

THE HIGHLANDS OF LAKE ST. CLAIR.

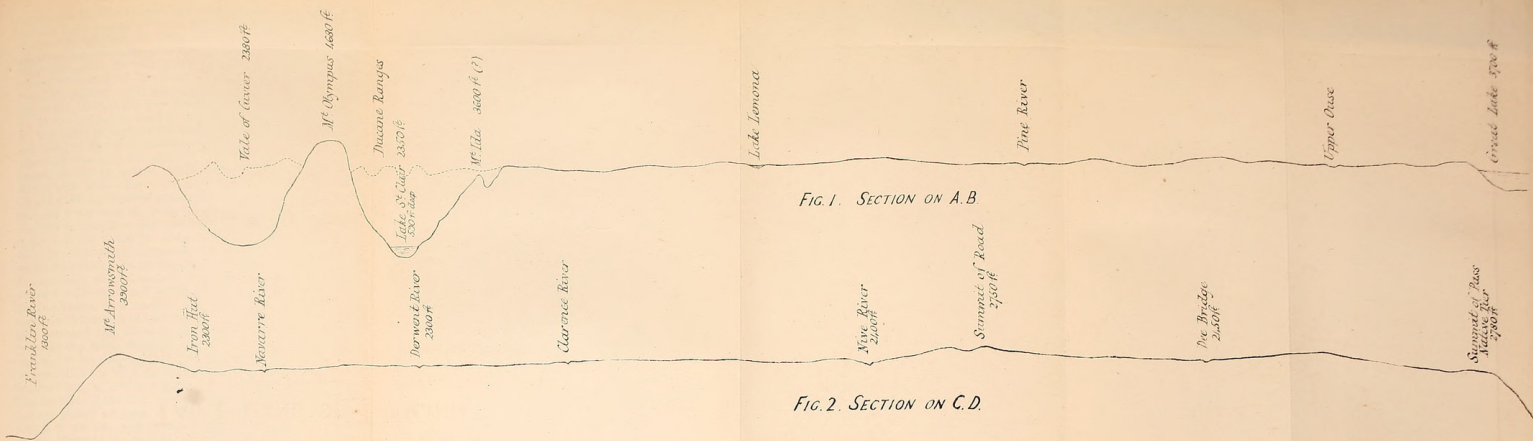
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In the following paper an effort is made to describe the topographical features of Mounts King William and Olympus, and to touch upon the magnificent scenery which surrounds these grand highlands of western Tasmania.

After the traveller crosses the Clarence River, some ten miles from Marlborough and draws near Lake St. Clair, he emerges from the forest upon the button-rush plains on the north of Mount Charles, and first becomes aware of the altered character of the scenery awaiting him as he journeys towards the west. In addition to the bold mural outlines, characteristic of the greenstone districts of the island, and which are here also a marked feature in the landscape, peaked mountains rise up grandly here and there among the adjacent bluffs, and add a new and grand feature to the country. Thus, from the plains near Mount Charles, the peaks of Mount Byron and Mount Hugel come into view, and, mingling with the precipitous bluffs of Mount Olympus and King William, form a view not easily forgotten.

