QUEENSLAND
THE WINTER PARADISE OF AUSTRALASIA.
Australasian Coastal Steamers.

The following Magnificent, Fast, and Modern Passenger Steamers, fitted with every comfort, and up to date in every way, trade "WITHIN THE BARRIER" along the Queensland Coast, and through to Melbourne, also connecting at Sydney with Steamers for South and West Australian Ports, and are unsurpassed as Coastal Steamers in any part of the world:—

**Wyandra**  
**Marloo**  
**Aramac**  
**Wollowra**

**Peregrine**  
**Wodonga**  
**Gabo**  
**Inamincka**

**Bombala**  
**Buninyong**  
**Arawatta**  
**Tyrian**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM</th>
<th>NORTHWARDS</th>
<th>SOUTHWARDS</th>
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<tr>
<td>MELBOURNE</td>
<td>Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays</td>
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<td>SYDNEY</td>
<td>Tuesdays and Saturdays</td>
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<td>BRISBANE</td>
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<td>GLADSTONE</td>
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<td>ROCKHAMPTON (Keppel Bay)</td>
<td>Sundays and Wednesdays</td>
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<td>MACKAY (Flat Top Island)</td>
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<td>Bowen</td>
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<td>TOWNSVILLE</td>
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<td>CAIRNS</td>
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<td>PORT DOUGLAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>COOKTOWN</td>
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<td>THURSDAY ISLAND</td>
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<td>NORMANTON</td>
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<tr>
<td>BURKE TOWN</td>
<td>...</td>
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Passengers can visit various places of interest (described in this book) by the steamers "Kuranda," "Lass o' Gowrie," "Caroo," and others,

**Leaving Townsville on Mondays and Saturdays,**

and calling at Lucinda, Cardwell, Tully River, Dunk Island, Clump Point, Cowley, Mourilyan, Geraldton, Cairns, and Port Douglas.

For further particulars apply to

A.U.S.N Co., Ltd.  
Howard Smith Co., Ltd.  
Adelaide Steamship Co., Ltd.

Offices and Agencies at All Ports.

Tickets are Interchangeable between the various Steamers of the Companies on conditions to be ascertained at the various offices.
REV. FRANCIS HICKEY,
ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE,
KILTEGAN,
CO. WICKLOW.
QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS.

MONTHLY EXCURSIONS.

TICKETS AT EXCURSION FARES are issued between all Stations distant not less than 100 miles apart on the FIRST SATURDAY (and preceding FRIDAY) in each Month, and on the following SUNDAY on lines where Sunday Trains are run. For shorter distances passengers are charged the Ordinary Fares, but not more than the Excursion Fare for 100 miles.

MONTHLY EXCURSION TICKETS are available to return for the same period as Ordinary Return Tickets.

Week-end Excursions—Friday to Monday.

TICKETS AT EXCURSION FARES are issued EVERY FRIDAY and SATURDAY (and on SUNDAY when Sunday Trains are run) between all Stations distant 12 miles and over, available to return until the following Monday, or, where Trains do not run on Monday, until the first running day thereafter.

FRIDAY TO MONDAY EXCURSION TICKETS are issued to Stations less than 12 miles apart at the Excursion Fare for 12 miles.

Northern Mail Train Service.

MAIL TRAINS, with FIRST and SECOND CLASS SLEEPING CARS, run as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
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<tr>
<td>BRISBANE</td>
<td>Mon. and Wed.</td>
<td>10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>1:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARYBOROUGH</td>
<td>Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday</td>
<td>5:45 a.m.</td>
<td>5:55 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUNDABERG</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>7:12 a.m.</td>
<td>8:12 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLADSTONE</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>12:10 p.m.</td>
<td>1:16 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROCKHAMPTON</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>4:2 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCKHAMPTON</td>
<td>Mon. and Wed.</td>
<td>12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Sat. only 12:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLADSTONE</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>5:20 p.m.</td>
<td>5:25 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUNDABERG</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>8:10 p.m.</td>
<td>9:40 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARYBOROUGH</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>10:35 p.m.</td>
<td>10:40 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRISBANE</td>
<td>Tue. and Thur.</td>
<td>5:25 a.m.</td>
<td>Sunday 5:25 a.m.</td>
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*The Mail Train leaving Brisbane on Friday night connects at Gladstone with the R.M.S. “EAGLE,” which runs to and from Townsville, and by which, under arrangements with the A.U.S.N. Co., Passengers are BOOKED THROUGH by Rail and Steamer between BRISBANE and NORTHERN PORTS and the Principal Stations on the Great Northern and Cairns Railways at REDUCED RATES.*

Round Tickets, Brisbane and Sydney, via Tweed Heads and Grafton, or via Wallangarra.

Combined Joint Rail and Steamer Tickets are issued as under, viz.:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Arrangement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRISBANE TO SYDNEY, via Wallangarra, by Rail; SYDNEY TO GRAFTON, by Steamer; GRAFTON TO MURWILLUMBAH, by Rail; MURWILLUMBAH TO TWEED HEADS, by Steamer; and TWEED HEADS TO SOUTH BRISBANE, by Rail, £6 6s., First Class; £4, Second Class.</td>
<td>br</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH BRISBANE TO TWEED HEADS, by Rail; TWEED HEADS TO MURWILLUMBAH, by Steamer; MURWILLUMBAH TO GRAFTON, by Rail; GRAFTON TO SYDNEY, by Steamer; and SYDNEY TO BRISBANE, via Wallangarra, by Rail, £6 6s., First Class; £4, Second Class.</td>
<td>br</td>
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</table>

These Tickets will be available for the Round Journey for SIX MONTHS.

Similarly, ROUND TICKETS will be issued from SYDNEY TO BRISBANE, via Grafton, or via Wallangarra.

CHILDREN, over three years and under twelve years of age, HALF-FARE.

R. DUNBAR,
GENERAL TRAFFIC MANAGER.

Brisbane, 4th March, 1907.
The OCEAN
ACCIDENT & GUARANTEE CORPORATION LIMITED

Funds: £1,623,438.
Revenue (1906) £1,178,385.
The Corporation has paid over £5,500,000 in Claims.

Business Transacted:
Workers' Compensation Act,
Fidelity Guarantee,
Public Liability,
Burglary and Personal,
Accident and Sickness Policies.

Tourists' and Journey Accident Tickets Issued to Travellers by Land or Sea.

Head Office for QUEENSLAND:

327 QUEEN STREET, BRISBANE.
A. HAMILTON HART, Manager.

Agencies in every Town in the State.
IT is much better to have two distinct classes of books of travel. One for the use of the travellers, the severely informative compilation of facts; the other, and rather for the use of stay-at-homes, the purely aesthetic record of impressions. So, in effect, writes a reviewer. This booklet violates the dictum and represents an attempt at the combination.

Most of the scenes herein referred to are familiar to the compiler, save those of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Necessarily a more or less liberal use has been made of the recorded observations of others. To those from whom impressions have been borrowed, grateful acknowledgments are hereby tendered.

"Within the Barrier" is, at least, an earnest and humble effort to portray some of the natural wonders of a portion of the earth's surface that is one vast wonder.
“Who is Silvia?  What is she,
That all our swains commend her?”

WHERE is North Queensland? Does it exist? And if so, what sort of a country is it? Peruse the maps of Australia, and you find it not. Search the archives of Government offices, and your labour and your faith in the existence of such a territory will be in vain. You will be quite correct in dogmatically asserting disbelief in the existence of any such dimension.

North Queensland is merely a presumptuous, arbitrary, unofficial geographical expression—an unauthorised, unrecognised, heterodoxical phrase. It has no status; no distinct and separate entity; no place or being in the community of Australian States which form the great and glorious Commonwealth.

But folk persist in speaking of North Queensland as if it were real and tangible. Letters addressed to North Queensland find their way. It is, and it is not. Officially and formally ignored, it holds a seat in the distracted brain—not an undiscovered nor yet a lost land.

Time passes, and in the gathering of the rosebuds of life is not this quaint country, that has no constitution of its own, entitled to an explanation?
Some day, of course, that explanation will be forthcoming, and then compilers of booklets such as this may be able to supply a formal and accurate definition of its boundaries; of its superficial extent; of its ports and harbours and channels; of its mountains and valleys, plains and downs, rivers and lakes; its beauty spots; its ways and means.

But how to undertake such duty unless we know where to begin and where and how far to proceed? That is the question; and as none of the many Governments that prevail in Australia recognises, officially, North Queensland—although the multitude of members of Parliament speak of the existence of North Queensland, and some legislate for it on distinct and separate lines—it is incumbent upon some one to create and establish it; so that none may be disturbed by any pretensions that may herein be made, nor vexed because of comparisons, nor imposed upon by any assumption of right or possession. Therefore, by these presents, be it enacted that North Queensland shall be said to comprise all that Australian territory "lying to the north of the 22nd parallel of latitude, and to the east of the eastern boundary of South Australia."

That area is too extensive for the present purpose, though it may be all embraced in a similar one ere long, if a considerable and appreciative public so orders and ordains. Just now our mission is to refer to a small portion of the coast of the newly established North Queensland.

Visitors from the South coming in the hot season, panting and perspiring, proclaim it to be a black man’s country, and return to their far-away domiciles to over-exert themselves in endeavouring to make it pure white by Act of Parliament. Soon a man with an honest sunburn may be called upon to produce credentials of white parentage, and to submit to the language test before being admitted to those fair-as-the-lily lands which hold political paramountcy.

We may bestow names and create fanciful geographical distinctions, but we cannot alter or amend meteorological conditions. North Queensland is hot in the hot season, and just blissful when others parts of Australia are unendurable and unwholesome; and as for complexion, the original denizens were black and those left of them are black, and some assert that they were made black not by any Act of any primeval Parliament, but by the act of the good God; and the climate may yet pervert Commonwealth legislation. A professor of an American University asserts that the Americans are fast developing into Indians. During his investigations the professor examined the descendants of a small colony of Germans who settled in Pennsylvania over a hundred years ago. He found that the fourth and fifth generations had developed Indian characteristics, such as black hair and eyes and darker coloured skin. If it
be the fate of the future residents of North Queensland to become of dark complexion and flat of nose, let it not be ascribed by the historian of the future to the present generation for perverseness. They are not of those who would "pluck God by the sleeve and say He shall not have His own way."

Avant the perplexities of politics! This North Queensland is immense and varied. It contains "The Plains of Promise" and "Hell's Gates"; hundreds of lakes and lagoons, where the blue and the white water lily and the pink sacred lotus flourish; and hundreds of square miles of sandstone and desert; mountain fastnesses set about with entanglements of jungle, and rolling downs, where, when the rains do not come in due season, it is but necessary to tap the withered bosom of the earth at the right place and the water spouts up to form marshes on the surface. A land of extremes and contrasts: without history, yet part of the oldest of lands; without renown, and with a character—well, misunderstood.

But this is a special, not a general purpose. Only a passing reference will be made to the infinite variety of the scenery and the wealth of North Queensland. Resisting even the appeals of "The Plains of Promise," subduing the inevitable curiosity that lurks about "Hell's Gates," we must proceed. Besides, what really could be said by way of entertainment or instruction, regarding even "The Plains of Promise," more than the entrancing title suggests? A good old writer, who was fond of reference to his whimsicalities, once said:—"There is nothing more pleasing to a traveller or more terrible to a travel-writer than a large rich plain, especially if it is without great rivers or bridges, and presents nothing to the eye but one varied scene of plenty; for after they have once told you that it is delicious or delightful (as the case happens); that the soil is grateful, and that Nature pours out all her abundance, &c. . . . . They then have a large plain upon their hands, which they know not what to do with, and which is of little use to them, but to carry them to some town."

Our plains are typical of wealth; they are not on our hands at present. So we bow and pass on; and do deeper obeisance, too, to the tall poppet-heads of every mining community in North Queensland, bespeaking as they do wealth told and untold, wealth obtained and obtainable; but we cannot pause just now to give all the details that a true and honest and impartial chronicle should in an attempt to tell of all the pastoral and mineral wealth of our dominion.

Our mission is to describe a few of the characteristics of a small portion of the coast for, possibly, the edification of those good folk who, condemned to live around other scenes, are recommended to visit us to their physical betterment and mental entertainment.
There is no pretence herein to give a detailed description of every foot upon which the gaze of the tourist might dwell with complacency between Flat Top Island, guarding the entrance to Mackay, to the mangrove delta of the Albert River, upon the banks of which stands "the utmost port" of Burketown. To fulfil such a purpose would be to essay a book, and this is merely a Tourists' Guide for a brief stretch of the coast; and, moreover, tourists are for the most part composed of favoured mortals who, entrusted with the custody of the means of leisurely travelling, would very properly glow with rage and resentfulness if nothing were left for them in the way of discoveries. We merely supply a rough draft, a crude and inadequate sketch; and indicate some features of interest and attraction, giving assurance that there are scores of discoveries to be gloated over by each succeeding original-minded tourist.

Few travellers, for instance, pass through Whitsunday Passage under similar conditions and circumstances. One may like it "in the pale moonlight," when Melrose Abbey is said to look the more lovely; another when the sun searches out the specks and scars of every island and islet of the group; another when any harsh aspect is placated by the tricky atmosphere of early morning; another through a curtain of cloud and mist; another when the sea is responsive to the slightest ripple; another when the storm fiend is raging with fury and mischievousness. So the experiences of one may seem to contradict the experiences of all others who may exchange notes of admiration. Each may be the discoverer of certain specific aspects or tones in the colouring, and enjoy the pleasure of a unique experience.

And now to particular instances of the desirableness of North Queensland.

**Mackay.**

THOUGH on the southern verge of what herein is to be known as North Queensland, Mackay is 625 miles north from Brisbane, and but 245 miles south from Townsville, the Cathedral City, and the city with bumps in its streets. Mackay comes first, not because of any superiority that Townsville recognises, but because it is the first of essentially northern ports. These chronicles must begin at the beginning, or they may end nowhere—and that would be as miraculous as the railway from another port, shortly to be mentioned.

At the port of Mackay the genial influence of the Great Barrier Reef is felt. It checks—at times—the boisterousness of the ocean. Sometimes, however, the ocean will have its own rough, frantic way, and the Barrier Reef lets it. Here the tourist will fail to recognise "the league-long roller" which thunders on most Australian beaches open to the ocean. The Barrier does break up the greatest sea, and constrains it to beat on the shore less regularly.
and with less force than on the rest of the coastline of Australia. As we are
now within the tropics, we have a more equable weather, fewer breaks, and
much less sudden and violent changes. Accordingly the tourist, choosing not
only the proper place to visit, but the proper time to travel, may rely upon
calm seas, serene skies, and that deliciously lazy sensation that only those who
dwell in or visit lands where the mango flourishes know.

Having steamed in the troublous waters that harass the shores of New
South Wales; having become weary of the "wandering fields of barren foam,"
and the no less barren shores of Keppel Bay, it is with joyous feelings that the
calm, blue ocean, well within the Great Barrier, is traversed. Islands of
infinite variety are welcomed. The luxurious perception of the tropics—the
soft air of perennial summer—comes with healing and reposefulness in its
wings from the favoured land beyond; and thus early one realises that there
are worlds of difference between North Queensland and the rest of Australia.

Scientists may manufacture and may bottle up ozone for the benefit of
those who cannot get all they want of it at home; but no one has yet invented
a trap to catch sunbeams. Southerners, depressed by the ashen skies of the
wintry months, long for the sun—its light and warmth and glorious promise.
They must come for it—chase it day by day along our coast and among our
isles, if they want the best of it and its gifts.

With the Percy Island (chief of the Northumberland Group) begins the
sulit panorama. "Ah, me!" sighed Milton, "the sounding isles and caves
among"; and the terms seem more realistic when applied to these bright spots
than to the cold grey seas that he knew. The largest of the group is typical of
the rest. Set about with wild precipices and steep bluffs at the bases of which
the sea has hollowed caves; with ample white beaches and sheltered coves;
shallow seas teeming with fish; grass lands alive with bustling quail; scrubs
with turkeys and pigeons, and water fowl in their element, it is not surprising
that an enthusiastic stranger said recently:—"I can imagine no more perfect
spot for a winter resort; and I am sure, if the people of Melbourne and Sydney
realised that within three or four days' journey they could, during the winter
months, simply transform their existence, it would not be long before Percy
Island would be the winter home for Australasia, just as Nice and Algeria are
the winter resorts for the people of the old world."

Percy Island owes its charms to comparisons that might be made with
scenic effects further south. If we fall into raptures over it, what will be the
sentiments inspired when the beauty spots within the Barrier come to be
surveyed? Yet who will neglect to admire it, or to observe with interest the
vista cut through the mangroves by Captain Cook when he sought a spot
convenient for the replenishment of the freshwater tanks of the "Endeavour"?
To the west of the Percys is Pine Islet, merely a precipitous rock affording no space for recreation, but crowned with a lighthouse. It is said and demonstrated in one of Dean Swift’s books that Bishop Ken walked round the earth while a prisoner in the Tower of London. All these lighthouse-keepers no doubt indulge in voyages and travels long and entertaining, however circumscribed their material resting-places.

Passing the Northumberland Group, the Beverley, Prudhoe, soon the distinctive forms of Round Top and Flat Top are seen; the latter with its group of coco-nut palms, its semaphore, and lighthouse—which at night sends out its guiding rays to a distance of nineteen miles—and the steamer glides into a secure anchorage close beside the shingly spit which runs landwards from Flat Top.

Cape Palmerston—allowed to be the coastal termination of the line to separate North Queensland from the State of Queensland—now lies full twenty miles to the south, and the breezes that come off the land at night have swept through miles of sugar-cane, for Mackay is the centre of abundant enterprise in the growth and manufacture of sugar. Known to its familiars as “Sugaropolis,” the tourist who lands may realise possibly one of the dreams of youth and chew cane, and become disillusioned.

Tenders meet the steamer to convey passengers to the town, on the banks of the Pioneer River, which alas! has an impediment in common with all rivers on the east coast of Australia; but the Pioneer has the somewhat rare habit of breaking out in fresh places in times of great floods. The Pioneer flows into the harbour over a bar on which the tide rises from twelve to about sixteen feet, and in about an hour from leaving the ocean-going vessel the town is reached. Between the beach and the town there is a strip of flat land about five miles across, over which the salubrious winds from the Pacific come almost daily in the forenoon, and continue till towards evening. What the vicinity of the town lacks in picturesque physical features is compensated for by the evidence of the richness of the soil. The river comes down from the ranges to the west, traversing a belt of twenty or twenty-five miles of alluvial flats before reaching the town, in the neighbourhood of which it is spanned by several bridges. As the vegetation is profuse, due to an ample rainfall and cordial temperature, many little scenes bespeak of wonders to be revealed further north.

Now, let it be explained without further delay that these chronicles do not profess to tell the ancient history—the far beginning—of each of the ports to be visited. All will be treated as if they were in that happy and glorious condition of having no history. If any should be afflicted, then it is not proposed to pass on the affliction. Tourists may come from places blood-stained with the throes of history. To such it may be a relief to find that
whatever in the way of ancient records any of the ports of North Queensland may possess is not of the kind that historians contradict and blow each other up about, and, therefore, can have no possible interest for mere strangers and pilgrims of pleasure.

Nor shall we burden our brief pages with figures, telling of miles of streets, thousands of acres of cultivation, thousands of tons of sugar. It is assumed that this specially conducted tour is for purposes of pleasure and general, not specific, enlightenment.

Mackay is situated in the lowest of the rainy belts of North Queensland. To the south the country is dry. Again, to the north a similar condition prevails, the zone in this direction extending over 200 miles—that is, almost to the line of the Herbert River, 70 miles north of Townsville. Thence for 300 miles and more is a wet zone, containing localities in which the rainfall is stupendous.

Mackay has a good share of rain, consequent, no doubt, upon its nearness to some of the highest mountain peaks in the north. To the south of the town there is level country, bounded by steep, uneven ranges, running at distances varying from twenty to fifty miles from the coast, and forming the watershed of the Pioneer River, Baker’s, Sandy, Plane, Cherry-tree, Rocky Dam, and numerous smaller creeks on the ocean side; whilst on the western slopes they form the watershed of the Rivers Connor, Isaacs, Nogoa, &c., which ultimately enter the Fitzroy, upon which Rockhampton stands. A range of hills, leaving the main or Connor’s Range at right angles, runs north-east of Cape Palmerston, under the name of Mount Funnel Range, and forms the southern boundary of the plain of Mackay. To the north of the Pioneer the country is more uneven, and is well defined by the continuation, north-west, of the elevated coastal range, verging towards Bowen. This portion of the district, too, is remarkably well watered by the Proserpine and O’Connell, and the Dempster, Blackrock, Scrubby, Constant, and other creeks. Some of the highest summits in North Queensland occur in this district, Mount Dalrymple rising to a height of 4,255 feet, the other peaks of note being Mount Mia Mia, The Twins, Black Gin’s Leap, Roy, Pelion, Sweetland, &c. From its rivers and creeks, mountain tops and ranges, and its nearness to the ocean, it is inevitable that the country should possess good drainage, rich soil, abundance of water, beautiful scenery, and salubrious climate.

