

(Copy)

"Fongataboo Friendly Islands"
"July 26. 1855."

"My Dear Hannah"

"I arrived here to-day safely, after a tedious passage of 17 days from New Zealand (from which place I wrote last), & a few hours after the John Wesley" dropped anchor & landed us, a ship arrived by which I hope to send this letter to Sydney. I write on chance of doing so and shall continue the thread of my tale further from the 4th inst. on which I finished my letter at Auckland. I then expected to have sailed the following day but on going on board found there was a difficulty with the Custom-house by which the vessel was detained two days longer, & the 3rd being Sunday of course we (a missionary brig) did not sail thereon & thus we were detained till Monday the 9th. I thus had two more days to see the neighbourhood of Auckland. On the 6th therefore, which was a dull dropping cold day with a strong easterly wind, I walked out to a fern-valley behind the town where were some tree-ferns, not of very great size & several smaller ferns, a few of them only being in season. I collected specimens of all I could which were few. But I have plenty of seed of two species of Tree fern (*Cyathea medullaris* & *C. dealbata* which I shall forward on my return to Sydney. I think both of them might bear the open air in the South of Ireland & would be very magnificent additions to a shrubbery such as the old walks at Carrigataha.

The first especially is the noblest tree fern I have ever seen. Its trunk in the denser forests is sometimes 40 feet high, but I have only seen it from 20 to 40 feet. The crown consists of 20 or more huge fronds each of them from 12 to 18 feet in length. They spring at an angle of 45° the stalks are polished black & like ebony & as thick as a man's wrist or more, & the feathers curve over most gracefully. The *C. dealbata* is smaller & slenderer species with the under surface of the leaves white, & it contrasts well with the dark rich green of *C. medullaris*. *Dicksonia antarctica* (the V. D. L. tree-fern) was also abundant in the valley but it looked poor & mean & stunted compared with the graceful *Cyathea*s. Another stemmed fern was a species of *Polypodium* or rather *Goniophlebium*, which often had trunk 4 or 5 feet high. By the rivulet banks *Lamaria procera* grew splendidly its feathers (or fronds) 8 feet high or more. One or two species of *Trichomanes* were there but not in fruit. Perhaps the handsomest of the smaller ferns was *Fodea pellucida* a transparent fern of great beauty, delicately feathered & 12 or 18 inches long. Flowering plants were few. *Sarcocolla* a *Leptospermum* which covers all the hills round Auckland & was in full bloom like a small myrtle, a small orchid *Pterostylis*, a flowering tree, a species of *Vitex* with red flowers, rather pretty. The day was so cold & wet however & the glen so sloppy, the soil being yellow clay & saturated with rain that I did not explore it fully. I therefore turned home & read the newspapers till evening when I went to dine with Col. Wynyard (the acting Governor) The dinner party ended in a "hop"

where I felt myself rather out of place. So I took a favorable opportunity of running away without saying goodbye. ~~Soon~~ after midnight. Next day, I was on shore cold bleak morning with easterly wind but as it was dry. I walked two or three miles from town to Nelson's Glen, a smaller, but better locality to that I had seen the day before. There were groups of Superb ferns & the Cyathus medullaris of all ages & pitched in various picturesque situations in a very mild & beautiful glen where a great variety of trees were mildly mixed together. A little stream runs at the bottom with its cold rills & the Dragon tree (noticed in a former letter) was here & there scattered about. I wish they could have seen it. I think too would have been a little wild with delight. There was a small waterfall & a rock or two, tree ferns about, big trees overhanging & spreading their arms across the glen. Some fallen down &c. &c. Moreover the stream at its outlet was full of water crosses, of which I made my lunch & thought of my lumberjack facts at the Quay. The beauty of this glen was the tree ferns - I found no new kind among the smaller, & on the whole the botany was very poor in species. But this is the best I am aiming at near Auckland as far as I told - The real forests & glens were too far away for my limited leisure - & Then day & bright fine morning. & That the pleasure of hearing the Bishop of New Zealand preach at St Pauls a very eloquent sermon delivered with much earnestness & fervour. He had just landed from England. His style is highly figurative, his subject was the miraculous draught of fishes, one which left him much scope for his peculiar view of picturesqueness metaphorical (I may call it so) Yet these ornamental parts were a more accompaniment to the main theme of the discourse, which was on the words of St Peter - Depart from me now and in the evening I dined with Capt. Drury & then went to church where Mr. Lloyd preached a sermon on Unity & brotherhood. I had tea with Mr. Rong-ti which Mr. Lloyd came & we had some talk about College & his friends there. Next morning Monday I went on board after breakfast, but we did not weigh anchor till the afternoon & then had to beat down the bay against a strong head wind. That night, the wind continuing foul, we anchored outside the Heads. Next morning wind again as I oblig'd to anchor & then we remained two days on one of the best but ashore at a small island & collected specimens, but as I had a headache I did not go on shore. Baffling winds continued, but as they were light we did not but it was not till the following Sunday 15, that we lost sight of the shores of New Zealand. The rest of our voyage until the last two days when we killed up the trade wind was a succession of head winds & calms, very tiresome particularly as there was almost always a heavy ~~fog~~ well within it clear or not & when it blew the weather was very calm. Calm & fog, & a stormy picture & mostly heavy kept us company through all this bad weather. On 26 we at last caught hold of the trade wind & at midnight on the 28 land was in sight, which proved to be the Island of Cuba. The outlines of the Primeval groups on that side. By daylight the island was quite plain, & distant about 10 miles. It seemed 100 feet high or more, a long island & very