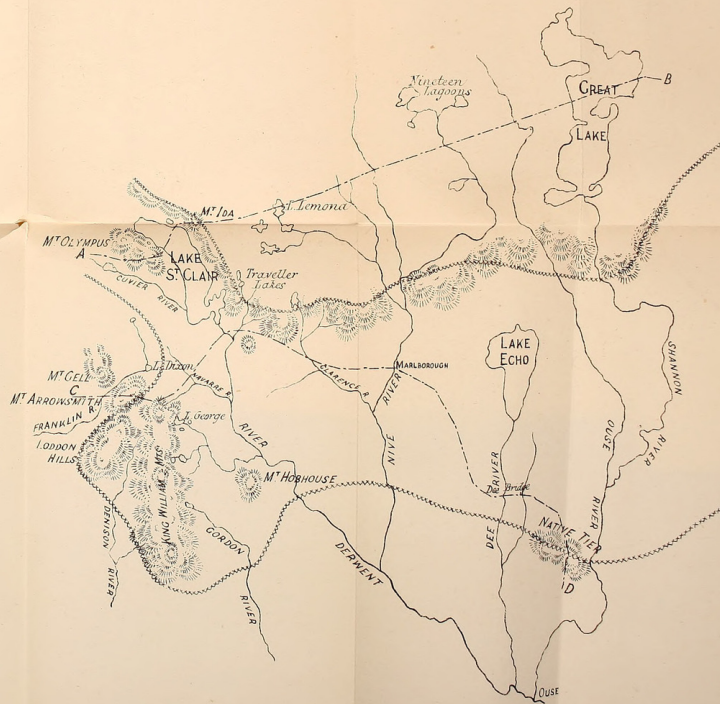
The newly formed track, which it is to be hoped will at a distant date become the main road from Hobart to the West Coast, passes to the north of Mount Charles, a forest-clad tier with an altitude of about 3,300 feet, and on the north side of the flat ground over which the track passes is another range, which is in reality the southern edge of the higher Lake plateau running westward till stopped by the gorge which contains Lake St. Clair. The small Traveller Lakes lie a little way back on this upland, and discharge their waters by the small and rocky Traveller River into the Derwent, about two miles from the lake. The road crosses the Traveller just beyond Mr. Orr's hut on a substantial bridge, about a mile from the junction of the stream with the river, and in another half mile or so the latter is reached, where a fine wooden bridge gives access to the "Wild West." The elevation of this bridge, and in fact of the whole track from Marlborough to King William, allowing for rise and fall, is about 2,300 feet. Between the Traveller and the Derwent is a small button-rush plain, bounded by the characteristic clumps of small gums, locally called "sapling banks," and studded here and there with those gaunt sentinels, frost killed gums, which so often mar the beauty of the Lake Country. From here, and nowhere is there a better standpoint than the little bridge over the Traveller, a grand view is





SKETCH MAP AND SECTIONS
OF THE
SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE UPPER AND LOWER PLATEAUS
FORMING THE
TABLE LAND OF TASMANIA

General boundaries of the Plateaus, thus-~~~~~



obtained of Mount Olympus and the jagged Du Cane Ranges, with the sharp peak of Byron in the centre ; and then looking due west beyond the Derwent, the whole length of Mount Hugel and its bold ridge, with the smoother outline of Mount Rufus, completes the panorama of the mountains in the immediate vicinity of the Lake. I regret that my lamented friend Mr. Sprent, under whose able leadership we made our trip to the West at the time I write of, did not see this view, for he was looking forward to it with considerable interest. We had, however, trudged the whole way from the hospitable homestead of Bronté in constant driving snow showers, which effectually obscured the country, and though the weather cleared up as we neared the lake, the mountains were still clothed with mist. Every now and then the clouds would lift and suddenly disclose some unknown crag or peak to our eyes, and many were the conjectures among the party as to what this mountain or that could be, for the study of our charts did not assist us much so long as our observations were limited to single mountains standing up here and there among the clouds. In the afternoon the sun shone out and the mountains cleared entirely, but by that time we had crossed the Derwent, and under the guidance of Mr. Orr, of Mount Charles, had reached the shores of the lake, the storm-tossed beauties of which fully occupied our attention. After crossing the Derwent, the country lying between the river and the King William Range is perfectly flat, and consists, for the main part, of two large button-rush plains, the first called the Derwent, and divided from the second, or Navarre Plain, by a belt of bush. A forest-clad ridge starts from the lake about three miles to the north and impinges on these plains, an arm of which runs behind the ridge through to the lake, and by which there is a track from the Navarre Plains to the Boat House. The western face of this ridge is a picturesque precipice about 300 feet high, called the "Bedlam Walls," and of which I am told an effective painting was made by a lady traveller some years ago. On emerging from the bush fringing the west bank of the Derwent, and issuing on to the plains, a grand view is obtained of the King William Mountain, which rises boldly up like a solitary monarch from the surrounding country. From this point of view the three peaks, which form the northern face of the mountain, blend into a continuous basaltic ridge standing out of a series of beautiful forest-clad slopes, which unite at their base with the bush skirting the Navarre Plains. To the south the Derwent Plain stretches away for miles like a yellow sea of grass, fringed on all sides with forest, and backed up by the Mount Hobhouse Range, between which and King William there is a wide gap in the landscape,

formed by the level country at the head of Gordon Valley. After reaching the Navarre Plain, the new track diverges towards the south with a view to avoid the damp ground, but in dry weather there is a short cut across the plain to the bridge erected over the Navarre, a pretty little stream which rises in the slopes of Mount Rufus and flows eastward into the Derwent abreast of the Wentworth Hills. A walk of a couple of miles more, with the bold bluffs of King William towering up in front, takes the traveller to the Iron Hut under the mountain, and which has been for the past few years the depôt for provisioning the road party engaged in making the track to the King River Gold-fields.