In 1864 the first cane was planted by Mr. J. Spiller. Two years later twelve acres were growing; but the following year the industry seems to have taken a good hold, for there were no less than 100 acres under cane. In 1868 the first mill, the Alexandra, was set in motion, producing 230 tons of sugar and 148 hogsheads of rum.
Since then sugar mills have gone on increasing in number, and Mackay rum is perhaps the purest and most exhilarating beverage known to Australia. It is what it professes to be—a pure distillation from a clean and wholesome source, not as the complicated and awful compounds that are manufactured from the Lord-knows-what, but come to the consumer under poetic aliases, and in curious vessels decked with gaudy, if not fascinating, labels. Sugar-growers say that it no longer pays to manufacture rum on account of the excessive excise duty imposed by the Federal Parliament. Some twenty years ago molasses realised 20s. per 100 gallons; now it cannot be given away. "The real Mackay" is still to be had, if not in the profusion of yore; and its reputation is mild and humane compared with that which some beverages brought from distant lands enjoy. From the summit of Mount Oscar a comprehensive view of the district is obtainable. As far as the eye reaches cane predominates, and impresses the beholder with the realities and potentialities of sugar and rum.

Railways and tramways have made many of the far fertile spots of the district available; but there is good land awaiting cultivation, and good times awaiting the cultivator—provided the embarrassment of politics is relieved and population is encouraged to come to the Commonwealth.

With a population of about 11,000, it would be impossible for Mackay to be without the customary means of local government, as well as a hospital, churches, newspapers, &c., all typical of the enterprise and self-reliance of British communities.

Whitsunday Passage.

One of the grandest series of views to be obtained in those seas which environ the continent of Australia lies between Mackay and Bowen, for it embraces Whitsunday Passage—famous since the days of Captain Cook. The ship threads its way through an archipelago of islands, each differing in size and physical features, but all alike picturesque. Rarely is the quiescence of the ocean disturbed in the neighbourhood; but whether the scenes are viewed when lively waves are leaping in foamy anger against the brown rocks and sweeping along the miniature beaches, or when the islands with upland meadows or pine-covered slopes seem to float in blue water, oily in the utter stillness of its surface, they are equally grand and beautiful. The scenes change quickly—new aspects with new forms of beauty presenting themselves in succession as the vessel glides along, and the desire arises that all the islands, near and as afar off as to be on the very rim of the horizon, might be visited and their diverse characters known.

Tracing the vessel's course on the chart, it is a matter of surprise how closely the shore is hugged. Seldom are we quite out of sight of land. Islands
and inlets of varied form and character are passed. Some of the islands are mere grassy mounds with flounces of creamy sand; others have wild rough cliffs shooting out from the deep with just the narrowest fringe of fleecy white, edging the intense blue that slowly heaves at their base. Some are passed within a stone's throw; others so far away on the edge of the ocean that they are but very dreams of islands, so etherealised by the magic hand of Nature that they seem scarce to belong to this terrestrial sphere.

Many of these islands are not alone pleasant to look at—they are useful, and are becoming more and more important to the State. Some of the group are occupied by sheep farmers, and there is splendid timber to be obtained, and marble, too. The wonders and the possible industries of the Whitsunday Islands were told and prophesied long, long ago by one who spent many months flitting from one to the other; but only during recent years have they been open to occupation. Hamilton Island was taken up five years ago for sheep, and the owner recently shore over 1,000, topping the market for unclassed greasy wools on the day of the sale with 9½d. The writer is happy in having at command the very latest news from this most charming locality, and a direct quotation may be made, so that tourists who take the trouble to read may be as well informed as to the character of the group generally from a practical point of view as the very oldest inhabitant. Hamilton Island is hilly and lightly timbered. The natural grass on the island is coast kangaroo, which carries very little seed, but couch grass has been introduced, and now grows luxuriantly in every part of the island, and frequently it has to be burned off to avoid rankness. The soil is rich and fertile, and every fruit tree introduced grows rapidly and well. Good water in natural soakages is everywhere, and even in the drought no difficulty in watering the stock is experienced. The surplus fat stock is sent to Bowen, and the increasing popularity of the Proserpine district will open up another market.

There are sheep on Molle Island, mostly merinos, also a few Shropshires, and the crossbred wethers are of exceptional quality. An old seafaring identity has taken up Lindeman Island, and has a fine flock of merinos on it. The soil is particularly adapted for fruit-growing, and there can be no doubt that that industry will attract more attention as the population of the State increases, and, as the islands are right in the centre of the coastal traffic, there should be no difficulty in making steamer arrangements to dispose of produce. The isolation of island life does not appeal to everybody, but when the everlasting beauty of the surroundings and the frequent rain are taken into consideration it must compare very favourably with the drier portions of the State.

Dent Island, which lights the entrance to Whitsunday Passage, affords a little more space for physical exercise than Pine Islet, though no more spacious
area for the roaming of the imaginations. An incident lends to it sensational interest. While sailing hither from Bowen with supplies and the news of the world in January, 1896, the Customs cutter “Dudley” was caught in the toils of the cyclone “Sigma,” and was lost with all hands. Nowadays the connecting link is a steamer, with Mackay as the home port.

In the Cumberland and Whitsunday Groups there are mountain peaks, such as those of Scawfell, St. Bees, Carlisle, and Hook Islands, whose heights exceed 1,000 feet. The cliffs and hillsides of the Whitsunday Islands are, for the most part, covered with a handsome species of pine, which communicates a most picturesque effect; and among the pines are palms and other trees of semi-tropical character. The ordinary steamer track through Whitsunday Passage is justly regarded as one of the finest scenes on the coast of Australia. Among other points of interest sure to attract attention is the remarkable aspect of Lion or Pentecost Island, which for some distance, from a westerly point of view, presents the contour-semblance to a lion crouchant with its head raised, after the manner of Landseer’s masterpieces in Trafalgar Square, London. Jesuit Point shows to the south-west, and other isles and rocks assume fantastic shape, for some of them are of limestone formation. Cid Island, whence great quantities of island pine have been shipped, possesses a fine harbour; but outside at times a seven-knot current rushes through channels many fathoms deep. Yet another aspect is presented by Marble Island, once the scene of an attempt to establish a socialistic settlement, but now devoted to fat sheep and the output of limestone.

Bowen.

Leaving Whitsunday Passage to the south, the steamer sweeps to the mountainous mass of Gloucester Island—which, rising abruptly out of the sea, attains a height of nearly 2,000 feet—and on to the entrance of Port Denison. Landing at the Bowen Jetty, the exclamation of the average traveller who sees the harbour for the first time will be, “What a beautiful place!” Old inhabitants who are familiar with the surroundings can still appreciate their beauty. The harbour is about twenty miles long from north-west to south-east, and five to ten miles wide from north-east to south-west, surrounded on three sides by hills and mountains, wooded to the summits, and some approaching a height of 3,500 feet. On the seaward side the harbour is sheltered by Dalrymple Point on its northern end; Stone Island, Gloucester Island, and the promontory (Mount Ben Lomond) on its southern extremity.

Bowen is one of the few ports of North Queensland whose early history is worth relating. Indeed, it applies almost to the present, for Time, that
writes no wrinkles on the azure brow of the ocean, has been kind to the district in one respect. It has wrought few changes. The scenery is the same—unmarred by the hand of man—as when the late Captain Sinclair, of the schooner "Santa Barbara," on the 17th October, 1859, with the late James Gordon, discovered and named the harbour. The latter was one of the pioneers of the North who kept a diary, and whose records, therefore, there is none to dispute. A little of what he wrote may be quoted:—

"October 17.—Light winds, and to our astonishment we were lying in a fine capacious harbour, sheltered from all winds. We sounded the harbour; within a cable's length of shore there is from three to four fathoms, while near the middle from seven to ten fathoms. At 6 a.m. three hands went on shore to examine the country; at 8 a.m. returned, stating that the country was very good, and that there was plenty of fresh water. The natives being so numerous, and our party being so small, prevented us laying down a chart of the harbour; at the same time we have taken a sketch of it, and have named it Port Denison. This port is very capacious, having an inner and an outer harbour, well sheltered from all winds. In entering from the south pass outside of Gloster Island and inside of Middle Island, giving it a berth of one mile, as there is a long shoal running off it; then steer south-west and by west for the inner harbour; you will scarcely perceive it to be an harbour until you are in it. In entering at the south entrance be careful not to come too near the island, as there is an extensive coral bank running off, and also a sand-spit. In entering the north entrance keep near mid-channel, selecting a berth at discretion. It is very good holding ground."

The journal says with regard to this discovery:—

"We discovered a most splendid harbour, which would contain a large fleet of ships, all of which could reach there in perfect safety. It is formed partly by islands and partly by sandbanks. On the day after the discovery all hands went ashore and commenced the survey of the island, which the captain had named Station Island, and which is about five or six miles in circumference. We saw a great many native tracks, also several acres of ground resembling a garden, completely dug over by the natives—a greater piece of industry than I was inclined to give these darkies credit for. The ground had been dug up with shells, the spot having been used as a cache, in which the natives had stored certain nuts which at particular seasons form their food. As regards the climate, it is not hotter than at Rockhampton, there being generally either a sea or a land breeze blowing; but when there happens to be a calm for a time we are soon reminded of the fact that we are within the tropics. The country along the coast is generally bad, but at several places we saw indications of good country in the distance, and it is a
manner of regret to us that we have not been able to examine it more minutely, owing to the smallness of our party and the persevering enmity of the blacks. The islands have a much more inviting appearance than the mainland itself, there being less scrub, whilst the soil also is apparently of a better description. The natives, as may be gathered from the foregoing remarks, are numerous on the islands and on the mainland, and are exceedingly treacherous and vindictive.”

Bowen, nowadays, has a substantial Government jetty, constructed of hardwood, nearly three-quarters of a mile long, at the end of which interstate mail steamers and over-sea liners berth to discharge into and take in cargo from railway trucks. Horses are sent away every year by the shiplead to India, and the meatworks at Merinda (about seven miles out from the town) are fitted to freeze 120 bullocks a day. The port is the outlet for a considerable number of cattle stations, and the fruit of the district is extensive in variety and noted for its excellence and for its capacity to endure long journeys by sea. Bowen oranges are known throughout the Southern States, and for early tomatoes there is no place in Australia like Bowen. Tobacco grows like a weed, leaves two feet long gracing plants six feet high.

The streets are broad, but do not carry much traffic, for, in spite of excellent situation, a capacious and safe harbour, salubrious and cool climate, Bowen has not prospered in accordance with expectations. It possesses a railway which, while opening up a certain amount of country, comes to a full stop at—nowhere. When this line is pushed a little further ahead, so that it may junction with that having its present terminus at Townsville—103 miles to the north—Bowen should recover some of the start that Townsville has gained in the race for supremacy. A recent visitor, in comparing the two ports, said that at one a harbour was being made in opposition to Nature, while at the other Nature had completed her task ages ago. Nature’s handiwork is undoubtedly the better; but the geographical position of Townsville gives it very certain compensatory advantages.

The site of Bowen is ideal for a prosperous, fair, and healthy city, and as the real development of the country which it commands has at last started, the “smooth things” prophesied in early days will surely hasten to plenteous realisation.

At the head of the Repulse Bay, to the south of Bowen, lies a most fertile tract known as the Proserpine Sugar District. Here is a mill capable of turning out 6,000 tons of sugar per annum, and a prosperous and well-to-do community is being gradually settled.

There is coal, too, in the district, and some day Bowen may be the Newcastle of the North.
Townsville.

HERE is nothing very engaging along the coast between Bowen and Townsville, save the names which Captain Cook bestowed upon the headlands and bays. Cape Upstart was so named because of its abrupt rise from the surrounding country; Cape Bowling Green because of green sward, which seemed to indicate a smooth and pleasant situation. Off Bowling Green is a lighthouse remarkable for being built on shifty and treacherous sands. Several attempts have been made to prevent the loss of the structure in consequence of the continuous scouring away of the sand. But after causing grave anxiety for years the restless sea has changed its mood, filling in a hollow which threatened disaster. From the tower, which distance dwarfs, the last of the steamer “Gothenburg” was seen, the wreck of which is second in tragic interest to that of the “Quetta,” off Adolphus Island, Torres Straits. The “Gothenburg” was lost on Perar Reef, near Holbourne Island, out from Bowen, in 1875, and a singular thread of family history connects the disaster with the fate of the ship “Loch Vennacher” (in the year 1905) on the Young Rocks, southern coast of Victoria. With the “Gothenburg” were lost a judge and several other prominent men of South Australia, and also Captain R. G. A. Pearce, whose son, Tom Pearce, was afterwards saved from the wreck of the “Eliza Ramsden,” off the entrance to Port Phillip, and was apprenticed on the “Loch Ard” when that vessel went ashore at “The Caves,” near Moonlight Head, on the south coast of Victoria. Tom Pearce swam ashore, and rescued Miss Eva Carmichael. These two were the only survivors. Pearce then joined the “Loch Sunart,” which was wrecked on the Irish coast, all hands being saved. He is now master of a steamer belonging to the Southampton Royal Mail Company; and Thomas Richard Pearce, his son, was one of the apprentices on the lost “Loch Vennacher.”

An able critic says that Cook’s methods of naming localities after natural features has since helped many a ship’s officer to verify his position. He gave the name of Point Upright to the north head of Jervis Bay. It is now known as Cape Perpendicular. Captain Henry T. Fox, lecturing in Sydney in 1855, on the history of the navigation on the south-eastern coast of Australia, said:—

“In the year 1841, on my first voyage on the coast, when all on board were equally unacquainted with the appearance of the land as myself, we were caught on the coast with a heavy easterly gale and thick weather. In the midst of our perplexity the mist cleared for a few moments under our lee, showing at no great distance a remarkably upright headland, with an apparent opening to the south. On consulting the chart, we perceived that the north head of Jervis Bay was named Point Perpendicular, and at once concluded
that this was the spot. The ship was immediately kept dead before the gale, and after an anxious half-hour we ran into the bay and anchored in security. The gale continued for three days, so that in all probability but for the sagacious name given to this headland all on board would have been lost."

There may be more of the significance of Captain Cook’s titles later. In the meantime, we are approaching Townsville.

The coastal country seen from the deck of the steamer is for the most part dry and forbidding, backed by blue ranges. No clue is given of the existence of the Burdekin Delta and its wealth of sugar lands, or of the great goldfield of Charters Towers, less than 100 miles inland.

It was the fate of Captain Cook to miss the best natural harbour in Australia, if not in the world—Sydney—and the second best on the east coast of Australia—Bowen—and to skirt upon what is considered by some, and quite unjustifiably, of course, one of the worst—that of Cleveland Bay. Cook, or one of his subordinates, spelt the name differently in his day (1770), for he writes: “On Tuesday they saw very large columns of smoke rising from the low lands. This day they gave name to Cleaveland Bay, the east point of which was called Cape Cleaveland, and the west Magnetical Isle, because the compass did not traverse well when they were near it. Hence they ranged northwards.”

On Cape Cleveland is a massive lighthouse which warns mariners of danger in the vicinity—the Salamander Reef and the Four Foot Rock, the scenes of many triumphs in the art of fishing.

In 1838, there arrived in Sydney the “Royal Saxon,” described as a fine ship of 510 tons. Her commander was Captain Robert Towns, who became the founder of Townsville.

Nowadays one sees barren hills, on which a grey and reddish rock protrudes; a bold cliff, red and grey, with bare shoulders (all or nearly all vegetation having been destroyed) in the immediate background; ranges of tree-clad hills, and an isolated mountain to the south.

The town—busy and populous—is approached through a channel toilfully dredged out in the shallow bay, and thence through a capacious harbour formed by embracing bulwarks of red-grey granite. Red-grey and brown seem to be the prevailing tints of the neighbourhood; but when the rains come, in a day or two, as it by magic, the whole district is as green as an English meadow. Vegetation flourishes in jinks and crevices of the hot rock, and gardens that have been merely pathetic dust heaps blossom as the rose—and with the rose.

No sightseer will resist the temptation of chiding the citizens of Townsville because of their apparent indifference to scenic effects. The most remarkable feature of the city is the barren, treeless Castle Hill, the seaward aspect of
which is a great cliff absolutely perpendicular. Old inhabitants tell of the
time when Castle Hill was covered with luxuriant vegetation, when the cliff
itself was sparsely decorated with creeping plants and orchids. The visitor
will be inclined to discredit these statements in view of the desolate aspect
the hill now presents. It is a perpetual and dreary monument to the absorption
of the citizens in business. So hard at work have all been in the developing
the resources of the port and district that none seems to have noticed the
melancholy degeneration of the surroundings of the town. Even the base of
the great rock which dominates the scene is used for advertising purposes.

The tourist, when he regards the long wharves and stores, and the great
steamers loading and unloading, the gasping of the locomotives hurrying
away with merchandise, or hauling long trains stacked with frozen meat, and
wool and hides, or horses, or those square, squat boxes ornamented with red
sealing wax that officials seem to regard so casually, but actually watch with
zealous care—for they are full of gold—will, without any strain upon his
mental capacity, come to the conclusion that Townsville is the inlet and outlet
of a considerable and varied trade. His conclusion will be correct. That the
city—for it is an official and formal city as well as an ecclesiastical—is as
prosperous as it is, is due to the fact that the citizens have worked for three
decades with one accord and cheerful voice to overcome natural disadvantages.
It is but fair to state that Townsville, during recent years, has not progressed
at the rate confidently anticipated. Droughts out West, a decrease in mining
prosperity, and a couple of cyclones seem to have damped the enthusiasm of
the citizens for the time being. That is but a passing phase—a spasm whence
recovery promises to be speedy and certain. A glance at the map shows that
Townsville is a most convenient outlet for an immense stretch of country, and
facilities now exist at the port for an enormous volume of trade, and trade
flows along convenient channels as naturally as water does. Trade and
commerce are, however, to be discarded for the time being in the effort to give
good advice to the visitor. He will find the streets of Townsville uneven, not
because that condition is preferred by the citizens, but because of the expense
in maintaining even thoroughfares under the stress of heavy traffic. Where
the broad street called Flinders now runs has been the silence of the bank of a
mangrove-covered creek. The man who knows what Townsville was in its
primitive state, and who ponders on the cost of thoroughfare improvements,
alone is able to properly appreciate the difference.

Townsville is divided. The principal half lies on the northern bank of a
narrow, shallow, and muddy stream, known as Ross Creek. Ross Island, the
other half, is a delta-shaped area, flat and low-lying, between the creek and
the outlet of the river of the same name—likewise shallow and muddy, though
wider. The river comes down from the ranges to the West, but is not to be mentioned as a consistent stream except during long wet seasons. It overflows sometimes, and then the saucer-like country to the south-west of the town is converted for a day or two into a shallow lake, or rather a white and shining sea, in which are low green islands and clumps of thin-leaved trees. After a flood has subsided, the fertility of the delta of the Nile is exemplified, for vegetation becomes overbearing, the air, saturated with moisture, is soft but enervating, and perspiration makes at least two changes of raiment daily desirable. But in the dry winter months surely there is no climate in the whole of Australia more admirable—cool with but a very limited thermometrical range; none of the moist air which comes of the proximity of gross vegetable life, with never-ceasing breezes from the great Pacific.

At Townsville, one becomes properly acquainted with the mango; and if there is any visitor who does not know the mango, let us for a moment diverge and tell him an incident or two in the past history of the divine fruit. In very remote ages, it is said, the mango grew in the garden of a Cingalese god or giant who could work miracles. A Hindoo hero, having become acquainted with the sweetness of the fruit, abstracted a plant and so enriched India with a priceless gift. But the god or giant (or both) discovered the theft, and, following the unfortunate Hindoo, transformed him into a monkey under the ugly form of the Huniman. As a further punishment, the poor monkey was condemned to the stake, and ever since his hands and face have remained black. Out of gratitude for the services of his heroic ancestor, the Hindoos allow to this day the Huniman free use of their gardens, and take care to protect him from the sacrilegious hands of Europeans.

Many centuries passed, and Cook discovered Australia; and when the pioneers pushed their way into Queensland, it was found that without the mango the country could never be worth living in, and, there being no one of such adventuresome mould as the ancestor of the black-faced monkey, one J. C. Bidwill (the Commissioner of Crown Lands of the Maryborough district) sent an unheroic request or a formal order to India, and received a few plants (in a wardian case probably), and that is how one of the best gifts of profuse Providence to grateful Queenslanders came to be introduced. Mr. Bidwill was neither threatened with the stake, nor was any description of miracle practised upon him; neither is his name venerated, nor even generally remembered. Are we very sacrilegious, or our mouths too full of the mango and its praises to remember the name of the good and wise man who first made it available?