like a whale, probably on appearance of trap rock from its aspect in the distance partly wooded but with extensive grassy downs. It has a few inhabitants, a bad landing place, most of the shores being steep & barren. but is said to be well watered & to have some good land in the valleys - about 10, a canoe with native pilot & his friend came on board the canoe small & very leaky & one kept bailing out the water while the other paddled. The paddle is shaped like a shovel & quite as broad at the end. The canoe without a rigger had much rougher & more viciously than the Galia Canoes. The Pilot brought their clothes tied up in a palm-leaf (like a dry) & dressed when they came on board - the dress being a roll of native cloth paper made of the bark of the paper mulberry, wrapped round the middle. They were shivering with cold, which is their winter. So as it was generally warm & sunny, but we had cloth clothes on our backs. Tonga was now in sight, low flat shores with coconut groves, white beaches & an intensely blue ~~water~~ smooth sea, & a few small islands all round, & the whole a very pretty tropical scene. - The news of the place is that the King is absent at war in Siccego, where he has taken 3000 men. His eldest son was a friendly one at first - but on one of the islands, one of his junior chiefs, perhaps a tempting bit of flesh! was treacherously killed & eaten & this led to a quarrel, the quarrel to a war the war to taking of persons &c, but we hear it is now over & that the Tongans have the victory. - I hope it may be so as the King is a very noble character & his life a most valuable one to his people. You may read about these islands in a book called The Southern World by Lieut. Col. Young & Mr. Whittell. Tell Remond to bring it as I am sure he will read it with interest & will like it well. - but perhaps his friend Cochrane has got it & can lend it to him. I have been much interested already in this mission & although they dissent from some unity & syncretism in the work. - I think they are working in a Catholic spirit teaching broad Christianity & their work so far has been most successful - As yet I have seen but little (having only landed yesterday) but what I have seen is ample proof of the real nature of their labours - I shall have more to write by & bye from Sydney. I have now only time to say that I am heartily entertained at the Mission house and everything done to make my stay profitable & agreeable to myself - We expect to be here about 10 days. After the 10th I shall hardly get back to Sydney by Christmas or perhaps not till the middle of January, owing to detentions we have already experienced & may look for, so don't be disappointed at my not writing for some time. I have pretty much made up my mind on reaching Sydney to take the first ship for Valparaiso or Callao & proceed up the coast by the Steamers plying to Panama. In this case I shall land at different points as way may open. My friend Dr. Sinclair of New Zealand expects to accompany me & I should not have a more agreeable & congenial companion. Once across the broad Pacific I shall feel about at home. The voyage from Valparaiso to Sydney varies from one to two months according to the wind, I shall make it in the summer time. The people without line are generally better, I am told, than to the Sandwich Islands, so take comfort therefrom. - This is the winter season, the mornings and

evenings are cool & pleasant, the mid day is either Cool or warm according
as the wind blows. There are no mosquitoes - Today is cool, yesterday was warm
Thy affec. brother

"M.H.B."

27th I have ^{made} my first excursion on the ~~at the~~ ^{reef to-day} very few algae but a wonder-
ful variety of beautiful Corals, seen not collected - I hope to gather them
on other days but was not duly provided to-day. They are of all colours
red, purple, green, yellow, white, & rainbow tints (like that Silb) the animal
like Small Sea anemones - Besides these are superb algae things with
brilliant golden flowers (animal, ~~light~~ ^{light} ~~Sapphires~~ ^{Sapphires} like fishes as big as "pinkies" dart
about the brambles - Water like crystal - Soft foam the charming & other things
that would set Allman crazy, but I have no time to do more than admire their
beauties. I collected a bag of shells, mostly ugly things, but I found nice
small ones & Corals among them -

30 We expect to sail tomorrow



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