In this district the gum forest is chiefly stringy bark (*E. obliqua*), and between the Hut and base of the mountain there is a small button-rush plain, traversed by a little stream which runs into the Navarre. The first beech groves met with on this route, except those which clothe the western shores of Lake St. Clair, are in the vicinity of the Iron Hut. About a mile before reaching the hut, a clump of deep green foliage is observed between the track and Mount Rufus, which is soon discovered to be a grove of beeches (*F. Cunninghami*), and thenceforward to the West Coast this tree is more or less prominent. At the foot of Mount King William, and at the farther margin of the little button-rush plain just alluded to, is a splendid beech grove, in which I measured a monarch of the forest which was 27 feet in girth. Perhaps most of the Fellows of this Society have wandered through the beech forests of the West of Tasmania, but there may be some whose acquaintance with this tree is limited to the solitary specimens met with here and there in the dells of Mount Wellington. To such, I may be permitted to say, that on suddenly entering one of these beautiful woods, ignominiously called "myrtle scrubs," the traveller is translated in an instant to the cool, shady, and romantic forests of Southern or Central Europe. All around stand weird and moss-covered trunks of lofty stature, whose gigantic lichen-clad limbs stretch out among the feathery beech foliage, upon which, as the wind sways the branches overhead, fitful gleams of sunlight play for an instant, and then fall on the massive decaying logs which lie strewn among the ferns. For the most part an absolute stillness pervades these verdant solitudes, as scarcely a bird-note enlivens their depths, and the usual animals of the Australian bush seem to be absent from them.

So far, my remarks on the country through which the West Coast tract runs have been introductory, and relate to our journey to King William from Marlborough on the 18th and 19th of February last. On the morning of the 20th we started for the King River and continued our journey along the new

track over Mount Arrowsmith across the beautiful Franklin and Collingwood Rivers, and along the picturesque stream called the Cardigan, to a point ten miles from the King River. The next day Mr. Piquenit and myself, wishing to see more of the beautiful scenery in the vicinity of Lake St. Clair, and taking no interest in the King River mines, returned to King William while the rest of the party continued their journey to the West. A warm wind blew over the endless gorges lying between the Frenchman and Mount Arrowsmith and suddenly turned to rain, which continued more or less all the next day, and it was not until the morning of the 23rd that the weather was clear enough to ascend Mount King William. The range, which I shall presently describe, towers up in the form of three bold rounded bluffs connected by two saddles, immediately behind the Hut.

A shepherd of Mr. King's, who owns sheep on the Navarre Plains, was my guide, and making an early start we ascended a long spur which holds a sloping button-grass plain or field about the middle and runs out to the east of the eastern peak. Passing up along the edge of the plain we entered the low bush and scrub which always surrounds the greenstone cliffs of these mountains, and climbing up through it soon reached the rocky slope forming the northern face of the peak. Selecting this for our attack so as to avoid the precipitous southern face, we shortly gained the summit after a walk of two and a-half hours from the Hut which, however, included a halt of three-quarters of an hour under the precipice for a sketch of Lake George and the Gordon Valley. The altitude of this peak, taken with the aneroid, was 4,100 feet, and that of the second peak, to which we climbed directly afterwards, about 60 feet lower. From this end of the King William Range one of the finest mountain views that can be imagined is obtained. It may be said to be a complete panorama, for although it is intercepted to the southward by the plateau of the mountain itself, yet this is so beautiful that instead of being an obstruction it forms a lovely foreground to the scene. I may therefore digress to give a short description of the scenery.

Looking first to the north, close at hand and just beyond the moor of Mount Arrowsmith, rises up the picturesque Mount Gell, which is backed by the lofty Eldon Ranges, and skirted on the east by the romantically wooded valley of the Upper Franklin, running into the heart of the mountains near the Coal Hill, and holding in its depths the pretty lakes, Dixon and Undine. Flanking this valley on the east are the heights of Mounts Rufus and Hugel, towering up beyond which come the crags of Mounts Olympus and Byron, with a back-

ground of lofty peaks, one of which is the Cradle Mountain and another probably Barn Bluff.