To return to Townsville. Besides a Cathedral and a club and what is called an Esplanade in violence to the reputation of every other, Botanical Gardens that provide much appreciated shade and which contain a valuable
collection of orchids, a great hospital, a popular racecourse, cricket pitches, a
golf club, tennis clubs, a rifle range, a yachting club, show and sports grounds,
the city owns a block of civic buildings which comprises a theatre and an
arcade, and a perpetual wail over its "inadequate water supply." The visitor
will at once recognise the similarity of the city to most others in Australia.
All may not have Cathedrals, but "an inadequate water supply"—is it not as
common as dust?

In the near neighbourhood are several places entitled to the patronage of
tourists: Cape Marlow about six miles to the north, Mount Stuart five to
the west, and Mount Elliott to the south attract attention. The latter is unique
from the fact that it is a huge, detached mountain rising from forest country
and flats gleaming with lagoons, yet is clothed, 2,000 feet above sea-level,
with jungle somewhat similar in character to that which obtains in localities
further north, in which the rainfall is twice as heavy. Several considerable
streams have their sources in this mountain. Those who have ventured to
reach the summit—some have grown weary in the attempt—speak of the
gloomy gorges in which grow gigantic pines, palms, and tree ferns; of trees
heavy with lichens and of almost impenetrable scrub; shoulders 3,500 feet
high, whence glorious views are visible of the islands between Townsville and
Hinchinbrook, the blue Pacific shimmering to the edge of the Barrier Reef,
the sweep and indentations of the coast line from Bowen to Lucinda, an
illimitable tract of forest-covered country, and contorted chains of silvery blue
lagoons which they know to be teeming with aquatic game. Resting on these
cool moist heights, the alpinist gazes with pity upon the country below, whence
the heat, waves quiver, and ventures to predict that some day a tramway will
make the plateaux of the mountains popular pleasure resorts.

Magnetic Island, five miles from Townsville to the north-east, is well
patronised as a watering-place, as a resort for pleasure-seekers fond of the
unspoiled bush, and by those in search of health. Not only do the citizens
gladly seek the change, but visitors from Charters Towers and the West
generally come hither to rest and recruit. Twenty square miles in area,
triangular in shape, its pivot 1,700 feet above sea-level, the island is varied in
its features, possesses many more or less convenient and picturesque bays and
landing-places. In Picnic Bay, the most popular, many citizens have acquired
allotments, and some have made homes, finding there quietude and freedom
from the hurry of the street. All the more readily accessible bays have their
homesteads, which are the envy of those condemned to live on the mainland.
There are patches of fertile soil in the bottom of the valleys adjacent to the
beaches, the climate is bled with perpetual breezes, and the sea—pure and
undefiled—is ideal for bathing and boating. The more popular bays afford
accommodation to visitors, reasonable as to cost, homely, and in every sense "grateful and comforting." Magnetic Island atones for some of the bareness and aridity of the mainland opposite. Spots may be selected there where the refreshment and free growth of climates blessed with a far more bountiful

rainfall may be obtained, for a considerable area of the surface of the island is an elevated plateau, rough, rugged, and seamed, but which holds the rain for a season, allowing the drainage to permeate gradually to the lower levels, filling the wells of the islanders with pure cold water, and maintaining the verdure of the valleys when the adjacent hills are withered, brown, and parched.

From Townsville there is a railway, too, which, following the coast line to the south for nearly fifty miles, taps the fruitful district on the delta of the Burdekin River. Thence the chief output is sugar; but all manner of vegetables, and corn, butter, and bacon are sent to Townsville. The climate is dry, but Nature compensates for this disadvantage by providing an inexhaustible supply of water close to the surface. The Burdekin River, one of the largest streams in the North, keeps its extensive area of alluvial deposit well saturated. Irrigation is universal. The principal plantation (Pioneer)
has some of the most powerful pumps in Australia, their united capacity, it is said, being 125,000,000 gallons daily in a dry time. There are thirty miles of tramway on this estate alone, and the mills owned by the company turn out about 12,000 tons of sugar per year.

A visit to the Lower Burdekin is recommended if only to see to what luxuriance the bougainvillea of various varieties can attain. Here the plants grow bigger than the houses, great glorious masses of purplish red, or brick-red—bold blotches of the most emphatic colour. Lagoons are crowded with the great pink water lily (the sacred lotus). The large and fragrant flowers have been worshipped in many places, and the fruitification Herodotus likened to the wasp’s nest. More common is the large blue water lily; and there are other water-loving plants of almost equal interest to the close observer. A whiff from a pink and blue lily lagoon is as sweet and as refreshing an experience as could be desired. The fragrance from a beanfield commingled with that of clover meadows on a dewy morning in Kent is something to remember, but the perfume of water lilies—millions of them—pink and blue, with humbler blooms of yellow and white, and those minute drifting growths
that at certain seasons tinge the still water with greyish pink, is of a different character—cool, pleasant, comforting, and full of flavour. No tourist should leave North Queensland without lungs full of that entrancing sweetness.

On the Lower Burdekin, too, there is an abundance of game. Tourists will find eager sportsmen who know all the favourite haunts of ducks and geese, and if he is taken to the rocks at Bend Easterly he may get a shot at a real live alligator.

The chief line of railway runs west from Townsville, giving access first to Charters Towers (the premier goldfield of the State, 82 miles), then to Hughenden (236 miles), and finds its present terminus at Richmond (312 miles) towards the setting sun. An extension to Cloncurry (520 miles) is now being pushed on. A branch (77 miles from Townsville) leads to Ravenswood, a mining centre, visited because of the crispness of its climate. If the tourist be a yachtsman, he will find fast and up-to-date boats, and Cleveland Bay, with Magnetic Island as a rendezvous, pleasing and safe.

**Summer Isles.**

About forty-five miles due north of Cleveland Bay lies a group of islands and islets, known collectively as **“The Palms.”** Rare old Captain Cook anchored off the larger of the group in 1770, and bestowed the name “from the number of cabbage trees” growing there. Nowadays we call these particular “cabbage trees” Alexandra Palms, in honour of the most graceful and lovable woman of the age—the Queen of England. Yet only two of the group bear the generic name—the Great Palm Island (about nine miles long by three in the widest part) and the North Palm (or Pelorus); Curacaoa, Fantome, and Orpheus lie in close companionship, each differing in size and shape and, to a certain degree, in physical features. The Great Palm has but little open country; all of its surface which is not usurped by jungle is fairly thick forest, and the highest point is 1,890 feet above sea-level. Orpheus Island is 568 feet and Pelorus 924 feet above sea-level. Each bay has its outlying coral reef, within which is shallow water.

From Townsville The Palms are but an irregular mass of blue, a little more solid than the blue of the sky and sea. Distance lends pleasing variance of shape and style to the intervening islands. Magnetic Island, Bay Rock, Rattlesnake, Bramble Rocks, Herald Island, Cordelia Rocks, Acheron, Havannah, Pandora Shoal, Brisk, Eclipse, Dido Rocks, Esk and Falcon Islets, might be accepted as stepping-stones—of irregular order certainly—to the more attractive and graceful havens of The Palms.
Various attempts have been made to form settlements in one or other of these islands. A lonely man spent many years on Rattlesnake Island, and starved there. But the Great Palm is a fruitful place, and on Orpheus Island sheep have been raised, and goats and pigs now run wild. Fishing and the gathering of clam shells and coral seem to be the chief industries of the island, which are also favoured by excursionists from Townsville. A more delightful cruise than that from Townsville to Challenger Bay, the port of the Great Palm, and thence among the lesser islands of the group, is scarcely to be imagined. Sport is plentiful, and the scenes on the seaward aspect among the coral reefs, which are miles in extent, reveal some of the wonders of the world. Mr. Saville-Kent, the highest authority on the subject, devotes much space, in his splendid work on the Great Barrier Reef, to descriptions of the corals of The Palms, and some of his finest photographs are of patches which may be seen by any visitor who, on pleasure bent, hires a competent boat at Townsville, sails to Challenger Bay, and makes excursions thence.

At The Palms, too, we get first glimpses of truly tropical vegetation; but as yet we are on the lower edge of the rainy belt. Twenty miles to the north makes a world of difference in climatic conditions.

Making Fire with Fire-Sticks.

Lucinda and the Herbert.

OCEAN-GOING steamers pass the Palm Islands, and thence to the seaward of Hinchinbrook Island. Small vessels turn off at Orpheus Island to the north-west, where, ten miles away, lies the port of Lucinda, the outlet of the rich and well-favoured district watered by the Herbert River and its tributaries.

We are now fifty-five miles from Townsville, and at the end of a jetty, shooting out 900 feet from the flat and uninteresting shore, the chief features
of which are sand and mangroves. Residents of the Pilot and the Customs officials, the Post and Telegraph Office, the store and quarters of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and two hotels constitute the settlement. No; there is, or rather was, one other permanent dwelling, as unpretentious but as necessary to the owner as his tub was to Diogenes—the bottom half of a malt tank, set on its side. In it the clerk who tallied cargo from the steamers sheltered himself and his documents. There is a legend that another official is never seen on the jetty without an overcoat. Do the fact and the legend reveal anything of the peculiarities of the weather? If not, let it be at once announced that Lucinda is in the rainy zone.

Sugar, butter, and minerals are the chief products of the extensive tracts of fertile and other lands through which the Herbert and the Stone Rivers run. Away up at the head of the Herbert are waterfalls said to be the deepest drop of any in Australia. Good bushmen assert that the falls of the Herbert have never been approached from below, so rough and precipitous are the walls of the ravine into which the river is hurled. Those of the Blenco Creek have been properly explored, and in respect of precipitous descent are surpassed only by their near neighbours.
Ingham and Halifax, progressive townships on the Herbert River, are the centres of industry here, the former being connected with Lucinda by tramway.

For many years the port of the district was Dungeness, a settlement at the mouth of Herbert River, two miles or so to the north. Here were substantial houses and wharves and stores; and steamers were wont to go miles up the beautiful river. But "the rains descended and the floods came," and now the very name of Dungeness is passing into forgetfulness, for it was all built on unsubstantial sand and mud. To exchange all the beauty of the river scenery, long and wide reaches of placid water bordered with mangrove, and higher up, fringed with jungle, for the flat and dreary neighbourhood of Lucinda, must have been a pang. Yet, what was loss to the sandflies and mosquitoes of dear departed Dungeness was gain for the mosquitoes and sandflies of lively Lucinda. But no situation whence the lovely outlines of far-famed Hinchinbrook are to be seen may be termed desolate or "horror haunted." The good folks of Lucinda have only to lift up their eyes unto the hills to obtain solace that many lovers of scenery would travel far to participate in.
The grand old mountain is swathed in a thin gauzy haze of shimmering blue, a haze that lends enchantment, for it softens the jagged outlines of peaks, cliffs, and boulders, fills the ravines and gullies with a luminous purple, and contradicts all estimates and calculations of distance. Sometimes the whole mountain is cloud-capped, and again wreaths of vapour rise from some water-course deeply hidden beneath a wilderness of vegetation, to drift and sway and melt ghost-like in the thin air. It is all a glorious, almost unknown and untrodden field for the adventurous tourist. Nearly thirty miles long, Hinchinbrook Island (named originally Mount Hinchinbrook by Cook, who could not distinguish the separating channel), is one of the chief effects of North Queensland from a scenic aspect. Few even of the lesser heights have been ascended. No man has ever set foot on the summit of the greater, although the limit is said to be but little over 3,600 feet. Consequently, the tourist, with a taste for mountaineering and ambitious of wooing and winning those virgin peaks, may possibly gratify himself and earn renown. But one aspect of great and varied Hinchinbrook is here alluded to. It has as many moods as the wilful sea. The present wish is to reveal that mood which attracts and appeals, for it speaks of the mountain in all its winsomeness, when each peak, lovely and lofty, seems to plead to the tourist—“Come, woo me, woo me, for now I am in a holiday humour, and like enough to consent.” At other times and seasons the mountain can be as perverse and prohibitory as a cross-patched dame. For weeks together she veils all her comeliness in rain—impetuous, unceasing rain—until her very foundations are sodden with swamps, and from every upland foaming streams rush down to the grey and steaming water of the Channel.

Kangaroos and wallabies and wild pigs are common on the lower levels, and a few years ago the Government turned down three deer, which may have increased and multiplied. Vegetation is so profuse that to attempt an exploration without scrub knives and tomahawks, and camp equipment for several days, would argue inexperience and court failure. Orchids, terrestrial and epiphytal, are numerous and beautiful, and botanists have been heard to express the opinion that in the upper regions may be found varieties unknown to science, for Hinchinbrook is unique. No other considerable isolated mountain mass exists on the whole of the eastern coast of Australia.

The spurs leading from the buttresses to the peaks are in many places bare and slippery rock, patched with spongy mosses and treacherous lichens, and laced with trickling water. If the mountaineer demands the elements of danger—the almost if not the altogether impossible—he will assuredly find them ere he peers (if ever he does) from the cloudland into which the proud spire of Bowen soars. Some who have ventured assert that this peak is inaccessible; but, then, no trained alpinist has yet made the attempt.
And all this time we have been hanging on to the end of the Lucinda Jetty, with the little steamer snorting with impatience, and all the beauties of Hinchinbrook Channel before us. Dodging between the buoys, the course is to a white blotch on the face of one of the bluffs of the island. Just when you begin to feel that the captain is cutting it rather fine, the steamer swerves off and the channel begins to open up. There will be several similar surprises and narrow escapes during the morning. On the shore side the land is a dense mass of mangroves intersected by creeks, the deepest of which (known as the Seymour River) is one of the mouths of the Herbert. The background is a range of rough and rugged hills, some of the spurs of which come down close to the sea. On the other hand is the ever-changing mountain region, indented with wide and steep valleys. Here, a waterfall shoots out over a brown bare precipice, on which the early light glitters. There, is—

"The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms, and ferns, and precipices.
And again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise."

Orchids in bloom in due season; palms bearing masses of straw-coloured flowers, and later on ruddy berries; wattles bloom, the bloom of many eucalypts; the honey-scented silky oak that parrots revel in; and the green and orange of the bean-tree can be seen from the steamer’s deck, for the course is nervously near the rocky ledges. The tourist will certainly think the captain absent-minded when approaching Haycock Island, and may imagine that he himself hath bubbles in his brain as he notices how Leafe Peak seems to change its position and aspect as the vessel glides through water that reflects every height and repaints every mountain tint. Creeks, almost obscured with mangroves, wind among the hills for miles, and at the mouths of some of these creeks fishermen are established, for the channel is a famous fishing ground; and famous, too, for that uncouth but none the less interesting mammal, the dugong. No student of Nature can pass through the channel without finding engrossing themes, and, if his instincts are destructive, the knowledge that alligators (pace crocodiles) infest the mangroves may excite him to stay and endeavour to shoot one or more of those watchful brutes.

To summarise Hinchinbrook, it may be said that the whole island is made up of broken and confused masses of hills, warded with rugged knolls, fretted with sharp inaccessible pinnacles, faced with precipices, and furrowed by deep ravines and gullies. The highest peaks are: Southern—Straloach, 2,990 feet; Central—Diamantina, 3,160 feet, and Bowen, 3,650 feet; North-west—Burnett, 2,210 feet; Barra Castle Hill, 1,970 feet; and Pitt, 2,352 feet.

Towards the upper end the channel widens out, and four hours or so from Lucinda the steamer anchors off the sedate maritime village of Cardwell.
UNTIL 1872, Cardwell was the most northerly settlement on the northeast coast of Australia. Thence to Cape York, no white man was to be found on the mainland, though several of the islands were used as curing stations by bêche-de-mer fishers. Thirty odd years ago it was anticipated that Cardwell would be the port for the extensive mineral field of the

VIEW OF FRESHWATER CREEK, CAIRNS.

Etheridge; but the almost impasseable Sea View Range, which is so pleasing a feature of the landscape, forbade hopes, and the trade of the interior now flows to ports north and south of Cardwell.
Rockingham Bay, at the south-western corner of which Cardwell is situated, has been the scene of more than one wreck, and the country at the back of Cardwell and the coast to the north has witnessed many deeds of bloodshed and cannibalism in days that are no more. Looking at the peaceful white houses, behind glorious calophyllum trees and among graceful coco-nut palms, one can hardly realise that Cardwell was a lively port long ago, and that gay young men were wont to "paint it red," so good and bustling and exhilarating were the times. "Imagination fondly stoops to dwell" on those days when a gentleman's coat was stolen "for a lark," and pledged at the hotel for a bottle of whisky; when a pair of boots hoisted to the truck of the flagstaff was redeemed by the owner "shouting" for all hands; when a pot of soup was filched from the kitchen fire of a housewife and an anvil from the blacksmith's shop, and each put up the spout for grog; when an important and influential gentleman was arrested by the police in the street and unblushingly charged with horse-stealing before the police magistrate, who remanded him to the hotel and fined him drinks all round; when the magistrate, after a lively evening, took a nip from a bottle containing a solution of blue vitriol, and merely ejected the poison spontaneously, for they were used to strong drinks, and they were of cast-iron stomach in those days.

In 1875, a settler and his wife were murdered by the blacks, and search revealed the poor woman's body from which the legs had been cut off just above the knee. Avenging angels in the shape of black trackers found the blacks corroboreeing and exhibiting the woman's legs and the gun with which she had defended herself. They were officially "dispersed."

These are examples of the incidents that occurred when Cardwell flourished. It now dreams, and the district at the back produces fruit—oranges, pineapples, and mangoes in increasing quantities. The scrubbs are alive with beautiful butterflies and rare and radiant birds. The district is a veritable paradise for those who are vulgarly called "bug-hunters," and the hills at the back are the home of several curious and scarce animals—
among them the "boongarry," or tree kangaroo. The botanist will find the vegetation strange and beautiful—the jungles a tangled mass of vines and creepers, with tall and magnificent trees encumbered with ferns and orchids, the ravines and gullies crowded with palms and tree ferns and bananas of quite stately dimensions. Numerous creeks and rivers water the flat lands between the beach and the foothills; and lagoons and swamps vary the picturesqueness of the landscape.

Several rivers flow into Rockingham Bay, the chief being the Murray, the Tully, and the Hull. On the banks of the two first-named there are considerable areas of cultivation, the main products being bananas, oranges, and corn. The land is fertile, the rainfall ample and regular; and steamers of shallow draft bring most of the advantages of civilisation within easy and cheap reach of settlers. Settlement increases steadily, for it is impossible that land capable of producing so many of the necessaries as well as the luxuries of life should remain idle. Over thirty years ago there was a sugar plantation and mill at Bellenden Plains, between the Murray and the Tully; but scarcity of capital and a series of those accidents and adverse circumstances with which the pioneers of industry have so frequently to contend put an end to the enterprise, and several hundreds of acres of splendid cane, a fine fruit garden, valuable buildings, and other improvements were abandoned. Now the second wave of settlement is rolling in, promising permanency and prosperity.

The islands of Rockingham Bay cannot escape perpetual admiration. Counting the Brook Group—twenty miles out from Cardwell—Goold and Garden Islands, the Family Group and Dunk Island with its satellites, the steamer passes eighteen in as many miles, the largest and fairest being Dunk Island, whereon is a solitary but ideally located homestead. This lies two and a-half miles off Tam O'Shanter Point, where Kennedy, the explorer, landed on his fateful expedition in 1848. These islands vary in form, and are for the most part covered with scrub and dense tropical jungle to the water's edge. One feature common to all, and to others further north, is a sandspit, more or less pronounced, shooting out to the north-west, aiding in the formation of a well-sheltered bay or cove. With the exception of Goold and two islets close by, the islands of Rockingham Bay have been proclaimed a perpetual reserve or sanctuary for birds. Visitors to them must subdue the British instinct for killing something. Under any circumstances, it would seem almost sacrilege to disturb the peace which presides over these charming scenes.
Clump Point.

The next feature of interest is Clump Point, six miles northward from Dunk Island, and which leads on to one of the largest orchards for tropical fruits and the very largest coffee plantation in Australia. The tourist will not now venture to suggest that he has seen nothing of the tropics. Country where coffee, bananas, pineapples, coco-nuts, custard apples, sour-sops, oranges, papaws, cashew nuts, and roseapples flourish must be voted tropical. Coffee is one of the prettiest of crops. The plant, an evergreen shrub, bears frail blossoms, white as snow and almost as delicate—richly fragrant, but all too soon passing away. Berries that change from pale-green to red and purple follow the flowers, the prolific nature of the plant being astonishing. Each berry has to be picked separately, and the stiff pulp is removed by machinery, exposing twin beans. These are cleaned and dried; the skin or parchment removed by another machine termed a “huller”; and when the chaff is winnowed away the blueish-grey beans represent coffee fit, after roasting and grinding, to make a beverage for a Mahomet. But all this is not accomplished without severe trial and trouble. Unless the tedious drying process is accomplished thoroughly and without check, the flavour of the bean—as tricksy and wayward an essence as may be encountered anywhere—may be affected and the whole crop converted into second class. From this most picturesque estate one looks over King’s Reef—a mass of coral and rock, visible only at low tides—to the Barnard Islands, the home of myriads of great white pigeons, and at one time of the rare rifle bird and other birds having the fatal gift of beauty. The waters hereabout abound in turtle—the Hawksbill (yielding the tortoise-shell of commerce), the Green Turtle (of which the famous soup is compounded), and the savage Logger-head (that only a hungry blackfellow will eat).

