the Southern extremity of Africa. In T. del Fuego we have beheld many curious scenes in savage life, but I think never one where the natives were in such high spirits & so perfectly at their ease. — After the dancing was over, the whole party formed a great circle on the ground & the boiled rice & sugar was distributed ~~to each in succession~~ to the delight of all.

{MARCH} 8th

One day I accompanied Capt. FitzRoy to Bald head; this is the spot mentioned by so many navigators, where some have imagined they have seen Coral & other trees petrified in the position in which they grew. — According [to] our view of the case, the rocks have been formed by the wind heaping up Calcareous sand, which by the percolation of rain water has been consolidated & during this process enclosed trees, roots & land shells. — In time the wood would decay

& as this took place, lime ~~would be~~ was washed into the cylindrical cavities & became hard like stalactites. — The weather is now again in parts wearing away these soft rocks & hence the harder casts of roots & branches stand out in exact imitation of a dead shrubbery. — The day was to me very interesting, as I had never before heard of such a case. —

K. GEORGE'S SOUND TO KEELING ISDS

MARCH 14TH 1836

Our departure was delayed by strong winds & cloudy weather until this day. Since leaving England I do not think we have visited any one place so very dull & uninteresting as K. George's Sound. Farewell Australia, you are a rising infant & doubtless some day will reign a great princess in the South; but you are too great & ambitious for affection, yet not great enough for respect; I leave your shores without sorrow or regret.

❖ DARWIN'S BEAGLE DIARY TRANSCRIBED BY KEES ROOKMAAKER,
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