Turning to the east, Lake St. Clair is seen embosomed in the forest beneath Olympus, and then follows a long stretch of broken upland until the eye rests on Mount Hobhouse and Wylds Craig, both fine pinnacles from this point of view. Immediately beneath are the wide plains of the Upper Gordon with the secluded Lakes George and Rufus at the foot of the range. Due south, beyond Lake Rufus, is a labyrinth of peaked mountains, some of which belong to the almost unknown Denison and adjacent ranges, and further still to the south in the dim blue distance stands up a lofty pinnacle which may possibly be Mount Wedge. Then, before we look to the West, lies immediately at our feet the grand upland moor or plateau of the range itself, crowned with the heights of King William the Second and Third, which stand out from the hills and vales and rocky knolls and craggy ledges of the moor like huge billows from a stormy sea, while near at hand lies a little mirror-like placid lake as a glistening gem on the mountain-top. Finally, to the westward is reserved for the eye the grandest sight of all; the mighty Frenchman, from whose jagged summits the huge Cap stands up into the sky like a giant sentinel looking to the south over all the mountain wilderness of the Gordon. Further beyond, towards the ocean, are the bold outlines of Mount Lyell and the West Coast Range, which carry the eye northward to the Eldon Range and thus complete the panorama.

To return to the King William range, it may be described as a mountain plateau built up to a height of from 2,000 to 2,500 feet from the plains surrounding it on the north and east, while its western face descends suddenly into a deep, densely clothed gorge, dividing it from the Loddon Hills, and running southwards towards the head waters of the Denison. I cannot help thinking, and Mr. Piguénit agreed with me, that on our recent maps both the Loddon Hills and Loddon River are incorrectly laid down, and that instead of running westward, their direction should be more southerly; in this case the Loddon would arise in the western slopes of the hills of that name, and the waters draining the deep gorge just mentioned would flow south to the Denison. Along the eastern base of the range there is quite a system of small lakes lying ensconced beneath the precipices, exactly after the manner of the Scotch tarns and Welsh mountain pools. They are kept filled by the melting snow in the winter and spring and the abundant soakage from the plateau in the summer. Beneath the eastern peak of the northern face of the range is situated Lake George, which has the shape of a sea-horse (*Hippocampus*),

and with which is grouped three other smaller sheets, two at the tail of the horse, and the third upon the ridge between its back and the next group. This follows at a distance of a mile and a-half, and consists of four lakes, the two largest of which lie in a deep hollow, beneath King William the Second. The larger of the two is Lake Rufus, which is too far to the south in the map; it is a fine sheet some two miles round, I should say, but is not so pretty as the smaller, circular lake, lying higher into the gorge. This lake is without a name, and I bestowed on it that of "Lake Anne." The waters of Lake George and Lake Rufus both drain into the Derwent by the Guelph River, a small stream meandering across the plain, and joining the queen of Tasmanian rivers north of Mount Hobhouse. A slight rise in the plain towards the south forms the water-shed between the Derwent and the Gordon, which latter rises in the next system of lakes, defined by the name of Lake Richmond, and lying close beneath the range, and between King William the Second and Third. I did not explore the plateau far enough to the south to view Lake Richmond, and cannot say whether it is a solitary sheet or not. It is probably fed by a stream descending into it from the plateau above, or it could scarcely furnish enough water for the source of such a stream as the Gordon.

The waters of the upper lake on the plateau drain in the opposite direction towards the west, descending into the deep gorge towards the Denison, and are probably the source of that river. This little lake has a circular form, with low shores, except at one spot, and is about three-quarters of a mile in circumference. It is moderately shallow, and at one end (the north-west) there is a tiny islet, to which access can be gained by stepping on the rocks between it and the mainland. On this isle we broke fast, and erected a little cairn in memory of our visit. The water is inhabited by the small shrimp (*Palæmon* sp.), some of which we caught among the stones. The springs on the moor just beneath the peaks of the northern face of the range supply this lakelet. A small stream is formed there, which, on its way to the water, flows through a pretty pool some 80 yards long, and overhung on one side by a perpendicular rock face.

The sides of the range on the north and west are clothed with gum forest, tolerably open in places, in others thick, with ti-tree scrub, and here and there groves of the handsome *Richea pandanifolia*. This palm grows to a height of 30 feet, and when seen mingled with the surrounding vegetation has quite a tropical appearance.