Tourists, lingering awhile amid these delightful scenes, will be enabled to make acquaintance with the wonders of coral reefs; to see strange and marvelously beautiful fish—as brilliant in colouring as the most gorgeous parrot, and as novel and fantastic and grotesque in shape as those creatures which come even to the least imaginative in dreams at Christmas time. There are shells innumerable for the seeking, from the huge clam to tiny forms as delicate as beautiful; while the coral growths bewilder in shape and substance.

The mainland abreast of these fair islands is like most of this coast—fertile and plentifully watered. It would be quite safe to say that the average annual rainfall exceeds 120 inches. Frequently it overreaches that by 30 inches and more. Muff Creek, Maria Creek, and Liverpool Creek are now fast attracting settlers. Bananas and maize are at present the chief products;
but no doubt coffee, sugar, and various fruits will also be exported. At Liverpool Creek there is a long jetty, after the style of that at Lucinda Point, but privately owned and called the "Cowley Jetty," in honour of the present Speaker of the Queensland Parliament. Cultivation extends far up the creek, the produce being brought down in flat-bottomed punts for shipment at the jetty to Sydney and Melbourne.

From Cardwell, much further north than our present standpoint, the ranges are covered with dense forests and almost impenetrable jungle. In years gone by much valuable cedar was obtained; but nowadays pencil cedar, maple or silkwood, and silky oak (different from the silky oak of the South) represent the varieties most sought for. They exist in immense quantity, together with other descriptions no less useful and ornamental. So far, notwithstanding the interest and concern of successive Governments, no systematic regard is taken of the value of the tropical forests of the State. After all, in consideration of the vast area of North Queensland, the proportion overspread by jungle and forest on these moist, low-lying coastal lands is by no means great. Some day, let us hope before it is too late, steps may be taken to conserve areas whence denuded patches may be renovated. None yet knows the value of this asset of the State, for it can be confidently said that, although the Colonial Botanist has classified and named most of the timber trees of the North, the settler, eager to clear his land, looks upon the best as weeds of larger growth to be killed, burned, and destroyed as speedily as possible.

Mourilyan.

From the Barnard Islands the steamer sweeps by Rocky Island, and thence quickly reaches the most completely land-locked and the most picturesque harbour on the east coast of Australia. It is a harbour in miniature, approached by a narrow entrance through which the tide ebbs and flows with "the strength and current and deep-swirling eddies of a large salmon river," to quote the expressive phrases of Dalrymple, who explored the coast in 1873. The notes of that industrious official may be further drawn upon:—"On the east, north, and west the harbour is picturesquely bounded by the dark-wooded Georgie, Hilda, and Ethel Hills of Captain Moresby's survey. [Captain Moresby, of H.M.S. 'Basilisk,' was the discoverer of the harbour and of the river which flows into it.] On the south-east, a low grassy hill, green as an emerald, I named 'Esmeralda Hill'; and a pretty wooded one, between it and the sea, 'Mount Julia.' These hills are divided from Georgie Hill by a short valley running out from the shores of the harbour upon pretty grassy slopes and a smooth sandy beach between Double Point and
Hayter's Point, which I named 'Seaforth Vale.' In it, abundance of fresh water was discovered, and many beautiful building sites are to be found on its slopes, both towards the harbour and the ocean, the distance across being only about three-quarters of a mile.'

To the botanist the heights, faithfully reflected on the mirror-like surface of the water, will ever remain an attractive field. Ferns in great variety: some of such sturdy growth that one is forced to conclude that previous conceptions as to the delicacy of the species have been all astray, some so fine and frail that they can scarcely bear without wilting the touch of a caressing hand, some whose young and tender fronds are pink and even red, and some of bronze green. Orchids are plentiful, though, as is invariably the case, the more lovely varieties have been thinned out; but to the ardent botanist half the delight of rambles amid scenes of vegetation run mad is the chance of discovering rare and beautiful plants. Among the mangroves which hem in the shallow Moresby, on the face of rocks in the gloomy ravines, on the branches of the tallest trees felled in the process of preparing the land for sugar-cane, in the low, malaria-infested swamps, have been found orchids, charming in form and colour and fascinating in fragrance.

In 1884 the site of the township surveyed on the side of the hill overlooking the harbour was sold in convenient allotments, the primeval jungle having been cleared off at considerable expense. Fancy sites realised fancy prices; but the jungle has reconquered the land on which the scrub knife and the axe committed such awful desolation. It would be difficult for those who purchased residence allotments—with the idea of retiring occasionally from the excitement and whirl of Charters Towers and Townsville to watch as evening falls the "rip" where the forces of the tide and of the ocean meet, or the outlines of the hills clear cut against the sky—to say where they proposed to build their bungalows, for the landmarks are deep below the surface of matted and tangled vegetation.

The tramline, which from a well-kept wharf gives access to the Mourilyan Sugar Plantation, penetrates the heart of the jungle, crossing many gullies and streams and some extent of unwholesome looking swamps. There is a legend to the effect that each of the seven miles of the line cost a human life—for the disturbance of the soil let loose a perfect demon in the shape of malarial fever. Now, however, the place is healthy enough, and none could wish for a pleasanter spot than that which is occupied by the headquarters of the estate.

The South Branch of the Johnstone River is but a short distance from the back of the manager's residence, and thence there is a road to Geraldton, the port of the district (five miles), with a ferry crossing. But the wise tourist will prefer the sea route thither.
Geraldton.

Passing out of the most completely land-locked harbour in Queensland, the vessel hugs the steep coast line closely until the pilot station on the sandy beach at Flying Fish Point denotes the entrance to the Johnstone River—Gladys Inlet—and, if the state of the tide be propitious, the bar is soon crossed and the first glimpses of the most lovely river scenery in the State are obtained.

On 4th October, 1873, the Dalrymple exploring party landed and camped on the south side of the mouth of the Johnstone River, and two days afterwards the first residents on the Johnstone River—temporary residents only, of course—took up their abode at the junction of two wide and deep streams, the place selected being where Geraldton is now situated. The rich land, the enormous cedar trees, the bamboos, the game, the large numbers of alligators, and the hostility of the natives and the March flies furnished material for many pages in the diaries of the officers. Both branches were thoroughly explored, and, at the limit of navigation in the whaleboat in the northern branch, "colours" of gold were found in a few dishes of dirt from the foot of the bank. This, at such a time as that of the Palmer River rush, attracted no attention, and
a dozen years had to pass by before “payable” gold was found in the upper waters of this stream. Between 1873 and 1878, the Johnstone River was visited only by cedar-getters; but in the latter year selections on the bank of the Johnstone River, opposite Geraldton, were taken up, and the first sugar plantation north of the Herbert River started. A rush for sugar lands followed, and in a couple of years thousands of acres of impenetrable jungle had been selected, and several other sugar plantations were adding to the wealth production of North Queensland.

The very first settlers saw on the north bank land generally high above all possibility of flooding. “The steep banks of dark brown and reddish loam, of twenty to forty feet in height, clothed with dense masses of lofty forest, heavily festooned with flowering creepers of convolvuli, climbing bamboo, and lawyer palms, descend to the water’s edge in steep slopes of luxuriant entanglement and variety of undergrowth; palms, bananas, ferns, lilies, arums, and large-leaved taro, struggling for prominence of position, a dazzling commingling of shades, colours, and intricate minutia of outline that would puzzle even a Millais to paint or a laureate to describe; the deliciously-scented arums, all in full bloom, and hanging moon flowers greeting us as we passed, with whole green-houses of rich perfume.” The wand of commercial enterprise being outstretched, the impenetrable jungle disappeared off thousands of acres, and in place thereof grew up fields of sugar-cane. Sugar-cane grew as it had never grown before in Queensland. There was practically an unlimited depth of vegetable mould, high temperature, and a rainfall that registered as much as 200 inches per annum. The district was regarded as a perfect Garden of Eden, and vast tracts along both branches of the river and on the tributary creeks were secured by private individuals, a considerable amount of capital being expended in clearing and effecting formal improvements.

Nowadays land far out is under cultivation, a tramway with feeding branches opening up miles of this rich and wonderful country. The output of sugar, and the aggregate of the wealth that the district has produced in the comparatively brief time it has been occupied, must be enormous.

The town is most pleasantly situated on an elevated peninsula formed by the bifurcation of the river, one branch trending to the west and the other in a southerly direction.

Convenient and commodious wharves provide facilities for shipping, and on the rising land above the town is laid out to advantage. Not many years ago the streets were almost blocked by primeval jungle, but all save a few fine trees has been cleared away—at a cost, be it said, of £62 per acre—a splendid prospect down the river being obtained. Immediately opposite is Innisfail Plantation, the green canefields of which and the buildings surrounding the mill, then a belt of jungle and a background of hills, form a pretty picture.
But the picture of the district once existed between Geraldton and Goondi, on the North Branch. Both banks of the river were clad with dense jungle; taro, crinum lilies, and ferns, mingled with graceful grasses and reeds, fringed the water's edge, and all the details of the compact mass of vegetation—the broad leaves of the bananas, the plumed palm tops, the airiest branches of the giant figs and cedars, and the draped heads of the lesser trees—were reproduced on the placid surface of the water. Butterflies of brilliant blue still flit across, and here amongst the waving sedges sit stolid snow-white herons, and there a thin column of smoke shows the locality of the blacks' camp. It was an uninterrupted panorama, any portion of which might be reproduced with splendid effect for the drop-scene of a theatre. Most of the glorious vegetation is of the past. Gross utility has shorn away the beauty of the stream and some of its virility. From the lower part of the river, looking towards the setting sun, one sees the bold heights of Bartle Frere, on the head of the Russell River, and the peaks of Bellenden Ker, the highest points of the two mountains being 5,200 feet and 5,400 feet respectively.

Many years ago a great sensation was caused in Geraldton when an intrepid bushman appeared, after one of his long sojourns in the jungle, with 30 or 40 oz. of gold, which he had obtained from the ledges and beaches on the upper reaches of the north branch of the river. The gold was a beautiful sample, and visions of great and immediate fortunes rose before the eyes of those who were excited to the extent of impelling them to face the privations that all who endeavour to force passages through the jungle must expect. Gold was obtained in several places, and all the more readily accessible deposits of auriferous gravel were speedily exploited. Amidst great hardships, terraces on the steep hillsides were prospected. The field, however, proved patchy, though work was continued on until quite recently.

Many pleasant days may be spent exploring this neighbourhood. One ideal excursion may be recommended. Some miles up the South Branch of the Johnstone, the watercourses are obstructed by what is apparently an ancient lava flow. This hard blue-grey dyke marks an abrupt difference in the level of the country, and causes "falls" in creeks; and that known as "Miskin's" is unique. The water rushes out of a narrow shallow gutter precipitately into a horseshoe shaped hollow, sending its spray over the glistening leaves of ferns and creating miniature rainbows, in and out of which gorgeous blue, black and red, and green and gold butterflies flash and flicker. The sound of the sparkling water—soothing, hollow hum—the delicious freshness of the vegetation, the frolicsomeness of insect life, the sweetness, the pliancy of the jungle airs, are elements that make the scene as enchanting as the harp of Orpheus.
This district is the home of many remarkable birds, from the cassowary—the ostrich or emu of the jungle—to the superb regent bird, clad in gold and black; from the untameable industrious scrub hen, which makes of the damp, steamy earth and decaying vegetation the best of all incubators; to the tiny sunbird which flits from flower to flower with the alertness of a humming bird. Land shells in great variety are to be found in the moist soil, and animals strange to other parts of Australia frequent the jungles. No wonder naturalists from distant parts of the world visit the Johnstone River for novelties for their collections.

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Several miles back, a cockspur off a main track opens out at a spot whence a grand view is to be obtained of a waterfall on Cowley Creek. The aboriginal title, “Durbudgerbah” (to be pronounced with caution, not trippingly on the tongue), is preserved on a notice board; but the more popular name—that for every-day use—is bestowed in honour of the Speaker of the State Parliament. Unsoiled jungle, a stupendous gorge into which the white water is shot, glistening rocks decorated with ferns and orchids, are the chief features of a scene which no pilgrim in search of the beautiful and the impressive should leave unvisited. There are several other delicious waterfalls in the neighbourhood.
The Russell and Mulgrave Rivers.

PROCEEDING north from Geraldton, or rather from the mouth of the Johnstone River, the scenery is of a similar character to that immediately to the south. Two miles or so from Flying Fish Point there is another port of shipment named Ella Bay, whence at a long, substantial jetty, built by private enterprise, bananas are sent away for transshipment at Townsville and Cairns. Land needs must be fertile to grow to perfection this delicious and nutritious fruit; and, if other testimony on that point was wanting, the enormous quantity sent away from the tract of country between the Murray River (which flows into Rockingham Bay) and the Daintree (to the north of Port Douglas) should be all sufficient. Yet there is ample banana land to sustain a much larger trade.

The features of the coast are as when Dairymple made his report.

MULE PACKING.

The range, alternately receding and advancing its spurs towards the beach, encloses a succession of pockets of rich jungle lands, rendered the more valuable from their proximity to open grassy ridges forming fine breezy building sites.

Soon we pass the Frankland Islands, where magnificent views are obtained of Mount Bartle Frere, the Bellenden Ker Range, and the numerous but lowly folds of the Coast Range. No. 1 Frankland—lofty and jungle-clad at the south end; level and scrubby to the north-west—is the southern extremity of a row of steep rocky islets, connected by coral reefs, some of which are extremely picturesque. About twenty years ago, visitors to this island were wont to ponder over the trunk of a coco-nut palm, on which was deeply
cut the date “1819.” Possibly the carving was the work of Captain Phillip P. King (afterwards Admiral), whose voyage along this coast in that year is elsewhere mentioned. The north-west termination of the group is a low island, with conspicuous rocky knolls at either end. There is an anchorage for small boats at the south-east end of No. 1 Frankland—an ideal spot for a marine picnic. At certain seasons of the year the Franklands swarm with Torres Strait pigeons, which feed in the jungles of the mainland during the day, and roost at night in great companies on the islands off the coast, where also they nest. Turtle and dugong are fairly plentiful, while fish are to be had on the reefs in almost any quantity.

Further north again is High Island, which affords shelter to vessels waiting to cross the Mulgrave Bar, generally difficult and treacherous. The Russell and the Mulgrave Rivers, Harvey’s Creek, and other lesser streams junction here, in a shallow mangrove-invaded inlet; but recently a new self-scoured channel cut the bar, and steamers pass in and out with safety. One of the spurs from Bellenden Ker, approaching within a few miles of the coast, leads the eyes to the summit of the northern peak. Both of the rivers mentioned run through rich alluvial flats; the Russell meandering for miles amid reedy swamps and lily lagoons.

The Vale of the Mulgrave, broad and long, productive and lovely, extends from this neighbourhood almost to Trinity Harbour. Before very long, there should be an almost continuous chain of sugar-cane and banana fields between the Johnstone and Cairns Inlet. This vale is tapped by a tramway from Cairns; has direct communication with the ocean over the Mulgrave Bar, and is now being approached by settlement from the Johnstone.

The Russell River, in common with all the streams of this part of the coast, comes from the high lands through rich country, the over-hanging banks and hillside being covered with jungle, in which palms and banana and lofty, substantial trees struggle in a bewildering entanglement of vigorous vegetation. Up on the head waters gold-mining is still being carried on. Some time ago a company was floated to dredge for gold in the lower reaches; but engineering difficulties stood in the way of success.

Fifteen miles up from Point Constantine, the banks of the Mulgrave are 20 feet high, cut through rich soil carrying luxuriant tropical vegetation. The river reaches the foot of Walsh’s Pyramid (3,016 feet)—“a bare, steep, imposing granite peak, like some storm-beaten horn shorn from the summits of the Oberlandt, and planted on the Australian coast of the Pacific.”

Point Constantine, the southern head of the opening whence the united waters of the Russell, the Mulgrave, and Harvey’s Creek find an exit to the ocean, was the scene of the discovery of a mummy, among the first, if not the
very first, found in North Queensland. It was the body of an aboriginal gin, "doubled up and tied like a roll of spiced beef, and of the same colour, and somewhat of the same smell." This tasty description, written in 1873, has served since for many such mummies. Occasionally, however, the spiced beef similitude is varied for "ham"; but it passes as fresh.

![A Mummy](image)

A MUMMY.

No aboriginal home complete without one.

[For this and other blocks acknowledgments are due to the Editor "North Queensland Register."]

All a fair and fertile country, abundantly watered and set about with the grandeur of the mountain scenery, which surely must elevate and refine the sentiments of the people who work out their destinies in such a favoured spot. "Every prospect pleases," and man, far from being vile, industriously turns to good and useful purpose, for himself and the well-being of others, natural
forces which have lain idle or have expended themselves in what we are pleased to call waste and fruitless profusion for hundreds of years. Are there not here crowds of witnesses to testify, as the present Lady Lugard said, “That there are in truth two Australias—two Australias which are likely to modify each other profoundly as they grow to maturity side by side, and which are, also, likely to develop totally different social and political problems—one is temperate Australia; the other is tropical Australia”?

But scenery—ever changing, ever fresh, ever beautiful—not complex social nor dusty political problems, is the theme of these pages. This country about the foot of Bartle Frere and the Bellenden Ker Ranges, lovely and imposing and fruitiful as it is, must not be allowed a monopoly of attention.

**Fitzroy Island.**

Coming again to the shallow inlet into which the Russell and the Mulgrave empty, and, passing out a few miles to the north, we come to Fitzroy Island—another of those beauty spots common along this part of the coast. The landing-place is in a pretty crescent-shaped bay, with a north-western aspect, and a high background thickly timbered. A creek comes down a picturesque vale, percolates through a white beach of broken coral, shells, and granite sand—clean and wholesome—never failing. The Yarrabah Aboriginal Mission has possession of this island as an outpost or retreat for its proteges, and promises to improve it by the planting of coco-nut palms and other desirable trees.

**The Yarrabah Mission.**

The headquarters of this mission are at Cape Grafton. A large area of country, having frontage to the shallow bay lying between Cape Grafton and False Cape, has been reserved for the purpose of the mission. There is a population here of over 300 aboriginals, under the care of the Rev. E. Gibb and a band of faithful co-workers, and for the details annexed the writer is indebted to the notes of a clerical visitor:

“On first landing, one is struck with the beauty of the place as a whole. The palm trees and other tropical growth, the houses situated on the sloping grounds, and the signs of life in the coloured people moving in different directions, give one the idea almost that you are in another country altogether.

As you step on shore, the children cling to your hands, and show you the chief
objects of interest. The great secret of Mr. Gribble's success with these people is that he keeps them always at work, and the work differs every day, it may almost be said, every hour. There is gardening and farming, tree-cutting, and a steam sawmill, and fishing and sailing. The mission has its own gasworks and waterworks, and besides all this there is the daily work which has to be done in washing and cooking and mending. They are also great builders, and they have a hospital, and a dispensary, and a commodious church, in which they take a great interest. Everyone seems happy, and they work well together. Sometimes there are discontents who escape over the hills, but they invariably find their way back again. The day commences at 5:30, and the church bell calls them to matins at 6:15, at which they are all present; then comes breakfast, which consists largely of porridge. After breakfast is a general parade, and then they break off for their different works—some to build, some to plant, some to prepare the dinner; but, in the middle of the morning, a bugle sounds and work ceases, for singing classes or gymnastics, band practices, and such like. The afternoons are spent much in the same way, or perhaps they appear now as soldiers with their rifles. The religious side of the mission
is not overdone; but it takes a very real place in the hours at their disposal. Evensong is sung in the church at 8 p.m., when all are present. Little black-legged piccaninnies with white surplices certainly look somewhat odd, and the singing is somewhat overpowering at times. They all speak and read English very well, and the saying of the Psalms is a most impressive feature of their service. They follow the lessons in their Bible, and the sermon generally consists of personal warnings and encouragements to individuals who are mentioned by name. Mr. Gribble knows when to be firm, and it is his strong personality which he makes to be felt in every corner at Yarrabah which keeps the 300 a happy family. They are allowed to marry very young; but they have to build themselves a house first and show themselves competent in keeping it clean. The married couples have more privileges than the single people. The idea of the mission is that it is to be a home for all time. They are not educated for service or for taking up work in the towns of Queensland; but in time it is hoped that the mission will be self-supporting. Their only connection with the outside world is by sea. They have an oil launch, which goes in to Cairns two or three times a week for provisions and letters, and sometimes a concert party comes across. The life strikes one as being extremely simple, natural, and happy, and this mission is the undoubted answer to all who imagine that nothing can be done with the aboriginals, and that the best thing is to leave them alone to themselves."

