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978-1-108-04597-1 - Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia, Performed Between the Years 1818 and 1822: Volume 2

Philip Parker King

Excerpt

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VOYAGES FOR THE SURVEY
OF THE
INTERTROPICAL COASTS
OF
AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER I.

SURVEY upon the Mermaid:—Purchase another vessel:—New establishment:—Departure on the fourth voyage, accompanied by a merchant-ship bound through Torres Strait:—Discovery of an addition to the crew:—Pass round Breaksea Spit, and steer up the east coast:—Transactions at Percy Island:—Enormous sting-rays:—Pine-trees serviceable for masts:—Joined by a merchant brig:—Anchor under Cape Grafton, Hope Islands, and Lizard Island:—Natives at Lizard Island:—Cape Flinders:—Visit the Frederick's wreck:—Surprised by natives:—Mr. Cunningham's description of the drawings of the natives in a cavern on Clack's Island:—Anchor in Margaret Bay, and under Cairncross Island:—Accident, and loss of anchors:—Pass through Torres Strait, and visit Goulburn Island:—Affair with the natives:—The Dick parts company.

AS soon as an opportunity offered after our arrival, the cutter was laid on shore upon the beach of Sydney Cove, and surveyed by the master and the carpenter of H. M. Store-Ship Dromedary, which ship was preparing for her return to England with a cargo of New Zealand

1820.
—
Dec. 6.

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1820.
Dec. 6. spars. Upon stripping the copper off the bottom, the tide flowed into her, and proved that to the copper sheathing alone we were indebted for our safe return. The iron spikes that fastened her were entirely decayed, and a considerable repair was recommended by the surveying officers. Upon my communicating the result of their report to His Excellency, Governor Macquarie, he agreed with me in thinking that, as her repairs would take up so much time, it would be better to purchase another vessel, and as a brig was then in the harbour, that appeared to be every way suited for my purpose, she was examined by my order by Mr. Mart, the Dromedary's carpenter, who reported so favourably of her, that, by the governor's permission, she was purchased and fitted for the voyage. She was built of teak, of one hundred and seventy tons burden, and had lately received a very considerable repair at Calcutta ; so that, excepting a few trifling defects and alterations, she was quite fit for sea. Her name was altered at the suggestion of Governor Macquarie to that of the " Bathurst."

By this change we gained a great addition to our comforts ; and, besides increasing the number of our crew, were much better off in regard to boats ; for we now possessed a long-boat,

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large enough to carry out and weigh an anchor, or save the crew if any accident should happen to the vessel ; a resource which we did not possess in the Mermaid. 1820.
Dec. 6.

A further addition was made to our party by the appointment of Mr. Perceval Baskerville, one of the Dromedary's midshipmen ; but Mr. Hunter the surgeon, who had volunteered his services in the Mermaid during the last voyage, was superseded by Mr. A. Montgomery, who had lately arrived in charge of a convict ship.

Our establishment now consisted of the following officers and men :

Lieutenant and Commander,	1	Phillip Parker King.
Surgeon,	1	Andrew Montgomery.
Master's Mates, (Assistant	} 2	Frederick Bedwell.
Surveyors,)		
Midshipman,	1	Perceval Baskerville
Botanical Collector,	1	Allan Cunningham.
Steward,	1	
Boatswain's Mate,	1	
Carpenter's Mate,	1	
Sail Maker,	1	
Cook,	1	
Seamen,	16	
Boys,	5	
	Total	32

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4 SURVEY OF THE INTERTROPICAL

1821. After experiencing many tedious and unexpected delays in equipping the Bathurst, notwithstanding our wants were few, and the greater part of our repairs were effected by our own people, we were not completed for sea until the
May 26. 26th of May, when we sailed from Port Jackson upon our fourth and last voyage to the north coast, accompanied by the merchant-ship Dick (the same vessel in which we had originally embarked from England): she was bound to Batavia, and being ready for sailing at the time of our departure, requested permission to accompany us through Torres Strait, which, since it would rather prove an assistance to us than cause any delay in our proceedings, was acceded to on my part with much satisfaction. In the mean time the Mermaid, our late vessel, had been thoroughly repaired, fresh fastened with copper spikes, and fitted out; and, before we sailed, had been sent to sea to carry the first establishment to Port Macquarie, on which service she had been wrecked. She was, however, afterwards got off the rocks and repaired, and is now a very serviceable vessel in the colony.

Boongaree, the native who had formerly accompanied us, volunteered his services whilst

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the vessel was preparing for the voyage, which I gladly accepted; but when the day of departure drew nigh, he kept aloof; and the morning that we sailed, his place was filled by another volunteer, Bundell; who proved not only to be a more active seaman, but was of much greater service to us, than his countryman Boongaree had been. This addition made our number thirty-three.

1821-
May 26.