On the slopes of the mountain above Lake George, the *Hakea*, a pine-like tree of small dimensions flourishes, and

grows as high as the base of the crags at the edge of the plateau. The deep gorge between King William and the Loddon Hills is clothed, for the most part, with beech forest, and here and there I could distinguish isolated pines, probably *Arthrotaxis*, *Seleginoides*. This valley of the Denison will probably be found to contain valuable beds of timber, which no doubt improve southwards towards the Gordon. The most accessible route by which to reach the valley of the Denison would probably be from the Iron Hut over the King William plateau, and keeping on the top of the range, which affords easy walking, to descend from the south-west edge into the valley. By adopting this route the lie of the valley, with its spurs and gorges, could be well viewed, and a track chosen before descending from the heights. I speak here under correction, not knowing what the alternative route between the Gordon valley and the Denison, round the south end of King William, is like; but even supposing the gap between this and the next unnamed range afforded easy access to the Denison, there would be a wide stretch of forest to traverse before the river was reached, and one would have the disadvantage of keeping entirely to the lower level—often a fatal mistake in bush exploration.

To refer now to the upland of King William, with its curious Alpine vegetation, so different from anything seen in the lowlands of Tasmania, the plateau itself, though a much narrower tract than the great moor of Ben Lomond has, when viewed from the northern peaks, a singularly beautiful aspect. Bold bluffs tower along its eastern edge above the valley and lakes beneath; and on its surface rocky hills, picturesque hollows, studded with shining pools, and rocky knolls, with here and there a precipitous torr, all succeed one another as the eye looks southwards towards the heights of King William the Second and Third, which close in the view. The vegetation differs slightly from that of Ben Lomond moor, in being mingled here and there with dwarf specimens of the grass palm (*R. scoparia*). The curious "yellow bush" (*Orites acicularis*) and the dark-green leaved *Richea Gunnii* are the largest bushes which one meets with on the moor, but round the little lake we saw several specimens of the *Hakea lissorperma*, about the height of a man. In the swampy spots the pretty mountain artichoke (*Celmissia longifolia*) flourishes, and affords good stepping ground on the oozy moor. I did not notice the curious tabular moss (*Abrotanella fosterioides*) in such abundance as on other mountain tops. On Ben Lomond it spreads out like a green table, beautifully patched or mapped out, so to speak, with pale greenish-white tracts on the dark green ground of the larger

portion of the plant, and rises up here and there into round, pudding-like masses, reaching a diameter of two feet or more. I have often spoken of this curious moss-like substance to people, and find that it is very little known even among those who are mountain climbers. On King William I found it paving the damp places here and there, in about the same abundance as on Mount Wellington.

The same characteristic vegetation probably obtains along the whole plateau to its southern edge, with no doubt here and there a boulder-strewn tract or "ploughed field," interrupting the green clothing of the surface, and clumps of stunted gums lining the lower edges of the plateau. Above Lake George is a grand perpendicular precipice of columnar greenstone; it shows out well from the plains to the eastward on coming from the Derwent, and I walked across to the edge of the moor to examine it. On arriving within about 40 feet of the edge, my companion suddenly startled me with "Look out, sir," and on looking down we found we were just on the point of stepping into a crevice varying from 18 inches to 3 feet in width, and which was cut down like the gash of a knife for a vast depth into the bowels of the mountain. It was partly overgrown with vegetation and was consequently a most dangerous spot. A momentary survey of the spot revealed the fact that the grand precipice in front of us had parted from the main mass of the mountain, and that the yawning cleft at our feet would some day be the means of sending it into the valley beneath. On stepping across the crevice, after endeavouring to sound its depth by throwing stones into it, we gained the edge of the precipice, and there found that at perhaps no very distant period a mighty downfall of tens of thousands of tons of rock had been precipitated into the valley beneath and had left exposed the perpendicular face, on the brink of which we stood. The cleft that we had just stepped over was the process repeating itself and is, in fact, a characteristic of all basaltic mountain tops.

But little animal life was seen on the plateau; quadrupeds we saw none, though probably kangaroo, wallaby, and wombat, find their way up to it from the low country. As regards birds, the Tasmanian Honey-eater, *Meliornis Australasiana*, was seen in flocks among the low honey-bearing bushes; the Hill Crow-shrike, *Strepera Arguta*, was also seen flying across the moor, and a few Rock Swallows, *Petrochelidon nigricans* skimmed here and there past us. A pair of white Goshawks, *Astur Novæ Hollandiæ*, soared high above the mountain and disappeared into the Denison Valley, where they were no doubt breeding. My companion caught sight of a small brown snake under the peak upon which the

shattered trig. station is built, but I could scarcely gather from his description to which species it belonged.