Another recent visitor came to the conclusion that the blacks at Yarrabah are little better off than prisoners; that they are underfed, and die off quickly.

The differences of opinion that apparently exist will but lend zest to the visits of tourists to Yarrabah who wish to study the methods by which undoubtedly humane and earnest men hope to ameliorate the lot of the primitive owners of this glorious country.

**Cairns.**

CHARTS and maps of the north-east coast of Australia, in 1873, showed at the end of Trinity Bay, and to the west of Cape Grafton, two small, shallow bays, between which lay the headland known as False Cape. These are Captain Cook's titles. He named Trinity Bay because he entered it on Trinity Sunday. Whitsunday Passage commemorates the Whitsunday of his great year. On 15th October, 1873, the two vessels of the Dalrymple exploring party cast anchor in the eastern one, and on the following day they entered the other, Trinity Inlet. As no deep water was marked on the chart
here, the delight of the leader of the expedition when he sailed into the splendid, sheltered, deep water, on the northern bank of which the town of Cairns is now situated, can be imagined. He felt sure that he had discovered a larger river than the Johnstone, and he saw that in its estuary a fleet of men-of-war could ride at anchor, land-locked, in seven fathoms of water. It took several days' exploration to convince Mr. Dalrymple that there was no river there, but merely a deep salt water inlet, which split up into innumerable branches, the furthest extending one of which ended about a mile from the low but conspicuous Green Hill, for which the great, gaunt Pyramid stands sponsor. It was not until in 1876, when the news of rich reefs on the Hodgkinson excited the gold fever once more all over Australia, that a permanent settlement was formed on the shores of Trinity Bay.

So dense were the mangrove swamps that they completely masked the country behind them, of the character of which little was known. No way down the precipitous, jungle-beset ranges had then been discovered, though
more than one attempt had been made to reach the Inlet from the Hodgkinson Goldfield. When a track was cut by Inspector Douglas (not the first by the way), a local wit declared that a crow could not fly down it without a breecching.

Now big steamers berth at substantial wharves; the rich low-lying lands are under cultivation, and a railway ascends the range amidst the finest scenery in Australia; and, running inland, opens up hundreds of miles of tableland famous for agricultural resources and immense wealth—diversified and inexhaustible.

Here is one of the headquarters of the banana industry. The fruit is shipped in “hands” (packed in crates) and in bunches, the latter average thirty to the ton, each bunch containing eighteen to twenty dozen. The heaviest bunch on record weighed 160 lb., and comprised forty-eight dozen bananas.

Cairns is the show place of North Queensland, or rather the district is. The white houses of the town form a charming colour contrast to the perennial greenness of the country. Coco-nut palms, huge shade trees, and masses of creepers indicate that the citizens do not lack appreciation of the beauty and value of ample leafage in their streets and about their homes. The Esplanade is more than a mere title. In the white tropical glare, the shade of the figs and the Exocarpus are as black blotches on the living green, and, standing in the coolness thereof and looking across the deep blue of the Inlet, on those rare occasions when the mirage works miracles, one may see the plumed heads of palms that indicate the situation of Green Island—the rendezvous of yachting parties, the paradise of those who love to collect curious and beautiful marine wonders. The morning air is fresh and sweet; dew, heavy and clinging, saturates the boots of the unheedy walker; lace-like whiffs of cloud enhance the charms of distant green hills and purple mountains.

On all hands there are evidences of ample rainfall. In 1893, the total was 187 inches. In 1894, there were 137 wet days, and the rain measured 127.98 inches. The average annual rainfall is about 90 inches. In 1902, the total was no more than 50.34 inches, and then Cairns was seared as though a red-hot iron had been passed over the face of Nature. Where moisture is usually abundant, a little less than the average—a quantity that would flood hundreds of square miles of the Western Downs—spells ruin to cane and banana crops. The country is dipsomaniac. Deprive it of accustomed excess of refreshment and exhilaration, and it becomes limp, and then parched and despairing. Then, again, the first shower restores spontaneously wonted exuberance.
“SPELL OH.”
Let the town of Cairns speak for itself. The tourist may still, as one visitor said, drive through gas-lit streets to finely appointed hotels, and go to sleep amid the melancholy wail of the curlews mingling with the click of billiard balls in the rooms below. The tourist will not find himself an object of interest here. Admiring visitors are too plentiful to excite curiosity, and he may go about the business of sight-seeing absolutely unembarrassed—that is, if he takes a single precaution. Up among the mountains is Kuranda. Pronounce it Ku-randa, and your speech betrayeth you as a stranger.

Cairns is the only town in North Queensland in which the personal worth and virtues of a citizen are recorded in marble. The monument to Dr. Koch, in the very heart of the place, tells of a clever, a good, yet quiet man.

Once again let it be remarked that Cairns is the outlet for a large extent of country teeming with varied resources. In the immediate neighbourhood sugar, bananas, rice, tobacco, cotton, coffee, and all sorts of tropical fruits are grown. Straw hats from sugar-cane are proposed; banana leaves are said to be capable of being dried, prepared, and plaited in imitation of the fashionable panama. Natural history specimens—birds' eggs, skins, butterflies, and fancy bugs—are among the exports. The neighbourhood is scarcely ever without some collector, privileged to kill pretty birds for the sale of their skins or rob rare nests for eggs. In common with other sugar-growing districts, Cairns suffers from a plague of beetles, and pays for their destruction. For a period of about a month in the year of grace 1905, the District Beetle Fund purchased two tons of the insects at prices varying from 12s. per pound at the earlier portion of the period to 6d. per pound at the latter. Students of Nature come from all parts—England, America, and distant Australian States; but mostly from Germany. Residents marvel how the supply of rachet-tailed kingfishers, rifle birds, and the eggs of the cassowary last. But each is becoming rarer every year, and is, therefore, sought for the more ardently and implacably. This "trade" should be regulated, for it is a national not merely a local asset.

Timber—cedar, pine, silky oak, silkwood, ash, and right through a long and interesting list—is exported. Metals—gold, silver, copper, wolfram, molybdenite, &c., &c.—come down the line from the hills and back country.

A side show of Cairns is the Kamerunga State Nursery—not a crèche nor an orphanage, but merely a garden, wherein are grown, experimentally and for distribution, rare and valuable plants brought from distant countries. It is an excellent institution. No one can estimate the ultimate value of the work that has been done and is still being done by its means. The grounds are reached partly by rail and a pleasant walk from Redlynch Station. A list of the plants cultivated and for distribution seems to include almost every
tropical and extra-tropical plant worth cultivating, and when it is known that
such plants are distributed without fee or cost the gardens deserve honourable
mention as well as admiration on account of the intrinsic attractions.

Visitors may travel to the Nursery from town by cabs, seating four or six,
dores £1. The drive of eight miles is pleasant, with pretty spots on
Freshwater Creek and on the Barron River (a quarter of a mile beyond) for
picnicking. Some arrange to call at Kamerunga, en route to Kuranda by train,
breaking the journey at Redlynch—half a mile from the gardens. But it
should be borne in mind that the institution is neither a State farm nor a
botanical garden. There are no bulls of high lineage, no stud wheats, no fancy
poultry, no verdant lawns nor glowing flower beds. Plants of economic value
from all parts of the tropics are in orderly assemblage. Spices, scented herbs
and shrubs, fragrant beans and exhilarating berries, contribute to make the
Nursery the one spot in Australia where the odours of Ceylon, the Indies, and
of Araby the blest blend or diffuse distinct but entrancing whiffs. The grounds
are small but replete with interest, every plant, shrub, or tree having its utility.
In close association may be found tea and coffee plants, coco and kola nut
trees, rubber trees of several varieties, fodder plants and trees, fibre-producing
plants, many palms, from the generally useful coco-nut to the sago, ivory nut
and oil, and the famous wine palm—all graceful and useful; plants whence
strong drugs are obtained—anise, cocaine, &c., &c.; pepper, vanilla, all-spice,
nutmegs, cardamoms, cinnamon, cassava, ginger, and turmeric; litchies and
breadfruits are no more novel here than plums and apples in Victoria; the
strawberry and the peach of the South are compensated for by the granadilla
and the mango.

Bellenden Ker.

The man who has never viewed the world from a hill holds but a paltry and sluggish spirit
within his bosom. He is myopic, limited, hemmed in of soul, a gazer upon walls.

A TRAMWAY runs southwards past Aloomba, across several creeks, down
the Vale of the Mulgrave, skirting the Green Hill and Walsh's
Pyramid, and approaching the foothills of Bellenden Ker. And now
we may dispose of that great range.

More than one reference has been made in these pages to this range. It
dominates a vast area of country; it is the chief of the mountains in North
Queensland—chief, not only because of its superior height, but because of its
unique character, and because it holds unlocked secrets in natural history
and botany. The range lies to the south-east of Cairns, between—roughly
speaking—the Mulgrave and the Russell Rivers. The first white men to
attempt the ascent of any of the peaks were members of the Dalrymple
Exploring Expedition of 1873. They do not appear to have gained the highest elevation, but rather the northern peak—that which lies nearest to the coast—climbing it by a spur running up from Harvey’s Creek. A party of botanists, in 1886, succeeded in reaching heights hitherto untrodden by white men. They were modest scientists, absorbed in their work, not mere alpinists. In 1889, more of the secrets of the mountain were won and made public. From notes then published, we learn that the north spur dips into the Mulgrave Plains about twenty-five miles from Cairns; the south ending abruptly, and separated from Mount Bartle Frere by a valley 4,000 feet deep. A long narrow spur, shooting out from the north-west slopes of Bellenden Ker, dips far down into this valley to the base of Bartle Frere, forming the divide between the Russell and the Mulgrave waters that fall between Bellenden Ker and the main Coast Range. The length of Bellenden Ker from north to south is about fifteen miles; the width at the base about ten miles. There are seven peaks—the lowest 2,600 feet, the highest 5,400 feet. The vegetation on the east side of the mountain is quite different from that on the west. The general contours are also totally distinct. On the east side, the mountain is very precipitous, in most places quite inaccessible, and covered by dense tropical jungle, crowded by lawyers, stingy-tree, thick ferns, and patches of a coarse-cutting grass plant common in the scrubs of the Russell.

As to the impressive scenes and intoxicating sensations which may, according to the temperament of the tourist, be experienced on the summit of the highest peak—that to the south—let one abridged quotation suffice:

We were 5,200 feet above the sea, and the tree tops stood clear of all obstructions to the view. And what a view! For some time not one of us could find a voice. All was distinctly visible, in the perfectly clear atmosphere, in a radius of, at least, 100 miles in all directions. Eastward rolled the calm Pacific, visible from the Palm Islands in the south to the vicinity of Cooktown in the north. The white surf breaking on the Barrier Reef was a long white line on the lovely azure of the slumbering ocean. The towering peaks of Hinchinbrook looked down on the cone-shaped islands of Rockingham Bay and the valley of the Herbert; behind them the dark-blue serrated ridges of the Cardwell Range. To the north, Cairns nestled in calm seclusion on the shores of the beautiful bay, a white oasis in the desert of blue haze. Green, Fitzroy, High, and the Frankland Islands were as emeralds set in the lapis lazuli of unruffled ocean, the bleached coral beaches girding them with a white zone, on which the dying waves expired in long ripples of snowy foam. Between us and the ocean was the valley of the Russell, with its reed-covered plains and mysterious lakes, and the river winding in sinuous curves like a vast silvery serpent through the dense dark-green tropical jungle, down to where it joined the Mulgrave, and the united waters rushed together into the sea. North-east was the valley of the Mulgrave, ending in the beautiful plains beneath the long evening shadows of the cone-peaked Walsh’s Pyramid. From where the range dipped into the sea at Double Island, north of Cairns, away west to the hills on the head of the Gulf waters, and south to where the eye lost itself in distance, was a vast indescribable panorama of hills and valleys and mountains of every conceivable shape, and to the west the wavy sea of magnificent country on the Herberton tablelands, the future garden of Australia, with its regular rainfall, rich scrub soil, and glorious climate. The site of the volcanic lakes was marked by their covering sheets of
snow-white mist. In all the ravines along the face of the Coast Range were blocks of beautiful amber-cloud, reposing there like white-winged birds weary of tossing to and fro in the combat of warring winds. Mount Sophia and the dark north peaks of the Bellenden Ker stood facing us in gloomy grandeur. South-west, immediately in front, stood the majestic form of Bartle Frere, divided from us by a chasm 4,000 feet in depth, and four or five miles across from peak to peak. Around and over all, in one dark-green wide spreading mantle, the wonderful tropical jungle, infinite in its shapes and hues.

![Coffee Plantation, Kuranda.](image)

**Chinamen and Alligators.**

**Tourists** from the cool, dry, southern latitudes, desiring to "reap the flower and quintessence of change," might spend weeks in this district and leave it still effervescing with new and delightful emotions. Mountain scenery forms but an item in the great programme with which Nature appeals for admiration.

If you drive parallel with the beach to the north, there is the mouth of the Barron River to be seen, and all the country teems with invitations. On the higher reaches of the Barron, and more especially in the creeks and lagoons, there are wondrous aquatic plants—water lilies of heavenly blue, with golden corollas and perfume fit for the tip-tilted nose of a goddess. And in the still waters are many alligators—the shooting of which is more to be desired than the shooting of quail or of pigeons from the trap, for it has the elements of
danger and mishap, and, therefore, a proper game, according to the disciples
of Gordon, “for a rational man to play.” Alligators have taken in several
Chinamen on the Barron. There seems to be a kind of understanding between
them—at any rate, on the part of the alligator. A Chinaman is said to be the
most patient and plodding of men; but the alligator is patient, too. He studies
the Chinaman; he learns his habit of coming to the river bank to fish or to
wash his scanty change of raiment; and by never being seen at the particular
spot, considered particularly safe, hulls the wily Chinaman into the belief
that an alligator is easily fooled. The alligator plots and plans for weeks, and
one day there is a swirl in the water, a cry that resembles “Wha’ for!” flung
about with gasps, gurgles, and bubbles, and there is one Chinaman less in the
land. Then stratagems begin on the part of the compatriots of the Chinaman
that was. They offer dainties to the alligator in the shape of somebody else’s
dog, or portions of decomposing goats, or the offal of pigs, and the flattered
alligator begins to imagine that he has entered the gates of Paradise, and
wallows with delight. All goes well. The Chinamen smile, and the alligator,
without any pride whatever, accepts their tributes. One day the alligator
takes a putrid titbit, spiced with strychnine, and feels uncomfortable. There
is a twitchy sensation along the spine, and he cannot, for the life of him, keep
his jaws from snapping. There is glee in the camp of the Chinese as they
witness unique aquatic feats. They shout “Welly good,” when, leaping clear
from the water, the alligator curves gracefully backwards until, for the moment,
it converts itself into an animated capital G. Again, when, shooting up head
first, the beast gapes ecstatically, jerks its paws, fore and hind, makes lightning
strokes with its tail in a mad endeavour to copy for an instant the Chinese
symbol for potential unhappiness, the audience becomes frantic. Three days
after, an alligator, scandalously distended with gases of decomposition, floats
ashore. The Chinamen find in its interior a few brass buttons; and, possibly,
a rusty knife, but no bones worthy to be taken to China.

Mount Buchan.

One of the beauty spots in the neighbourhood of Cairns, and the only
marine suburb, is Double Island. Looking at the magnificent scenery,
the unrivalled sea bathing facilities, the attractions of climate and
other advantages, the spot is tolerably certain to be patronised by visitors in
search of health or recreation. Double Island, or, as the estate is known,
Mount Buchan, is sixteen miles from Cairns by road (eight miles of which can
be negotiated by the railway) and about ten miles by water.
The Railway Beautiful.

Most of the railway lines of Queensland are prosaic. Cairns has one that is beautiful. Not that there are any points of loveliness in parallel lines of iron laid on short pieces of timber, and snorting, puffing, cinder-scattering locomotives, dragging reluctant, creaking cars. But we say the line is fine when we merely mean the route. It crosses ten or twelve miles of
fairly level country— for the most part rich and well favoured—in which are several pretty creeks; on past the long since deserted site of the settlement of Smithfield, and into the debouchment of the valley of the Barron. Here begins the tempest of the soul of the man who attempts to describe the scenic effects. Some see absolutely nothing in the trip up the side and shoulders of the valley, except the black blotches of fifteen tunnels. To others it is all one “purple patch.” Artemus Ward was once hurried down a canal. He set forth his sensations in words to this effect:—“Beautiful scenery! lovely scenery. Red-headed gal washing her feet on the bank!” The tourist may look in vain for such gaudy and picturesque personal elements in this scene, unless girl tourists in floppy hats are of his party. Some see many stars on the Cairns Railway; but, on investigation, find that they are purely local—due to the cinders that the smokestack of the locomotive scatters impartially through the carriages as the tunnels are penetrated. Others look with unimpaired vision on a long and steep valley, clothed with lovely vegetation, with here and there obtruding rust-coloured bluffs and precipices; a stream of white water appearing and disappearing below; a level stretch of dark jungle, chequered with the brilliant green of banana and corn plantations; palms and ferns and graceful creeping plants; stalky and spider-webbed bridges; butterflies flitting just out of the whirl of the engine; waterfalls so close at hand that the spray bedims the glass of the windows. At the entrance to the valley, there may be flecks of fleecy clouds, among which the deep blue of the distant hills seems as the groundwork of some great cameo. Every curve and twist of the line—and they are many, and some of surprising suddenness—reveal fresh aspects. Tall timber, interlaced with vines and creepers, screens the view as the train winds along the echoing spurs, and ever and anon, without warning, you are plunged into tunnels of inky blackness. Emerge from the gloom, and alongside the line hibiscus plants flaut their yellow flowers; the red spikes of the “umbrella tree” surmount graceful whorls of glossy leaves, and away in the distance the “coral tree” illumines the dark jungle with a daub of pink; the “flame tree” flashes red. The vegetation bespeaks abundance of rain and heat. The air is warm and moist. All the valley is a hothouse in which plant life, varied and rich, flourishes riotously, and from which thin steamy vapours arise.

Hundreds of tons of rock and earth were blown out from the shoulders of the hills to make ledges and embankments of the line. Most of the embankments are covered with vegetation, and even the rocky faces,
shattered by dynamite and scarred by picks, have their adornment of ferns, mosses, and orchids. Just past where the Stony Creek ravine is spanned by a thin and high-elbowed bridge and overlooking the gorge of the Barron, stands a pinnacle of reddish-grey granite, the outer fragment of a shoulder through which the line was cut. It stands as an emblem of a colossal undertaking—a sentinel overlooking a wild and yet lovely scene; the witness of the union, in a deep and peaceful pool below, of the hurrying Barron with the eager Stony Creek. Dynamite plugs had been placed to cause the overthrow of this monument, but someone who had an eye for effect urged its preservation. It remains an everlasting benediction.

Up the gorge puffs of white vapour arise, and the moan of falling water whispers among the rocks. Since the train began the ascent, fourteen tunnels have been penetrated. The fifteenth is the longest of them all. Some tourists prefer to leave the train at Stony Creek station and walk thence to Kuranda (seven miles), so that the first impressions of the Falls may be pure and undefiled by the rumble of the train and its vexing cinders. In that case, the long tunnel has to be entered, and to those who are nervous this may not be an altogether pleasant experience, unless there is ample assurance that no train is likely to be met with. The darkness is intense; all sense of direction is lost. A stick is absolutely necessary to enable one to keep between the rails. On each side of the line, at intervals, are alcoves, "one-man holes," into which a person may nestle with safety in case of being caught by a train. But there is an undoubted sense of comfort and relief when you catch a glimpse of light and emerge from the grey, dripping arch into sunshine, and begin to feel the softness of the pure mountain air.

Occasionally on the grassy slopes above the Stony Creek Falls are to be seen white tents, the temporary home of fossickers; the outward and visible signs of hope. They come and go, "like the cares that infest the day." Along the course of this creek and of Freshwater Creek, gold has been found from time to time, not in any quantity, but just in alluring samples, which seem to tell of great hoards somewhere not far away. There are those who believe in the existence of a second Mount Morgan among the hills. They are the most persistent prospectors. Occasionally they display encouraging specimens, and crevicing for gold becomes more fascinating. When naught but bad luck is struck; the white spots on the shoulders of the range disappear. After a while they bud again—immature blossoms of hope.
Counting the Cost.

As this railway is an engineering wonder, as well as the most costly in the Commonwealth, some practical details may be of interest:

Section 1.—Cairns to Redlynych, 835 miles. Work commenced 7th April, 1886. Line opened 8th October, 1887. Cost, £57,302. Contractors—P. C. Smith and W. McBride; subsequently taken over and finished by the Department.