Three days after we left the port, a discovery was made of another addition to the number of the crew. Upon opening the hold, which had been locked ever since the day before we sailed, a young girl, not more than fourteen years of age, was found concealed among the casks, where she had secreted herself in order to accompany the boatswain to sea: upon being brought on deck, she was in a most pitiable plight, for her dress and appearance were so filthy, from four days' close confinement in a dark hold, and from having been dreadfully seasick the whole time, that her acquaintances, of which she had many on board, could scarcely recognise her. Upon being interrogated, she declared she had, unknown to all on board, concealed herself in the hold the day before the vessel sailed; and that her swain knew nothing

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- 1821.** of the step she had taken. As it was now inconvenient to return to put her on shore, and as the man consented to share his ration with her, she was allowed to remain; but in a very short time heartily repented of her imprudence, and would gladly have been re-landed, had it been possible.
- May 30.** **June 4.** Between the 30th and the 4th of June we had a series of gales of wind, which enabled us to prove the capabilities of our new ship; and it was very satisfactory to find that she was weatherly, tight, and dry, three very essential qualities for a surveying vessel.
5. On the afternoon of the 5th we passed round the north end of Breaksea Spit, and crossed Hervey's Bay; in the night, when the brig ought to have been many miles from the shore, we found ourselves unexpectedly close to some land; but it was not until the day broke that we knew the full extent of the danger we had encountered: the land we had seen proved to be the round head of Bustard Bay, which, as the wind was blowing directly upon it, we were fortunate in having room to clear. The Dick was apprized by us of the danger in time, and succeeded in clearing the land by tacking to the southward.
6. At noon we were passing the small

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woody isle that was seen by Captain Flinders, ^{1821.}
 and farther on we discovered two other isles of a ^{June 6.}
 similar character: they were seen from the mast-
 head to the north-east; and a fourth was seen by
 the Dick. After this we had a few days of fine
 weather, which, as dysentery had already made
 its appearance amongst us, was most welcome,
 and tended materially to check the progress of
 so alarming a complaint. On the 8th we entered ^{8.}
 among the Northumberland Islands; but, from
 light northerly winds, did not reach an an-
 chorage under Percy Island, No. 2, until the
 morning of the 10th. Our situation was between ^{10.}
 the Pine Islets and the basin, in ten fathoms,
 near a run of water, which fell from the rocks
 into the sea at about a quarter of a mile to the
 northward of the sandy beach: from this stream
 we filled our casks. Water was also found in
 many other parts, but all the runs appeared to
 be of temporary duration.

This island, like No. 1, which we visited in
 1819, appears to be principally of quartzose
 formation. The soil is sandy, and affords but
 little nourishment to the stunted trees with which
 it is furnished. In the more barren and rocky
 parts the pine was abundant, but not growing to
 any great size: the Dick's people cut down and ^{11.}
 embarked several logs; on examination they

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1821. were thought to be useless; but, from subsequent experience, they proved to be far from deserving such contempt, for during the voyage we made two pole-top gallant-masts of it; which, although very full of knots, were as tough as any spar I ever saw; and carried a press of sail longer than would be trusted on many masts. These trees are very abundant on the Cumberland and Northumberland Islands, but do not attain any large size; being seldom higher than fifty or sixty feet, or of a greater diameter than from twelve to eighteen inches.

June 11.

Among a variety of birds, several black cockatoos and the pheasant cuckoo were seen. The beaches were frequented by gulls, terns, and oyster-catchers; and an egret was noticed of a slate-coloured plumage, with a small ruff upon its head.

The seine was hauled upon the beach; but the only fish caught were two very large sting-rays; one of which measured twelve feet across: as it was too unwieldy to take on board, we had no means of weighing it; but the liver nearly filled a small pork barrel*. It is very probable that

* Captain Cook describes some fish, probably of the same species, found at Botany Bay, weighing each three hundred and thirty-six pounds (*Hawkesworth*, vol. 3, p. 100); from which circumstance, as is not generally known, the name of Sting-ray Bay was given

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our bad success may be attributed to the pre-^{1821.}
sence of these fish, for on board the Dick several ^{June 11.}
snappers were caught with the hook and line.

In the evening the wind set in from S.b.E., with rain, and cloudy, thick weather : in striking the royal masts, a serious defect was discovered in our fore-top-mast ; the upper part being found rotten for twelve feet below the head ; and the top-gallant-mast was also found to be sprung in the wake of the cap ; so that we were compelled to remain all the next day at the anchorage to shift them. This detention was very vexatious, for we were not only losing a fair wind, but lying in a very exposed situation. 12.

During the preceding night a brig anchored half a mile to the southward of us : she proved to be the San Antonio ; she left Port Jackson four days after us, and was bound on a trading speculation to the Moluccas and Sincapore. In the forenoon I visited the master, Mr. Hemmans, and offered him my guidance up the coast, if he would wait until we had shifted our defective

to that harbour ; it is so called in the charts of the Endeavour's voyage, in the Hydrographical Office at the Admiralty, as well as in Sir Joseph Banks's copy of the Endeavour's journal, and in Dr. Solander's MS. journal, both of which are in the possession of my friend Robert Brown, Esq. The name by which it is now known appears to have been given subsequently, on account of the variety and beauty of its botanical productions.

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1921. masts ; but he declined it as he was anxious to
June 12. get on without delay ; and, having Captain Flinders's charts, intended to run "*day and night through the reefs*;" he told me that he had anchored here with the intention of watering and cutting some pine spars, but that not finding the latter worth the trouble, he was then getting underweigh to proceed. When I went away, he accompanied me to look over my plan of the passage ; after which he returned to his vessel, which soon afterwards steered past us on her way to the northward. Mr. Hemmans told me that he had anchored under Keppel Islands, where he had a friendly communication with the natives, who used nets, which he thought were of European construction ; but from his description, they are similar to what have been before seen on the coast, and are constructed by the natives themselves.
13. At eight o'clock the next morning we got underweigh ; but the Dick in weighing her anchor found both flukes broken off. The next
14. day, we rounded the north extremity of the Cumberland Islands ; and at four o'clock a.m.
15. the 15th, were abreast of Cape Gloucester.
- Thick cloudy weather with rain and a fresh breeze from the southward, variable between S.S.E. and S.S.W., now set in, and was unfa-