Before quitting my notice of this locality, a few words must be said about the now tolerably well-known Mount Arrowsmith, which appears to have given its name to the hut used as a provision depôt, which useful edifice is, however, more closely connected with King William than Arrowsmith. When viewed from the top of King William, Arrowsmith is no mountain at all, but merely the raised termination of the lake plateau lying between Mount Gell and King William, and divided from the former by the magnificent myrtle-clad gorge through which the Franklin River issues from Lake Dixon. The plateau rises gradually from the hut up to the Arrowsmith moor, which is broken up into rocky eminences and picturesque schistose torrs, standing up from the button-grass wastes around them; between these the path to the West Coast winds till it reaches the edge of the moor, and then, suddenly turning towards the south-west, drops about 2,000 feet into the valley of the Franklin. At the point where the descent commences a sublime view of the "Frenchman," with the Cap towering up in the centre, is suddenly disclosed. Seen from this point on the highlands I cannot call to mind any mountain of corresponding height which is so grand in the character of its outline as the "Frenchman," and a trip to Mount Arrowsmith from Hobart would be worth taking, were it only to obtain one glance at the magnificent range as seen from that point. I am told that the view of the mountain is excessively grand from the south-west, but from that elevation, when seen from among the valleys, it cannot be so comprehensive as from the highlands to the eastward.

I now come to a closer notice of the beautiful lake and its mountainous surroundings, the notable features of which are Mounts Olympus and Ida.

Lake St. Clair is about eleven miles long, and two wide at its broadest part; its shores are, on the whole, for the most part unindented, the "Lake Basin" at the south end being the only bay of consequence. Its eastern shore is flanked by a long unbroken tier (the edge of the great lake plateau), which descends steeply to the water's edge and is covered beneath its cliffs with gum forest. Near the north of the lake a bold, conical offshoot of this tier occurs, as Mount Ida, which is divided from the main body by a deep gorge, and overlooks on its northern side the pretty little Lake Laura. The densest forest surrounds this lake and prevented Mr. Pigenit from painting it when he penetrated to its shores with Mr. J. R. Scott in 1874. Overlooking Lake Laura, the tier assumes a loftier and bolder character, and running north

is broken up into bluffs and peaks forming a rugged wall to the lonely valley of the Narcissus, which extends for 10 miles or so from the head of the lake to the foot of the Du Cane Range. The western side of the valley is closed in by the peaks of Mount Byron, Mount Ossa and a portion of the Du Cane Range, and about the centre of the Lake the lofty crags of Olympus tower above the richly wooded slopes which abut on its shores. The chief beauty of the lake lies in the dark green foliage of the beech forest clothing its western shore, but much of it cannot be seen from the lower end, as under Olympus the water trends to eastward and becomes hidden by the spur of the mountain. The Olympus Range approaches the lake from a north-easterly direction, and slopes abruptly down into the beautiful Cuvier valley which terminates at "Boat House" or Cynthia Bay, and down the centre of which the Cuvier River, a pretty trout stream, flows after issuing from Lake Petrarch at the upper end of the valley. On the opposite side of the vale the heights of Mount Hugel, with a number of smaller subsidiary hills, form a fitting *vis-à-vis* to Olympus, and at the top beyond Petrarch and two smaller lakes, Gould's Sugarloaf and the Coal Hill on the left-hand, and the remarkable peak of Mount Byron on the right complete the view. The beech forest is almost wholly confined to the shores of the lake, for on leaving it to proceed up the vale nothing but gum forest is met with; a few pines of the handsome *Arthrotaxis seleginoides* species are scattered here and there in the bush on the south sides of Olympus, but they are not noticeable until the forest is penetrated, and from what I saw, do not exist in sufficient numbers for even a limited timber supply.

The summit of Mount Olympus is a wall-like formation of basaltic greenstone, rising 2,300 feet above the lake and somewhat less from the Vale of Cuvier, which has a slight elevation above the water. It has the shape of an irregular figure of 8, as the flat rocky tract swells out at each end and is contracted to a narrow ridge in the centre; on the lake side the formation is perpendicular, except at the narrow ridge, which is a boulder-strewn slope, at the foot of which, nearly 1,000 feet below the summit, are two little mountain lakes; overlooking the Vale the sides are perpendicular at each end of the plateau, the south-eastern aspect of which has a very grand appearance, towering to a considerable height above the wooded spurs which abut on the lake. Mr. Piquenit's beautiful painting depicts this view.