Mareeba to Atherton, 2126 miles. Work commenced 13th January, 1902. Line opened 10th August, 1903. Built by the Railway Department under the day labour system. Cost, £54,671.

The Chillagoe and Mount Garnet lines were constructed by private enterprise, and no official figures are at hand.

Falls of the Barron.

Except during the wet season, the Falls of the Barron are not to be accounted sublime. Always beautiful, for the gorge and valley are the unique features, rising and tumbling water adds grace and in times of flood grandeur to the scene. When there are but independent tricklets down the blue-grey face of the rock, the visitor is apt to speak disrespectfully of the Barron Falls; but none can look around and about and down the valley without praise, without thankfulness, though all the water that disappears might not fill a twelve-inch pipe. Very different emotions arise when the river in high flood rushes down in foaming haste.

Several descriptions of the Falls have been published. It is proposed to abridge one (written while the railway line was in the hands of the contractors), which attempts to picture the scene during an exceptionally heavy flood and from an unusual aspect. The wayfarers on this occasion travelled overland from Port Douglas, and, therefore, approached the Falls from above. To-day,
BARRON FALLS, HALF-FLOOD, CAIRNS TO HERBERTON RAILWAY.
happier tourists travel by rail, and the scene unfolds itself as the train creeps up the valley. Visitors must not expect a stupendous and awful sight, but one of wild and fantastic beauty—a scene perhaps unique in its loveliness, but by no means so affecting as that prodigious gap in Nature—Govett’s Leap—in the Blue Mountains:—

The noise of the Falls has been with us since the early morning—now humming through the jungle, now rushing like a mighty wind up the gorges, now echoing with astounding clearness on the ridges. Last night’s rain had increased the volume of the stream to such an extent that a mighty flood was sweeping down to the sea, and, with expectation at the straining point, we hurried along the southern bank, having occasionally almost to swim our horses across the backwaters which the full stream created. After some difficulty we succeeded in clambering up the banks to the cleared track of the railway line, and rode safely and easily along this until within a few hundred yards of the head of the Falls. From early morning the sky had been clear and the sun excessively bright. Everything was favourable to the contemplation of one of the grandest sights in Australia. A few hundred yards below our halting-place the turbid stream rushed among the blueish-grey rocks and along its well-worn channel, and beyond this gauzy cloud of spray floated up from the brink, caught the sunlight, and were glorified with ever-forming, ever-vanishing rainbow tints. Wide in extent, mighty in depth, grandly picturesque in every detail, the gorge into which the stream rushes inspires one with admiration; but the Falls, independent of the surrounding effects, might be voted commonplace when compared with other sights of the kind that are to be viewed in Australia. The water does not leap into the gorge, but plunges along its rocky and precipitous bed in a series of cataracts, imposing to behold, but by no means awe-inspiring. Churned into tawny foam in its impetuous, headlong course, the torrent ever and anon lifts its huge bulk into the air in heavy masses, and in tumbling forms myriads of fantastic shapes. It shrieks, and roars, and fumes, in its cavernous recesses, and issues in unexpected places and in unexpected forms lower down in its bed. It thunders against rocks, now leaping over them, and, spent with its own unavailing fury, courses along in almost lazy steadiness, as if it were reserving itself for still greater efforts on the rocky pinnacle which stands supreme in the centre of the gorge, almost at the foot of the first cataract. Over the brink the water finds its way in three separate and distinct streams, while a charming little side show lights up the northern corner of the gorge. This is the only proper fall of which the scene may boast. Issuing from among the trees it leaps down a narrow chasm, a distance of perhaps 150 feet; its silvery volume—so different from the tawny colour of the main stream—is dissipated before reaching the rocky bed into mist, which floats up among the gloomy trees, spraying perpetually the softest showers upon their glistening and dripping leaves. About 200 yards from the brink, the main stream—broken into opposing fractions by the hard grey rocks, and churned into yeasty froth in its gigantic hurry—unites and flows swiftly down a narrow defile, leaping and curling in its course, and disappears round a beautifully wooded spur in the gorge. Following the surveyor’s track through most interesting jungle—interesting because of the rarity and beauty of the ferns and orchids and dwarf palms and tree ferns, which obtrude themselves on every hand—and crossing several rocky gorges, one is reached whence another effective view is obtained. Opposite, rising to the height of many hundred feet, is the northern side of the great ravine, clothed from the bed of the stream to its topmost height with impenetrable jungle, its gloominess relieved here and there by flowering trees and the tender tints of fresh leafage. Below rushes the river, foaming between unimpressionable rocks and roaring in agony of restraint. New clouds of mist spring skywards, and with another plunge the whitened torrent leaps into the mystery of total disappearance. Further down, it issues through a narrow chasm in one tremendous volume, accompanied by angry puffs of spray, like the smoke from a battery of big guns, and with a noise that makes the hills resound. Thence it rolls along in impotent fury the narrowed gorge, leaving the spectator deeply impressed with various moods, the realness of its mighty presence, its exhibitions of tremendous but suppressed power. From various places on the northern bank perennial rainbows, which shift hither and thither, are to be seen, and one’s “thick coming fancies” weave all sorts of lovely tinted pictures in the illumined spray. With the noise of the cataract ever in our ears, we wandered up the dimly-lighted gorges, discovering beautiful ferns and foliage plants, flowers of delicate hues and shades.
The Hills and Beyond.

"G"ood Americans when they die go to Paris." Wise citizens of Cairns dwell among the hills. Honey-mooning couples love the quiet, sweet solitudes above the Falls. Secluded dells have heard hundreds of repetitions of the old, old story, yet ever the newest and most thrilling, of love and perfect bliss. Newly-wedded couples come from far-away places to renew their vows of fidelity. Blue doves murmur the soft accents of love. The Falls sing a never-ending epithalamium—impetuous or soothing. "The voice that breathed o'er Eden" whispers continuously in the shady walks. All is ideal. It is said a singularly happy state is ensured for those whose early married days are passed in the peaceful, yet inspiring, neighbourhood of Kuranda. The genius of good luck presides over these enchanting scenes.

For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard with his shadow on the stone
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.

The climate is perfect. What is it that makes the air so soft and buoyant, and saturates it with perfume? What is it that makes the trees handsome and noble, and the jungle more mystic? What is it that tints the swimming vapours with cerise? The cares of this world and the sinfulness of riches are banished with the first inspiration of the cool, bland morning air, which has filtered through the myriad of leaves on the mountain side. There is sympathy and kinship in the call of the mopeoke in the moonlight answering the passion-less voice of a mate, weird in the distance. The fireflies gleam and flash when the nights are dark. Great blue butterflies flicker among the blooms of giant trees in the searching sunlight. Is it not all, like the sweet forget-me-not, made "for happy lovers"?

When the sun is glaring viciously on the sands of Cairns, these uplands may be obscured in cool blue-grey clouds; and though imagination may not be gracious enough to make the perspiring denizens down below capable of holding fire in their hands by "thinking of the frosty Caucasus," yet it is easy to think how they envy the happy folk who dwell always and for ever up here among the hills and less than twenty miles away.

Still further along the line are Myola and Mareeba, other health resorts. Atherton is the centre of a vast tableland—fruitful and bracing—"a land flowing with milk and honey," and whence are sent huge logs of cedar and pine. Beyond, again, lies the mineral country—Herberton, Irvinebank, Mount
Garnet, Stannary Hills, Chillagoe, Mungana. Lofty limestone bluffs—"pre-adamite beasts setting their teeth against the sky"—denote wonderful labyrinthine caves decorated with stalactites, white as snow, in form and devices amazing, bewildering, incomprehensible—too lovely for prose, too bizarre for poetry. There are volcanic lakes, and hot springs renowned for curative qualities. The district is vast, and singularly endowed with rare and valuable mineral deposits.

**Atherton.**

By a wise series of movements between Cairns and this neighbourhood, and the Evelyn Scrub, near Herberton (another 1,000 feet higher), many grades and degrees of climate may be secured. Ideal localities for permanent residence exist, totally free from extremes, and where all the various wants and tastes of man may be met and satisfied. Herberton may not be as cold as Hobart, nor Atherton as bleak as the Blue Mountains. Hence the calm superiority of these highlands in the tropics. The air seems thrice purified.
Rain falls not in riotous superabundance as on the coast, but more frequently in soft and gentle showers and encompassing mists. The late Sir Thomas McIlwraith said that the climate of the Herberton hills reminded him of the highlands of Scotland. The mist may be the mist of the Scotch; but the vegetation—the trees, the plants, the flowers—bespeak tropical Australia with surprising variations.

To drive for five or six miles on a broad imperfectly made road, bordered on either side by tall masses of jungle, with here and there a small break disclosing a patch of waving corn, is calculated to make the most careworn forget his cares.

"About twenty years ago," said a resident recently, "when I first visited the Atherton Scrub, you hadn't to hunt round far for a cedar tree—and such trees! There are good trees still, but they're further back, and carting comes expensive. The smaller trees now are usually worked up at the local mills, whilst the larger ones are still sent away South as logs. But to come back to my story. Twenty-one years ago I went for a ride along the Barron, commencing where the river emerges from the scrub; and here what would I give to describe the beauty of the long stretch of placid water for, say, half a mile, fringed with giant trees and clinging vines, each being reflected in the transparent water, seeming to the eye like a subaqueous cedar scrub. Recently I had an opportunity of a row upon this magnificent waterhole, though it sounds like sacrilege to use this well-known Australian (and usually appropriate) term in reference to such a beautiful stretch of deep water, haunted by wild ducks and platypus, and I saw no change in almost a quarter of a century. The platypus still dived and left little circles of water. A diver with her young ones also disappeared into the pellucid depths. Other birds rose, flapped their wings, and rose over the giant trees. The great trees and vines, without a break, fringed the banks, and one's thoughts naturally got into a sweet and gracious mood, but, as we emerged from the shelter of the scrubby banks and the river flowed through forest country, the boat wanted no rowing, and we went faster and faster, the river's fall rapidly increasing."

Atherton is the terminus of the Herberton coast route, and the traveller finds good accommodation on the mail coach, which leaves Atherton for that old-established city of the highlands, twelve miles inland, daily. The drive across the range is very interesting, and the stranger will find Herberton worth a visit.

Back in 1899, the timber trees of this district were the subject of a report by a professional botanist, wherein were described no less than 111 varieties as furnishing woods of a useful character. Recently specimens of 300 different kinds of local woods were brought together in an ornamental display design.
Although the cedar of these upland jungles has been the subject of enterprise for over twenty-five years, large quantities are yet available. Recently one firm on the Upper Barron contracted to supply between 200,000 and 300,000 feet for export.

But this is a guide to the coast, and to the coast must we return, leaving the cool and fertile uplands with something of reluctance, and yet with knowledge that many of the wonders within the Barrier are as yet unnoticed.

Port Douglas.

Between Cairns and Port Douglas, mountains look on the sea, which beats upon the base of their inaccessible heights. A vast entanglement of jungle spreads over all. A distance of thirty-five miles separates the once rival ports; and every mile of the route is replete with interest. For years it was deemed impossible to attain the summit of the dark range which interposes a barrier between the ocean and the tablelands to the west. Two adventurous spirits in 1877 struck the White Cliffs—to the south—and gradually worked along the beach to the present site of Port Douglas. Prior to this event, the place had been called Island Point, then in turn Salisbury, Port Ferrigal, Port Orsen, and eventually Port Douglas in honour of the Hon. John Douglas, then Premier.

Merchants and others who had settled at Smithfield (an early settlement at the foot of the Cairns Range) until driven away by the big flood made an exodus to the new port, which became the depot for the whole of the trade of the Hodgkinson and the Etheridge, the green slopes of the headland being dotted with tents, soon to be supplanted by buildings of more substantial material. Shortly after the Herberton tin-fields were discovered, and the trade of that district also concentrated at the port. The star of Port Douglas was then in the ascendant, Cairns being almost abandoned.

Soon there were twenty-three public-houses in Macrossan street—a thoroughfare about a mile long, which is unique in that both ends are washed by the Pacific. The town is built on the landward slope of
a rocky headland, which is the termination of a peninsula, formed by the Pacific on the east and a narrow inlet to the west. It is across the narrow part of this peninsula that the famous Macrossan street runs, its eastern extremity being on a hard level beach, which extends some four miles to the south and forms at low water one of the grandest carriage drives imaginable. With the calm breadth of the ocean on one side, low sand hills backed with dense scrub on the other, and great mountain masses ahead, finer aspects do not exist in this part of the world; and whosoever drives over the hard firm sand must needs feel the exhilaration which is derived from fresh sea breezes and the contemplation of lovely scenery.

The inlet is the mouth of the Mosman River, which drains a large area of fertile land, on which sugar-cane (the crop for the year 1905 was estimated at 90,000 tons), coffee, bananas, mangoes, pineapples, and lemons are grown. Much more than is exported could be produced; but markets are limited and distant. Many tons of mangoes go to waste every year. The natural vegetation is lavish, and at certain seasons of the year the edges of the jungle blaze with the gorgeous red blossoms of the flame trees.

**FOXTON BRIDGE, MOSMAN RIVER.**

The immediate background—a high and rugged range—is known as "The Heights of Dagmar," which descend towards the coast in two steep jungle-clad spurs, with open grassy patches. Two miles further north is the opening of the Daintree River. First impressions are valuable, and let us here give those of Dalrymple who discovered and named the river:

"As we came to an anchor, the rain clouds, which till then had lain prone over the mountains and low country far and near, rose, exhibiting a magnificent
panorama of blue, massive, towering, distant ranges, fronted by the lower densely wooded Heights of Alexandra and Dagmar, which descend towards the river in luxuriant jungles, filling all the broad valley and giving evidence of many thousands of acres of the same rich agricultural lands which at present make this and the Rivers Johnstone, Mulgrave, Russell, and Mosman the most beautiful in Queensland—soon to be the gem of Australia. Although in common with the sister colonies, Queensland possesses deposits of gold, minerals, and gems, enhancing her present prosperity, the production of these may wane; but soils so rich and of such vast extent, opened up by such water carriage and with such a climate as those alluded to, are a lasting heritage of prosperity in the hands of an industrious and provident people.”

The river makes a bold curve close under the north-west end of the Heights of Dagmar, and thence sweeps away between fine jungle-clad banks to the Heights of Alexandra opposite, scooping out a sharp escarpment. This reach impressed Dalrymple as “certainly the finest river scenery in the colony.”

Port Douglas is the port for the Mosman and the Daintree Rivers, Bailey’s Creek, Saltwater Creek, and the Mowbray River. At one time it promised to be the port for the whole of the Herberton, Hodgkinson, and Etheridge districts; for, while in course of time a comparatively easy track was found up the Coastal Range, Cairns lacked that facility. But the railway eclipsed the sun of Port Douglas. Now the district depends more upon its self-contained resources—chiefly sugar. The extent and importance of this industry may be estimated from the problem contained in a small fact.
During one season the "Grub and Beetle Fund," maintained by planters, was drawn upon to the extent of £600 for the destruction of the pest. Payment is made for grubs and beetles at 6d. per pint, and the sum represents the destruction of 10 tons 14 cwt. 3 qr. 3 lb. of the insect which has acquired a taste for sugar-cane.

Tourists may spend weeks in the neighbourhood without becoming weary of the sights, and then may ascend the range and eventually gain the Cairns Railway, and so down to that port. The trip can be recommended to anyone desirous of seeing the country properly.

Mount Molloy, where is one of the greatest copper mines in the State, owes allegiance to Port Douglas, and the mineral wealth of the great ranges nearer at hand has yet to be known.

**The Low Isles.**

Out from Port Douglas—eight miles to the north-east—lie the Low Isles, whereon is a tall white lighthouse. The Isles are but patches of glaring white coral rock, for the most part entirely submerged at high-water spring tides, and narrow tongues of sand banks. Mangroves, low and misshapen by the wind, represent almost solely the vegetation. At times the Isles are alive with Torres Strait pigeons and sea-birds. Lovely shells, coral of fantastic form, and numerous varieties of marine animals make the spot desirable to those interested in certain aspects of natural history. There must be something more than ordinarily attractive about these Isles—"remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow," as they may appear to the outsider. It is said that a former lighthouse-keeper lived there for over a decade without visiting Port Douglas. This must not be taken to indicate that the port is abhorrent; but rather that the Low Isles possess charms of their own, revealed only to those who are intimately acquainted with them. Not everyone who wishes so to do may land here. Credentials from high authorities are essential; but only those of a certain class care to face, even for a few weeks, the isolation; to members of this class the Low Isles are a theatre of wonders.

Big ships pass the Isles about two miles away; and at intervals a herald comes from the mainland with tidings of the world and victuals. Otherwise there is no society; but the men, women, and children live contentedly.

Not long since, an enthusiast on the subject of marine shells obtained from the authorities permission to visit one of these isolated lighthouse stations, in order to improve his collection. He found the life pleasant enough, but the residents averse from conversation. He was such an accomplished whistler and so gifted a musician that, to beguile the time as he searched the coral-
entangled pools for prizes, he whistled whole operas to himself and mimicked all the birds of the air. He was like the musician of whom the “Spectator” wrote, for he could proceed from the thrush to the skylark, mounting up by a proper scale of notes, and afterwards falling to the ground with a very easy and regular descent. He also could contract his whistle to the voice of several birds of the smallest size. “As he was a man of larger bulk and higher stature than the ordinary, you would fancy him a giant when you looked upon him and a tom-tit when you shut your eyes.” Operas and the gleeeful concert of birds continued during several days, for he whistled unconsciously. Then he began to be aware of a certain fidgetiness on the part of the rest of the population. In a few days they broke out in a unanimous demand for silence. The strange sound of softly whistled airs had raised a mental tumult where previously all had been calmness and tranquillity. They could listen unmoved to the hoarse howling of the tempest, the monotonous beat of the swell upon the beach, the discordant shrieks of myriads of sea birds, the melancholy sighing of the wind through the mangroves, but the sweet exotic noise provoked an epidemic of nervous irritability that was unendurable.

Coasting to Cooktown.

ANGES, densely wooded to the summits, with pockets of rich jungle lands and terraced slopes, are the chief features of the coast further north. Peter Botte, 3,311 feet, is the most conspicuous of the many peaks in view. Although others rise to about the same height, Peter Botte has a splendid isolation of its own as it broods over Cape Tribulation.

After sailing along the uncharted coast for 1,300 miles, Captain Cook’s famous vessel, the “Endeavour,” on the evening of the 10th June, 1770, struck on the reef off the “Black Rock,” on a headland appropriately named Cape Tribulation—and, as she lay grating on the coral, the islands four miles ahead were named Hope Islands, to commemorate the feeling that sprang eternal in the breast of the gallant captain. The exact scene of the disaster has been localised and searched for the cannon Cook jettisoned to assist in the floating of his vessel, but no trace of them has been discovered. Undoubtedly, they would have suffered from such a sea change as to be unrecognisable, if they are not deeply embedded in the ever-growing coral.

Cape Tribulation lies to the south of the mouth of the Bloomfield River, once the scene of considerable enterprise in the growth of sugar-cane. It is interesting to note that the name bestowed upon this stream by Captain
Phillip P. King differs in respect of one letter from that now in use. He voyaged along the coast in 1819 in the Admiralty cutter, the "Mermaid," and his records may be quoted:

"25th June.— . . . As we steered round Cape Tribulation the sea ran so heavy that our boat, which was towed astern, filled and overset, and in a moment went to pieces. The wind had now increased to a gale, and the weather threatened so much that we were induced to take advantage of a bight to the northward of the Cape, in which we anchored at three-quarters of a mile from the mouth of a rivulet, the entrance of which was blocked up by a ridge of rocks on which the water rippled. 26th.—On the following day, the weather continued so unfavourable that we remained at the anchorage, and Mr. Bedwell was sent to examine the opening, which was called Blomfield's Rivulet. On his return he reported the bar to be too shoal to admit an entrance to vessels of greater draught than four feet, but, having passed it, the inlet runs up a considerable distance, with soundings from three to four fathoms. Near the entrance, upon the bank of the inlet, several huts were noticed, and near them Mr. Bedwell found a canoe, which, being hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, was of very different construction to any we had before seen. Its length was 21 feet, but its greatest depth in the bilge did not exceed 15 inches, whilst at the gunwale the opening was only from 6 to 8½ inches wide; an outrigger, projecting about 2 feet, was neatly attached to one side, which prevented its liability to overset, and at each end was a projection from 15 to 20 inches long, on which the natives carry their fire or sit. Nothing was found in the canoe but two paddles and a long pole. The bay on which we had anchored was called at first Shelter Bay, but it was afterwards changed to Weary Bay, in consequence of Captain Cook having given that name to the coast in this vicinity."

The Bloomfield River may be said to mark the northern limit of the rainy belt, the southern edge of which is the Herbert River. There are no very large areas of jungle land, but patches exist equal in fertility to any about Cairns. The scenery is rugged and wild in the extreme. The river in the wet season tears down from the ranges in a series of cataracts and rapids. At one place there is a magnificent fall—as grand on account of the confusion of the rock masses as it is of the foaming white water that lashes over and among them, and makes one tremendous bound over a ledge into a pool below.

Vegetation begins to assume a different aspect. Orchids and ferns rarely found elsewhere are here in abundance. *Dendrobium superbiens* and *Dendrobium bigibbum*—each bearing profusely, showy, deep lilac flowers—demand admiration; and a few miles further north the sage-green of the typical Australian bush supplants the rich and sombre leafage of the jungle.
Monkhouse Point rises abruptly from the sea—a rocky headland of granite boulders; and in the distance Mount Cook, mantled to the dome-shaped summit with jungle, rises to an elevation of 1,476 feet, and marks the position of the Endeavour River beyond.

**Cooktown.**

BEHIND the steep headland known as Grassy Hill, on the southern bank of the river, nestles the port of Cooktown. Captain Cook’s good ship was taken into the river and careened, when it was found that a piece of coral from the reef off Cape Tribulation was fast in one of her planks, plugging what otherwise would have been a serious leak. More than one log of the voyage of the “Endeavour” was kept. That of Lieutenant Hicks gives the aboriginal name of “Charco” to the river. It was a word in frequent use by the blacks, and is supposed to have been a term of admiration. It was the first aboriginal name given to any part of Australia, but it gave way to the Endeavour without struggle or regret. In passing, it may be mentioned that the blacks of to-day know the site of Cooktown as “Kan-gaar,” and apply the name “Warraboo” to the river.

Nearly a month having been occupied in effecting repairs, the “Endeavour” put out to sea again, sailing along “The Labyrinth” (as Cook termed the Barrier Reef). Baffled where he expected to find an opening, the disappointment he felt was expressed in the name Cape Flattery. From the summit of Lizard Island he reconnoitred the reefs. The two islands, North and South Direction, were so named on account of their utility in conjunction with Lizard Island as beacons. Cook passed out through a small gap now known as Cook’s Passage, re-entering the maze of the Barrier through a similar narrow opening, Providence Channel, some 150 miles to the north off Cape Direction, in which neighbourhood lies Restoration Island. Through this passage, Captain Bligh, castaway from the “Bounty” in an open boat, entered ten years after. Thence Cook discovered the route to Torres Strait, now daily navigated, between the Barrier and the mainland coast.

It is of interest to note the subsequent career of the “Endeavour.” She was a Whitby built ship, constructed for a collier to battle with the furious gales off the eastern coast of England. On her return from her strange eventful voyage in the Southern Seas, she was sold by the British Government, and became a whaler, flying the French flag, under the name of “La Liberté.” During the war between Great Britain and France, she put into Rhode Island, and in beating out of Newport Harbour went on a reef. The British Consul at Rhode Island, in 1834, said that he had frequently seen the vessel’s hull at low water.
A few specimens of the extensive botanical collection made by Sir Joseph Banks, while the "Endeavour" was undergoing repairs, are preserved in Sydney.

Just about 100 years after Cook's visit, on the presumptive spot where the "Endeavour" was repaired, a handsome monument was erected to his memory.

Cooktown is proud of possessing the most realistic scrap of world history that can be associated with Queensland, and proud of the only monument in the State erected in honour of the gallant sailor. Citizens would be prouder if the graceful column were surmounted by the statue which it seems to lack. As we have but one such monument on the whole long coast of North Queensland, we must make the most of it, especially as it is the theme of an enlightening anecdote. It was built by a Government whose head was the present Chief Justice of the Commonwealth. On the occasion of a subsequent visit to Cooktown, Sir Samuel Griffith was urged to finish the column by the addition of a statue of Cook. He assured those who tendered this plea that the monument was complete without the statue, adding—"I designed it myself, and should know." One of his hearers, who happened to be a professional, responded—"Well, Sir Samuel, I must compliment you on being a good designer of incomplete monuments." Every stranger and pilgrim here will, as a matter of course, put to himself the question—"Is the monument complete in an artistic sense without the effigy of Cook, cut in alabaster?" He should approach the question free from local bias and superior to the dictum of such a confident authority as the Federal Chief Justice. Having contemplated the proportions of the design in respect of the site it adorns, the heights of Grassy Hill, and the pretty vanity of the citizens, he may come to the conclusion that no artistic point is involved, but that, as the statue might represent a salve to the pangs of dwellers in such a remote port, it should be set up forthwith.

Cooktown is rich in public memorials compared with other towns in North Queensland. Charters Towers possesses a solid structure of granite and marble in memory of Victoria the Good; Cairns has similarly honoured a popular doctor; but Cooktown, in addition to the plinth and pedestal some day to be surmounted by a statue, has a neat and impressive memorial to Mrs. Watson, whose tragic and pathetic death on Lizard Island is to be mentioned later on.

Is it not a strange coincidence, too, that the second civilised visitor to this scene—Captain Phillip King—put in specially because of a mishap in the neighbourhood of Cape Tribulation? On the banks of the Endeavour he built a boat to replace that which was swamped and lost in the gale off that turbulent point. No doubt he reflected on the experiences which befell Captain Cook nearly fifty years before. Again, when in 1873, the Dalrymple expedition put
into the river, it, too, suffered from the perils of the sea. When the morning watch was called on board the “Flying Fish,” it was found that she had sprung a leak. The stores were all landed from the cutter, and she was hove down for repairs at the spot where the “Endeavour” had gone through similar treatment. Many a time and oft since has Cooktown proved a safe haven—a harbour of refuge—for weary and anxious mariners.

Cooktown, built heavily on the past. Once, when the Palmer Diggings were flourishing, it was the busiest port in Queensland, perhaps, for the time being, in Australia. During the first four years of its existence gold valued at £3,604,444 passed out to the world from Cooktown, besides an untold quantity sent principally by Chinese. The port now depends upon gold and other minerals from more distant fields, pastoral products, and the splendid facilities it offers for trade with New Guinea.

Cooktown—1,183 miles from Brisbane—has its railway, which at one time bade fair to form a connecting link between the port and the Palmer Goldfield. But it stops on the southern bank of the Laura River, a distance of 67½ miles. Half a mile further on, the river—frequently a wide sandy bed innocent of water, but in the wet season a roaring stream—is spanned by a substantial steel bridge resting on concrete pillars. If ever the Palmer revives, and ever and anon the old goldfield seems to kick in her sleep and yawn, the railway no doubt will hasten over the hills to consummate the alliance so long contemplated and so devoutly wished; and, if not by the straight and narrow track through “Hell’s Gate,” then round the corner by an easier one. The railway traverses the valley of the Endeavour through open country, and then drops over into the watershed of the Normanby. The land is poor, except in patches; but away back from the line there is said to be some of the richest and best watered spots in the State. Sugar-cane was grown near Cooktown, on the McIvor and Annan Rivers, as well as on the Bloomfield, as far back as 1883. Those unaccustomed to the wilfulness of these northern parts of Australia might judge, as they contemplate the dry sandy bed of the Laura, that rain seldom occurs and never in sufficient quantity to relieve the general appearance of aridity. Yet, not very many years ago, Cooktown registered twenty-four inches of rain in twenty-four hours, and in all Cape York Peninsula there was hardly a yard on which a duck could waddle and escape bogging.

Along the line tourists will notice the strange structures raised by white ants. In some parts of the State these insects build mere mounds; in others simple cones; in others the fashionable architecture is the “button” mushroom order. Irregular hillocks—upon which cattle stand, as Moses did on the heights of Pisgah, “to view the landscape o’er”—characterise the tenements of the insects in some western districts; and, again, the stranger is impressed with
their enormous castellated mansions, some like monuments, others like ruined castles, strange and weird in shape. In remoter districts still, obelisks—Cleopatra's needles of red earth—many feet high are constructed. Here the busy creatures build comparatively narrow habitations—steep-pitched, and breaking into more or less slender and elegant pinnacles and spires. In some spots these overcrowded fanes constitute the whole of the scenery. Being remonstrated with on account of the lack of scenery about his forlorn corrugated iron, oven-like shanty, a western landlord said apologetically—"We had some once; but the goat eat it!" There are scenic effects on the Laura plains and flats that no goat could eat. Not long since, in another portion of the State, a resourceful miner got "a splendid prospect of fine gold" from an ant bed. What magnificent possibilities yet remain for the Peninsula, none but the ants know. Was it to the white ant specially that we were bidden to go

Meridian Ant Hill, Cooktown Railway.
(10 feet high.)

The British "three-fold" restrictions for the best of things.

Xeroxy mud...
and consider her ways and be rich? The spires of these particular hills lie almost invariably due north and south, and are, therefore, specified locally and technically by the title meridian.

The British instinct for sport asserts itself even on the banks of the Laura. “Grass-fed” races are promoted, and if the visitor happens upon one of these institutions he will find that the residents possess the faculty of making the best of things, and that they do not take their pleasures sadly.

Ninety miles from Cooktown there are coal measures, and some there are who foretell that coal will do more for the brave old port than ever gold did. To the north-west, up and across the Peninsula, are several mining camps, those of the Coen and Ebaogoolah being permanent prosperous centres, and, if ever another great rush breaks out in North Queensland, it will have, so competent prospectors say, Cooktown as its port again.

All this is apart, perhaps, from the special purpose of this booklet. Cooktown in itself is interesting and an entertaining place—a town with a proud past; a convenient and safe haven for shipping. Grassy Hill, overlooking the still mouth of the Endeavour, and Mount Cook, brooding over the forest and open country to the west, arc fine features of the landscape; and the visitor will find pleasure in becoming acquainted with the scene where Britishers first dwelt in Australia, though, indeed, only for a month. On this spot—call it classic, if you wish—began the history of the civilisation of the continent.

Cooktown possesses splendid facilities for sea bathing, the popular “watering place” being prettily situated and within easy access of the town. The Botanical Gardens, in a picturesque hollow close to the foot of Mount Cook, might be made beautiful, for the situation is ideal, but until something turns up to revive old-time prosperity the citizens needs must be content to leave Nature almost undisturbed; and, thanks be, unspoilt. For a pretty and engaging walk, let the visitor wander along the southern beach and on to the mouth of the Annan River. Alligators infest the mangrove creeks, and possibly the stranger of the proper instincts may have the chance of procuring trophies.

Cooktown is the headquarters of several bêche-de-mer fishermen, who can tell strange stories of the wonders of the deep. Once it was reported that a giant clamshell, over ten feet long and weighing at least a ton, had been found on one of the reefs not far from the port; but the free offer of boats and gear for the capture and transport of the monster of the deep did not lead to business. There are prodigious clams on the reefs—so large as to occasion heavy romances. The best authority on Barrier Reef wonders (Saville-Kent) thus supports the popular opinion as to the strength of clams:—“A foot inadvertently inserted between the gaping valves of a large Tridacna is held with a grip as firm and unyielding as that of the strongest steel mantrap, and, unless the assistance of a comrade with a stout knife or axe or crowbar is at hand, the victim stands
little or no chance of escaping a watery grave. Should such misadventure befall the fisherman when wading, death approaches slowly with the rising of the tide; his fate in this case being a less enviable one than if trapped by the bivalve when diving, under which circumstance drowning ensues rapidly. Several instances of loss of life among the native bêche-de-mer fishers on the Queensland Barrier, through the direct agency of the colossal shellfish, have been reported to the author." A giant clam could no doubt trap and hold a man; but fishers of trout are romantic. How much more so those who toil in these most marvellous and sensational waters?

Low reefs and islets, purely of coral formation, constitute the dominant feature of the fishing grounds south of Cooktown and off Cape Bedford.

At Cape Bedford, to the north, is an aboriginal mission station, controlled by Moravians, where the blacks are kept as nearly as may be in their natural condition. Attendance at church is not compulsory, and none are made formal Christians in opposition to their will.

**The Lizard Island Tragedy.**

SIGHT of the Howick Group "a sad remembrance brings" of the fate of Mrs. Watson, to whose memory one of the public monuments of Cooktown stands. In the early days her husband had a bêche-de-mer station on Lizard Island, and, during his absence, when she and her baby and two Chinamen alone remained on the island, the place was attacked by blacks. One of the Chinamen was killed with spears; but Mrs. Watson drove off her assailants by using firearms, and, with her infant and the surviving Chinaman, put out from Lizard Island in half an iron tank, surely the least seaworthy craft ever voluntarily launched. The tank drifted on to "No. 5 Howick," where the fugitives died from thirst. Mrs. Watson and the baby passed their last moments in the tank, in which their bodies were found. The Chinaman died a few yards away. During the tragic days that preceded her death, Mrs. Watson wrote brief details of her experiences, and these few sentences still bear graphic testimony to one of the most pathetic incidents which a survey of the islands and the coast recall.
The diary found on Lizard Island reads:—

September 27.—Blowing gale of wind, south-east. Ah Sam saw smoke in southerly direction, supposed to be from native camp. Steamer bound north, very close about 6 p.m.; “Corea,” I think.

September 28.—Blowing strong south-east breeze.

September 29.—Blowing strong breeze, south-east, although not so hard as yesterday. No eggs. Ah Leong killed by the blacks over at the farm (a quarter of a mile from her cottage); Ah Sam found his hat, which is the only proof.

September 30.—Natives down on the beach at 7 p.m. Fired off rifle and revolver, and they went away.

October 1.—Natives (four) speared Ah Sam, four places in the right side and three on the shoulder. Got three spears from the natives; saw ten men altogether.

Diary No. 2, found in the tank near Mrs. Watson’s body at No. 5 Howick, continues the sad history, until writing was impossible:—

October 2 (Sunday afternoon).—Left Lizard Island in tank (or the pot in which bêche-de-mer is boiled). Got about three or four miles from the Lizards.

October 4.—Made for the sandbank off the Lizards, but could not reach it; got on a reef.

October 5.—Remained on the reef all day on the lookout for a boat, but saw none.

October 6.—Very calm morning; able to pull the tank up to an island with three small mountains on it. Ah Sam went ashore to try and get water, as ours was done. There were natives camped there, so we were afraid to go far away. We had to wait return of tide. Anchored under the mangroves; got on the reef. Very calm.

October 7.—Made for another island four or five miles from the one spoken of yesterday. Ashore, but could not find any water. Cooked some rice and clam-fish. Moderate south-east breeze. Stayed here all night. Saw a steamer bound north. Hoisted Ferrier’s (her baby boy) white and pink wrap, but did not answer us.

October 8.—Changed anchorage of boat, as the wind was freshening. Went down to a kind of little lake on the same island (this done last night). Remained here all day looking for a boat, but did not see any. Very cold night; blowing very hard. No water.
GROUP OF ABORIGINALS.
October 9.—Brought the tank ashore as far as possible with this morning’s tide. Made camp all day under the trees. Blowing very hard. No water. Gave Ferrier a dip in the sea; he is showing symptoms of thirst, and I took a dip myself. Ah Sam and self very parched with thirst. Ferrier is showing symptoms.

October 10.—Ferrier very bad with inflammation; very much alarmed. No fresh water, and no more milk but condensed. Self very weak; really thought I should have died last night (Sunday).

October 11.—Still all alive. Ferrier very much better this morning. Self feeling very weak. I think it will rain to-day; clouds very heavy; wind not quite so high.

October 12.—No rain. Morning, fine weather. Ah Sam preparing to die. Have not seen him since. Ferrier more cheerful. Self not feeling at all well. Have not seen any boat of any description. No water. Nearly dead with thirst.

Coral Isles and Reefs.

Between Cooktown and Thursday Island the Barrier Reef maintains a fairly regular distance from the coast, with here and there breaches of greater or lesser extent. Its course is marked, not by a continuous wall of coral, but by numerous detached and frequently overlapping reefs, some left bare at low-water spring tides, with numerous sand banks, rocky projections, and island peaks. In the harbour formed by this stupendous breakwater are series upon series of islands, negligently scattered about—some barren and dry, “where no water is”; some entirely covered with mazes of mangroves; other habitable spots wherein one might pass a pleasant enough hermitage, for all the glories of the tropic sea are here outspread. Rainfall is not so regular as in the country to the south of Cooktown, and we miss tropical vegetation.

Few of the islets there are that have not histories—sensational, when not tragic—for on them the advancing wave of civilisation has broken, more or less violently, against the primitive order of things.

North of Cape Bedford there are many scattered islets of granite or other primitive rock formation. Lizard Island, a little over twenty miles off the mainland coast, and about forty-five miles north of Cooktown, is one of the most conspicuous. It rises to a height of 1,167 feet, and the two islands of
North and South Direction, in the vicinity, are of the respective heights of 610 and 567 feet. Rocky Island, ten miles or so due south of the Lizard, is about 600 feet high, and is the chief of three or four outlying islets of granitic formation. A few miles to the north of Lizard Island is the group known as the Howicks. The highest point of the largest of the series does not exceed 180 feet.

Twenty-five miles to the southward of Cape Melville is Noble Island, which steamers pass some two miles to the east, with the Barrier Reef on the weather side. The island is small in area, merely a high and rugged peak, with a sandy beach on the north-west aspect, but it possesses attractions. Wolfram has been found upon it, several tons of ore having been sent to Cairns for sale; a copper lode lies revealed at low tide, and an enterprising party of miners is tunnelling into the peak under circumstances which are at least hazardous. Off Cape Melville is Pipon Island, whence a lighthouse sends a night guiding rays. Rounding the headland, the course enters Princess Charlotte Bay, in which is the Flinders Group—embracing half a dozen rugged islands, the largest of which attains an altitude of 829 feet—the Claremont Isles and others.

In March, 1902, while a great pearl-shelling fleet was in the vicinity of Princess Charlotte Bay, a devastating cyclone occurred. Nearly all of the boats were swamped (some had run before the wind from the reefs and were at anchor) or were driven ashore. Many lives were lost, and a great loss of valuable property occasioned. Blacks who survived the visitation still speak in awesome tones of the great wind that drove sharks and all manner of fish, turtle and dugong, boats, and drowned men far inland.

Some of the islands in this bay and further north are visited by turtle in incredible numbers. A native, wishing to impress his master on the subject, said—"When you come close up, you look out! Hello! You think about stone. No stone; altogether turtle."

Off Cape Direction lies Cook's Restoration Island, and in Lloyd's Bay Night Island—close in to the land.

Still further north are the Forbes, Sir Everard Home, and Sir Charles Hardy Groups. The largest of the islets of the Forbes Group (twenty miles from the coast) scarcely exceeds a mile in diameter, and has a hill summit of 340 feet. The Sir Charles Hardy Group includes three small islands, almost due east of Cape Granville, the highest point (on the northern islet) being 320 feet.
Among the smaller rocky islets which attract attention is one in the immediate neighbourhood of Restoration Island and Cape Direction. Viewed from the north-east, it presents a remarkable resemblance to the semi-submerged head of an Egyptian sphinx, while the outlying flank of Cape Direction represents the contour of a perfect pyramid.

Opposite Cape Granville is the opening through the Barrier which gives access to Raine Island, where there are deposits of guano. The island is only about 1,000 yards long by 500 yards wide, and in no part rises more than twenty feet above high-water mark. When Raine Island was visited, as far back as 1843, “the whole surface was covered with old and young birds. These consisted of frigate birds, boobies, gannets, noddies, and black and white terns, the only land birds being landrails. The frigate birds had a small colony for themselves; their nests consisted of a platform about a foot high, in each of which was one young bird. There were young of all ages—some able to fly, others just hatched and covered with yellowish-white down. Those who could not fly assumed a fierce aspect as we approached, and snapped their beaks at us. The boobies and gannets each formed separate flocks, but few of them had either eggs or young ones. All the rest of the island was covered with the eggs and the young ones of the terns and noddies. The terns’ eggs lay scattered about the ground without any nest, and how each bird found its own again among so many was a marvel to us. The young tern were also of all ages, some fluttering up into the air under our feet, others just hatched. Each one seemed unalterably attached to the spot where it had been hatched, and immediately returned to it on being driven off. We had picked a clean spot on the sand, just on the top of the beach, for our bivouac; but there was one young tern there, a few days old, that we could not keep away from among our things, and the old one kept hovering and sailing and screaming, just above our heads, to look after it. The whole island stank like a fowl roost, and we were covered with bird lice and ticks after sleeping in the sand. We dined upon young boobies and frigate birds and terns’ eggs—the latter were excellent, and the former very good, especially when cooked with a little curry powder. As night closed in, it was curious to see the long lines of flocks of birds streaming from all quarters of the horizon towards the island. The noise was incessant and tiresome. On walking rapidly into the centre of the island, countless myriads of birds rose shrieking on every side, so that the clanging was absolutely deafening, like the roar of some great cataract.” These are the words of Professor Jukes, who was one of the company of H.M.S. “Fly.”