The ascent of the mountain may be made either from the north-western shores of the lake, by way of the little mountain lakes, or from the Vale of Cuvier, but the former

route cannot be chosen without using the boat, which is at present in too leaky a condition to venture very far in. On the evening before my ascent of the mountain, I launched the boat and crossed the lake in her, but it took two of us to bail her out as the third pulled, or she would have sunk. It is much to be regretted that there is not a good boat on the lake, as it is impossible to get round the densely wooded shores, and even if such were not the case, very little of the scenery could be viewed with advantage. The present craft was very kindly placed upon the lake by Messrs. Piguénit and Scott in 1874, and had she been carefully looked after would have been serviceable for years to come.

Finding the lake route impracticable, I started from camp at the Boat House at seven o'clock on the morning of the 19th of February, taking Mr. Orr with me as a guide, and proceeded along Scott's track, which crosses the Cuvier about a mile from the lake and keeps to the north side of the river as far as Lake Petrarch, whence it ascends the Coal Hill Range, and passes thence into the low country to the West Coast. I understand that this track has not been used for many years. After leaving the Eldon Range it descends into very difficult country, and now that the more southern route, *viâ* Mount Arrowsmith, has been adopted, there will be no further use for it, as regards a direct road to the West Coast. When, however, the Lake country becomes better known, and tourists frequent the district I am speaking of, Scott's track will, no doubt, be useful to pedestrians, in giving access to the grand region to the north of the Eldon Range, and it might be continued down the gorges of the Murchison and the Mackintosh Rivers, which, when Tasmania becomes the tourist-land of Australia, will furnish some of the most beautiful scenery in Australasia. The Vale of Cuvier, into which the track first of all strikes, is an undulating button-grass plain, studded here and there with clumps of young gums, giving it a park-like appearance, the beauty of which is enhanced by the towering walls of Olympus, and the precipitous peak of Mount Byron. The track is marked out along the river with stakes. We found it much overgrown, as it has not been burnt out for four or five years, and the walking was consequently very heavy. At about five miles from the lake we turned across the valley and struck into the forest, making up the slope of the mountain to the foot of the crags at the south end. At the limit of the forest, on coming out into low rocky scrub, we met with the deciduous beech (*F. Gunni*), which was growing in a bush-like form among the boulders, the altitude being about 3,800 feet, and passing over this rough track we reached the foot of a narrow

and very steep slope of immense boulders, up which we clambered with some difficulty, and gained the summit of the mountain about half-past eleven. Included in this time were two halts for sketching and making tea, so that for good walkers the ascent by this route is no very difficult matter. The top of the mountain is a level tract of boulders overgrown with Alpine vegetation, and measures perhaps three-quarters of a mile by one-third, narrowing at its northern end into the ridge before mentioned. About the centre of this little rugged plain is a large crevice descending into the heart of the mountain. Its sides consist of basaltic columns, and at the northern end there is a slope of detritus, down which one could descend to the bottom. At first it gives the impression of having been a rent in the basaltic formation, but the fact of its being so short—about 50 yards—and closed at both ends, would rather lead to the belief that the cleft is the result of a subsidence in the rock formation. The altitude of the mountain taken a little distance from the trig. station, was 4,680 feet. The panorama all round was fine indeed, but to the westward it is simply sublime. Immediately at one's feet the lake lies 2,000 feet below with Mount Ida on its further shore, standing out like a sugarloaf in front of the walled tier, which forms the edge of the wild and rugged upland, stretching across to the sources of the Pine River. At the foot of Mount Ida, Lake Laura nestles in the forest, overlooked by the precipices of the upland, which further north break up into an indescribable jumble of peaks and bluffs standing up at the head of the Valley of the Narcissus; to the west, the view is more extensive. Directly beneath in the Vale of Cuvier is Lake Petrarch, painted by Mr. Piguenit in 1874, and beyond are the Coal Hill, Sugarloaf, and Hugel Mountains, forming a foreground to the Western Wilds, which are bounded towards the horizon by the lofty mountains, known as the "West Coast Range," and near the centre of the mining industry in that part of the Island.

The features of the upland between Lake St. Clair and the sources of the Pine and Mersey rivers are not sketched in in our maps; it is full of lakes and bold rocky hills with flat summits, and fully merits the term "rugged" which I have applied to it. Probably no one has ever crossed it, and if this is so there is presumably no good land there; but for the sake of acquiring a knowledge of its topographical features it is well worth while to explore it. About a mile from the edge of the highland and to the south of Ida, is a fine sheet of water, which is perhaps connected with the Traveller Lakes lying a little to the south. It was not marked on the map, and I named it Lake

Sappho ; furthur west are other sheets of water, which are probably Lake Lemona and Lake Ina. The lakelets at the foot of the crags upon which we stood, and which might be named the "Pools of Olympus," are exactly similar to the Cumberland and Welsh tarns, which are to be found beneath the summits of nearly all the British mountains ; they are almost circular, with their immediate surroundings bare and flat. In the Old Country these tarns are usually full of trout and many a good day's sport is to had "whipping" round the edges with a long "cast" and a taking fly !

The country to the north-west of Lake St. Clair could be explored by going to the head of the lake in a boat and following up the Narcissus River, the source of the Derwent, to the foot of the Du Cane Range, which might then be ascended and a topographical sketch of the country to the north of the range made. I do not know whether the tract between the Canning and the Rugged Mountain has been explored, but it could be done from this side and the settlements at the head of the Mersey reached, if the explorers did not wish to cross the Forth to the Vale of Belvoir, taking the Cradle Mountain *en route*.

I must not forget to mention that there is a little lake under the northern side of Mount Hugel, about three miles from the Cuvier River, and this I named Lake Hermione. On our return we found the button-grass in the valley, and though it was drizzling at the time a huge fire sprung up at night and burnt all the following day, so that the next pedestrians who ascend Olympus will have better walking than we had.

From the observations made in this paper it will be seen that the western limits of what might be termed the lower lake plateau, and which is bounded on the south by the Native Tier and other continuous slopes, are Mount Arrow-smith and the descent down into the valley of Rasselas from the head waters of the Gordon, these tracts being looked upon as ramifications of the plateau beyond the Derwent. The valleys of the Cuvier and the Narcissus are also further ramifications of this lower plateau, and the high mountains to the north-west of these valleys are the limits of the upland in that direction. Then the higher lake plateau, which contains the Great Lake and the system of smaller waters at the head of the Pine River, and thence westward to Lake St. Clair, ends in the high ridges overlooking the eastern shores of that lake and the valley of the Narcissus. I subjoin an ideal section of these uplands, which may assist in illustrating my meaning, if examined in conjunction with the maps accompanying them.

In conclusion, it may not be out of place to speak of the advisability of an annual improvement to the West Coast track, so that some day in the future it may become the trunk road to the other side of the island. This is unquestionably the route which a road should take from the metropolis to the West Coast, and following the system adopted by the Romans, who were the greatest colonisers of past ages, there should be a road from the centre of government to the confines of its jurisdiction on the West Coast. By making a main road from Hobart to the West Coast an artery is formed along which the life-blood of civilisation and commerce will eventually flow to the numerous roads, tracks, and settlements, mining or otherwise, which must be the outcome in future years of the construction of that road. It is all very well to talk of Macquarie Harbour being the shipping port of the West Coast mines, and that all that is required is a good road thence to the mineral country; this is looking at the subject from only one point of view, and it is not opening up the country, which I take to mean connecting the important parts thereof with the centre of importance and power: the metropolis. By the latter alternative, means are afforded for a special postal communication and for carrying on mineral, topographical and scientific exploration to the north and south of the main road, and thus thoroughly opening up the country; whereas by resting content with an occasional sea voyage of hundreds of miles, as the only means of communication with the coast, the inhabitants thereof are practically isolated from the world.

The route *viâ* Marlborough and Arrowsmith offers no difficulties as a winter postal route: I think I can correctly assert that the post boys of Connemara and the north of Scotland have more hardships from the weather to encounter than any who will have to ride over Mount Arrowsmith while that track remains the only route to the King River. Depôts, or "Rest Houses," as they are called in India, should be established at the Derwent and Collingwood Bridges, which places form a convenient division of the distance between Marlborough and the King River. A few hundred pounds spent upon the road from Marlborough to King William would make it a fair cart track, driveable for the tourist in the summer, and an assistance to the miner throughout the year, who is able now to walk from the Dee Bridge to the King River in three days. The track over Arrowsmith requires to be properly cut out over the button-rush portions and staked for winter travelling when the Mount is covered with snow. Once over Arrowsmith no one could wish for a better bridle track than now exists thence to the King River.



Legge, W. Vincent. 1887. "The Highlands of Lake St. Clair." *Papers and proceedings of the Royal Society of Tasmania* 1887, 114–127.

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