The year after, the “Fly” again visited Raine Island, for the purpose of erecting a substantial and conspicuous beacon that should assist vessels “in
making a straight course for the passage from the outer ocean." But the beacon was not destined to fulfil so universally useful a mission as was originally intended. The intricacies of navigation among the reefs, between the passage and the open channel near the mainland, occasioned so many wrecks and misadventures that the route was abandoned by all but small craft in favour of the much more open, although more remote, one known as the Great North-east or Blyth Channel, adjacent to the coast of New Guinea.

At several stages along the charted navigable route north of Cape Melville, steamers making or hailing from Torres Strait are accustomed, unless it is particularly clear, to anchor for the night. The Cairn Cross Islands, a little coral group midway between Cape Granville and Cape York, is one of these commonly chosen anchoring stations; and, if opportunity occurs, a brief run ashore is sometimes afforded passengers. Here may be seen many of the wonders of the coral-building polyps and various species of those strange creatures known as bêche-de-mer, sea slugs, sea cucumbers or trepang, and so much prized by gourmands, especially Chinese. No less than twenty varieties of this uncouth inhabitant of coral reefs are known to scientists; but not all are edible. Of the commercial kinds obtained in these waters, the largest is the "prickly fish" or "prickly red," which may measure when fully extended four or more feet by four or five inches in diameter. Eighteen inches is the more ordinary length of black and teat fish. Taken off the reef, the bêche-de-mer is boiled briefly, split open, dried, and smoked until in aspect they may be likened to a shrunken charred sausage. In life it is far from a thing of beauty, and the curing process does not add a single persuasive feature. But, cut into cubes and compounded with other ingredients in soup, the bêche-de-mer appeals with a grace peculiarly its own. Many of the leading hotels in Australia present it on the tables, and some connoisseurs prefer it to turtle. To North Queensland bêche-de-mer is important. It brings in something like £20,000 every year.

Of coral there is no end. Twenty-four species of one genus alone have been obtained on the Rocky Island reefs, in addition to a host of unidentified varieties. In addition to coral—in infinite variety of form and colour—and bêche-de-mer and huge clam shells, the visitor to a coral reef may, haply, see blue-eyed sea urchins, shells of lovely form, and wriggling radiates of sacrificial tendencies, and butterfly-like fish, big and little. The gorgeous parrot fish is gregarious. Sometimes a score or more may be left in a lagoon by the ebb tide, and such a scene is thus referred to by the author of "The Great Barrier Reef":—"To stand up to your knees and higher in water with such a shoal of magnificent fish swimming about you is an experience worthy of a journey to the tropics."
Cape York Peninsula.

Narrow as it looks on the map and uninteresting the coast line from the deck of the passing steamer, yet Cape York Peninsula not only glows with the romance that belongs to partially-explored territories, but abounds in entertaining scenery. North from the McDonnell Telegraph Station there is a land of lagoons and streams, along the margins of which vegetation is profuse, varied, and strange. Here is the Australian home of the Pitcher Plant (Nepenthes)—that curious, inanimate, but subtle trap for flies and other insects. Storing in its pitcher a little fluid, analogous to the gastric juice of an animal, the plant digests and assimilates its prey, which it lures to its fate by dainty nectar exposed on the inner surface of a cunning and deceptive lid and on the treacherous lip of the pitcher. The function of the lid is not to act as a trap by covering the mouth of the pitcher, although it is neatly hinged and all that, but by seductive tints to attract flies to the nectar, after sipping which they seek more on the lip, and thence slip or slide into the pitcher to be drowned and in due course digested. Ten varieties of the Australian Pitcher Plant have been classified and named. All belong to the Cape, and rare and lovely orchids and several plants unknown in other parts have been discovered here. The country may be poor, save in patches, from an agriculturist's point of view, but to the botanist in search of something new to science there is no untrodden field, perhaps in the whole of Australia, that offers such pleasing hopes. The East Coast Range, between latitudes 11 and 14, has never been botanically explored. At the heads of the Chester and Massey Rivers and of Rocky Creek are scrubs where "the foot of man has ne'er or rarely trod," and the spots hold secrets that may yet astonish the learned.

Many of the tributary streams and gullies of Rocky Creek, from the level country to the top of the mountains, have been successfully worked for gold; but the hardy nomadic prospector has departed. Now there is but one resident family, who have an ideal home in the depth of the jungle, 1,500 feet above sea-level. The climate is mild in the hot season and invigorating in the cool, for the narrowness of the Peninsula forbids untempered extremes. In this remote spot is a small quartz-crushing mill, driven by an overshot water-wheel—unique in this State, if not in Australia. Does not the fact that water is the motive power for a quartz battery pronounce more emphatically on the character of the country and climate than could paragraph upon paragraph of description? Earnest and venturesome as the prospectors have been, there are blank places yet which ever and anon excite enthusiasm.
To the thousands who live in their homes at ease, the prospector's life in this far-away locality may seem romantic and full to the overflowing of that joy which comes of golden expectations. But the miner also feels "what a sickness of the heart it is which arises from hope deferred," and knows of the perils, the lonesomeness, and toilsomeness of the bush. Some make friends of the blacks, and some keep them at arm's length. One ardent prospector, who has played many a lone hand in the Cape, adopted a strange device to make the blacks keep their distance. Picture a man camped in a lonely spot. His horses are hobbled and grazing contentedly away from the tent. An occasional

“clink, clink” of the hobble chains and a cheery furtive peal of the bells come to his ears as he lies reading by the light of a precious candle. Suddenly there is a frantic clangour of the hobble chains and wild ringing of the bells as the horses plunge and gallop towards the tent. They round up. Heads erect; ears pricked; dilated nostrils emitting loud whistling notes of alarm. At the
first sound of the excitement the light in the tent has been extinguished. In a few minutes the flaps of the tent part, and a ghastly object—apparently a skull glowing with a pale greenish light—obtrudes. There is dead silence as the gruesome lookout seems to peer this way and that, and then a terrific explosion shakes the ground and awakes echoes slumbering deep among the gorges miles away. The horses seem to have expected the report, for by the time its rumbles have died away they are grazing unconcernedly, occasionally lifting their heads in the direction whence they stampeded. To the lone man it is all a little bit of pantomime with a serious moral—phosphorus and dynamite representing his stage effects. Blacks accept the moral and never care to visit him, believing him to be a "debil-debil" of singularly repellant powers. Cape blacks are still unsophisticated, but are not so easily frightened as they were some years ago. It is told that when the first party of mounted white men came suddenly upon a camp of myalls, one of the horses began bucking furiously, and at last unseated its rider. The whole camp fled precipitately, with a dismal howl, for a creature that could bound about and then break in two sent far beyond all the uncanniness their limited imaginations ascribed to the worst of "debil-debils."

The most ambitious denizens of this little known land of the Cape are the white ants. Slowly and silently the myriad workers erect monuments that are absolutely astounding. One measured by tape line was 28 feet 6 inches high, and others are said to exceed even that. On the sections, north and south, of McDonnell, the labourers on the telegraph line are obliged to break down the ant hills when clearing the track. Scientists, who tell us that our "white ants" are not ants, refer to this particular species of termites as *Entermes pyriformis*.

Another curious natural feature of the Cape country is that the bark of the Quinine-tree (*Alstonia constricta*) is in nearly every case split on the western aspect, leaving a wide gap bare to the wood. With the ant hills running north and south and the quinine-tree gaping to the west, a compass is almost superfluous in these parts.

Then, if one had the time to pass over the West Coast Range—

Across the hills and far away,
Beyond their utmost purple rim—

he will find "greater wonders there"—broad and deep inlets that have never floated anything more seaworthy than a black's canoe; cliffs of ironstone and conglomerate facing the sea, with fresh water gushing out on the beaches at low tide from their bases, as it does at quiet Cardwell and still quieter Dunk Island. Rivers are so plentiful here that names seem to have run out, so they call one the Seventh—that is, the seventh south of Jardine River. Inland are
areas of conglomerate and sandstone, wherein lies the hope of yet another great alluvial goldfield as sensational as the Palmer; tablelands covered with magnificent timber—messmate and bloodwood as straight as gun-barrels; immense open lagoons, the homes of myriads of waterfowl; treacherous tea-tree swamps; and narrow belts of dense scrubs where the pitcher plants revel.

The tourist who wishes to see these parts thoroughly must, however, be a man of leisure and substance. He must own or hire a cutter and sail from inlet to inlet, from river to river, and be prepared to spend many weeks in inland excursions before he can assert that he has exhausted the novelties of this odd and awkward point of North Queensland.

**Torres Strait.**

To the generosity of the English is attributable the fact that the name of the Spanish navigator Torres was given to the water which separates New Guinea from Australia. Starting from Peru, he entered the Strait in 1606. He was not aware that the high hills he sighted, near what is now known as Cape York, formed part of an island continent. The first navigator to pass through the Straits knowing that the waters separated New Guinea from New Holland was Captain Cook, in 1770. Amidst the countless dangers, seen and unseen, which exist in these waters, are several channels leading from the Pacific Ocean to the Arafura Sea; but only two are known to the nautical world as safe for navigation. Nature has provided but a very narrow gateway for the trade between Australia and the East.

Knowledge of this prompted the Imperial and the Australian Governments to fix upon Thursday Island as a suitable place for the secure storage of reserves of coal. The fort that guards the coal depot commands also the Prince of Wales Channel. So revolutionary are the developments of destructive science, that, though it seems but yesterday the fortifications of Thursday Island were said to render the Strait impregnable, these defences are now pronounced obsolete. Upon Goode Island, a grim, granitic mass—more bare and barren than the Aden of Australia—may yet be thrown the responsibility of warder of the West. Then, if ever "grim-visaged war" threatens Australia, it will find one of the continent's gateways slammed in its face.

Perhaps it is not generally known that these northern shores of Australia were the first to be visited by Europeans, and, moreover, that here the first discovery of gold was made. A party of Portuguese fisherman, driven from
Timor by the north-west monsoon, landed somewhere on the coast. When the monsoon changed, they returned to Timor, carrying with them gold-besprinkled quartz. A more efficiently equipped prospecting party was despatched; but the locality where the fishermen obtained their specimens was never found. Was this the first "wild cat" venture, too—founded on one of those little romances ever the privilege of disciples of the gentle art? All that we have of definiteness of the incident is the name "Arafura Sea," which is derived from the title given to the spot at which the prospecting party landed.

The seat of the first Government in Torres Strait was at Somerset, on the shores of Albany Pass. Tides in the narrow channel were too strong for safe anchorage, and a change was made to Thursday Island. But Albany Pass, which separates a group of islets from the mainland, remains as one of the prettiest scenes along this part of the coast.

As far as we know (for there are evidences of most disastrous wrecks in these waters long ago), the loss of the "Quetta" was the most tragic event of the kind that the coast of Cape York Peninsula has witnessed. Steaming along on the night of the 28th February, 1890, the vessel struck a pinnacle of rock and sank in a few minutes, 123 lives being lost. The fateful rock, a sharp monolith, the existence of which had never been previously dreamt of, is covered to a depth of 16 feet 6 inches at low-water spring tides. It lies between Albany and Adolphus Island, off the northernmost part of the Cape. Not for a fortnight after the wreck was the rock discovered, so small is its extent; but it is now accurately buoyed and charted.

Realising the dangers to vessels in these reef-strewn waters, the Government, in years gone by, chose Booby Island as a fitting place for the storage of provisions for the use of castaways. Booby Island was probably chosen for this purpose because it is a barren rock rising abruptly from the sea, and too far from the inhabited islands for the natives to visit and pilfer the stores. The oldest record in the cave seems to be "H.M.S. 'Salamander,' 1845." More than one shipwrecked crew found succour at this depot, and were there picked up by passing vessels. Some years ago, when searching for bêche-de-mer on what is now known as Boot Reef, some natives came upon the ironwork of an old wooden ship. A careful search of the surroundings being made, an old cannon much incrusted with marine growths was found. But the owner of the bêche-de-mer fleet had a greater surprise in store for him, for near the wreck was a pile of old Spanish dollars, bearing dates varying from 1782 to 1821. Although immersed in water for so many years, the majority of the dollars were in a remarkably fine state of preservation, and but little worn down. Those, however, which formed the outside edges of the pile were corroded, in a few
cases nothing but a ring of silver being left of the old dollar. For obvious reasons, the value of the treasure never transpired; but it was stated by many that the silver was worth about £3,000.

Approaching half a century ago, the bêche-de-mer fisher began to work his way northward, and the numerous coral reefs which are awash at low tides were found to produce rich harvests. About this period, the nates working for a bêche-de-mer fisher on Warrior Island occasionally gathered a few pearl-shell. Some were taken to Sydney, where their value was learned. Not long afterwards, a sailing vessel left Warrior Island for Sydney with 40 tons of pearl-shell as cargo. From that moment Torres Strait became a field for speculation for Sydney merchants, who formed several companies and sent fleets of small vessels to gather the mother-of-pearl oysters. Pearl-shell was plentiful, and dividends were large. One small channel alone, known as the Friday Island Passage, about two and a-half miles long by an average width of less than three-quarters of a mile, is said to have yielded over £10,000 worth of shell.

Nowadays, the pearl-shell industry represents a money value to the State of about £50,000 per annum. Its headquarters are at Thursday Island—thirty miles north-west of Cape York. Pearl-shells are found weighing as much as six, seven, or even eight pounds the pair. The best is worth about £170 per ton, but the value fluctuates. Not long since, when the ladies of New York set the fashion of wearing immense buttons of pearl-shell, the price ran gloriously up. In addition to the shell, these oysters produce pearls—not as a regular habit or custom, but as a kind of happy thought. Pearls are the unearned increment of the industry. Mother-of-pearl shell is primarily fished for; the pearls being sometimes appropriated by the diver or the boat’s crew without respect to the partiality of the owner of the fleet for such baubles.

**Thursday Island.**

PORT KENNEDY (the official title of the town situated on Thursday Island) is the northernmost outpost of Australia. The island is of granite formation, presenting a bold and rugged appearance from the sea. Its fort commands the narrow channel through which ships that approach Australia from the north-west pass. The population of the district (which includes several of the adjacent islands) is about 3,000, and more than half is engaged in the pearl-shell and bêche-de-mer fisheries. No fewer than twenty-four different nationalities were enumerated in a recent census, so that the tourist who wishes to study the races of mankind will find here the most varied field of research in the Commonwealth.
One world-wide wanderer said recently of Thursday Island that it was a place where no man would ever think of going to live unless compelled to do so for the sake of his daily bread. "The town itself is a wretched tin-roofed little place, dry and arid as the Sahara, and without rainfall." Of course this is libellous in the extreme. Better and more populous places than Thursday Island are dependent upon the vagaries of rainfall. One visitor may see the island green, and gushing with creeks; another may have to be content with a meagre allowance of water. Residents enjoy excellent health as a rule, and, being on one of the world's highways, are important and self-possessed. They command a great and unique trade, and the tourist will find many objects of interest in and about the town, while the islands about abound in wonderful natural phenomena. In a locality like Cape York, only 640 miles from the Equator, the atmospheric temperature may be expected to be high, and the residents know what to expect. At the other extremity of the continent, thermometrical anticipations are idle and utterly illusive. All here are accustomed to a little heat in the warm part of the day, and house and costume themselves appropriately. Barbaric pearls are thrown to them as a sort of lovely compensation, though the times have gone by when a whisky bottle full might have been bought for £2—just about the value of the whisky! 

**The Gulf of Carpentaria.**

ALTHOUGH beyond the prime purpose of these presents, brief reference may be made to the two remaining ports of North Queensland. Leaving Thursday Island, the vessel enters the peculiar waters of the Gulf of Carpentaria, peculiar from the fact that there is but one tide during the twenty-four hours. Apart from this, there is little of interest in the Gulf of Carpentaria, save the direct effect that the winds of heaven have upon the depths of its waters. During the season of the north-west monsoons, the water is ample and deep; but when the wind blows with any force from the opposite direction, navigation close along the shores is difficult, and the rivers are almost emptied. The shores are flat and uninteresting; the voyager sees an occasional group of trees on the horizon, as though they were growing out of the water, and an occasional patch of mangroves indicates the location of the low-lying land. There is a Moravian Aboriginal Mission Station on the Batavia River, and another large area reserved for them on the Mitchell. The next streams of any consequence which flow into the Gulf are the Archer, the Gilbert, and the Norman—navigable, like the Batavia, for several miles.
Normanton.

As the Norman River is approached, the water becomes shallow, a bar about six miles in breadth having to be crossed. There is high land on the eastern bank, and for some few miles up a splendid reach of deep water, the low-lying country being covered with mangroves. Until Red Bluff—the abrupt termination of an ironstone ridge, about a mile from the river bank—is reached, the landscape is monotonous. This is about twelve miles from the mouth, and the Bluff is separated from the river by low-lying swampy country. Steamer of 800 tons, having navigated the flats at the entrance, during the continuance of the north-west monsoons, safely ascend to within twenty miles of the chief town of the Gulf; but when the prevailing wind comes from the opposite quarter the river is closed and steamers must anchor "outside." Large steamer bring up at Double Island, the breeding place of flocks of cranes and myriads of flying foxes. Thence the river narrows, with a dense growth of mangroves on each bank. About ten miles from town, Baffle Group—so named because of the intricate channels among several low islets—is reached, and then the country gradually undergoes a pleasant change, the obtrusive mangrove giving place to timber indicative of land more suited to the occupation of man. But the navigable character of the river is affected by the presence of ledges of rock—one four miles from town, and the other at the Margaret and Jane landing, about a mile ahead. All vessels, excepting those of very shallow draft, have to be navigated with the utmost care thence to the town landing, for the river is intersected by numerous dykes of rock. From the Margaret and Jane landing up abreast of the town, the river is of good width; but it cannot be said that the place is very picturesque. For the most part, the town is situated on a red ironstone ridge, about a quarter of a mile from the river. Although but 26 miles from the mouth of the river, the distance the steamer travels is fully fifty miles.

Normanton contains several notable buildings, besides large stores, banks, &c., and is the port for Croydon—next to Charters Towers, the wealthiest gold-field in the North.

The Utmost Port.

Burketown, the utmost port, is situated on the Albert River, which empties into the Gulf of Carpentaria between the Leichhardt and the Nicholson. The Albert is the only navigable river of the three. The Nicholson and Leichhardt play no unimportant part in the welfare of Burketown. Both rivers run through excellent pastoral country. The visitor will
find the place not entirely devoid of historical interest. He may remember that, as the good ship “Firefly” picked her way among the numerous coral reefs which abound in these seas in 1861, the explorer Landsborough with his gallant little band found themselves hard and fast on a patch in this locality. Landsborough had left Brisbane for the Albert River, whence he proposed to set out in search of the ill-fated Burke and Wills party. Captain Norman, of H.M.S. “Victoria,” was in the same waters about the time, also bound for the Albert for the purpose of establishing a depot to succour the various search parties which at this period were starting out to discover the fate of the missing explorers. Captain Norman succeeded in getting the “Firefly” off the reef, and, after many trials and tribulations, towed her into the Albert River. This was her last voyage, as all that now remains of her marks a bend in the river, two miles below the site of the town, called after the vessel the Firefly Bend. Captain Norman landed Landsborough and his party, with twenty-five horses, at the spot where he formed his depot.

A tree marked “L” with the broad-arrow, “Dig 2ft. N.,” or rather with scars to be so interpreted, still remains as evidence of Landsborough’s visit.

In May, 1865, Mr. J. G. MacDonald chartered the “Jacknell Packet” at Sydney, engaged men, and loaded her with supplies to form the new settlement on the Albert River. He landed on the site subsequently surveyed by the Government and named Burketown.

Burketown, neither populous nor great, occupies a portion of the edge of a spacious plain—

The plain was grassy, wild, and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air.

The Albert River, flowing between mangrove-fringed banks, is great in the eyes of fishermen, and is the home of many healthy alligators, which congregate chiefly in the vicinity of the meatworks. Six miles off is a lake, at which water-fowl afford excellent sport, while all the plain is the parading place of turkeys.

The town comprises a post office, police station, a public school, a bank, good stores, hotels, &c.

The inhabitants are cheerful and lively; endowed with sporting instincts, and, living as they do within easy reach of the far-famed “Plains of Promise,” have enthusiastic opinions as to the future of the place.

Burketown may not become a fashionable resort for tourists in search of the picturesque, but as the outlet for a wide extent of rich pastoral country, visited by a more regular rainfall than districts further south, must ever be an important port.

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The Air seems twice purified.

Sir Thomas McIlwraith said that the Climate of the Herberton Hills reminded him of the Highlands of Scotland. (See Description in this Book.)

ATHERTON is the most happily situated town in Queensland, enjoys a salubrious climate, and is the ideal spot for recuperation of health and rest. The roads for driving or riding are excellent, and the scrub lands on either side contain nearly every variety of timber to be found in Queensland, together with an abundant tropical growth, which is the feature of the District, the soil being the richest in the Commonwealth.

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