

From

The Andaman Committee.

To

Cecil Beason Esquire

Secretary to the Government of India

Home Department.

Dated Port Andaman 1st January 1858.

Sir,

We have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2436 dated the 20th November 1857, intimating that the Right Honble the Governor General in Council had been pleased to appoint us to be a Committee to examine the shores of the Andaman group of islands, and to select the best site that may be found for the establishment of a penal settlement.

2. The requisites for such a settlement were pointed out, and we were directed to proceed on the Honorable Company's Steam Frigate 'Semiramis' to Moulineau where the Steamer 'Pluto' was to be placed at our disposal, for the purpose of conveying us to the scene of our labors.

3. We accordingly embarked

on the "Semiramis" on Monday the 23^d of November, and reached Moulmein on the afternoon of Tuesday the 1st of December 1857. The Pluto was at that time absent but returned on Friday the 4th, and was prepared for sea with all possible dispatch.

4. To protect our party when engaged in exploring, Captain Campbell I. N. commanding the "Semiramis", placed at the disposal of the Committee, an officer and twenty European seamen from his crew. European
Squad.

To enable us to penetrate the dense jungle which was said, and which we found, to cover the Andamans, the Officiating Commissioner of Moulmein, Major A. Lytche, sanctioned the temporary transfer of twelve short termed Burmese convicts accustomed to forests with a guard of three convict peons. Without the aid of these men we could have made no progress in the examination of the coast. Major Lytche also made over to us the boring instruments in store at Moulmein, and Captain Man, the Superintendent of the Convict Establishment, taught the prisoners the use of that important instrument prior to our departure. Jamaica
Prisoners

Thus

Departure
from Moulmein.

5.

Thus armed and equipped, we left Moulmein on the morning of Tuesday the 8th of December, and anchored in Port Formwallis at 8^{1/2} A.M. of Friday the 11th of the same month.

Port Formwallis.

6.

Our object in first visiting the old settlement was to ascertain by personal examination the causes of its extreme unhealthiness, to guide us in our investigation into the other localities likely to possess sites suitable for a permanent settlement.

7.

We do not deem it necessary to furnish a detailed description of this magnificent harbour, and the islands enclosed within it. The survey of Lieutenant Blair was found to be generally accurate, and with the exception hereinafter noted, the place seems to have undergone no material change since the abandonment of the settlement in 1796, for reasons which are contained in the records of the Government of India.

8.

We landed on the North East corner of Phatham Island where all that could be found of the old settlement was lying on the beach in the form of detached fragments of a substantial brick building.

9.

The rear wall only was

standing, and contained a door and two windows - the remainder of so much of the house as had not been destroyed by the encroachment of the sea, which in this spot must have advanced some 40 or 50 feet, was strewn with large pieces of masonry and brickwork on the beach. The brickwork, cemented with shell lime, was of excellent quality which was shown by the retention of their form of the arches which had fallen. The masonry had been detached in masses by the vegetation growing in fissures which had probably been caused by the action of the sea. The detached bricks, which were scattered over a space of some 200 yards, had been rounded by the same agency.

10. A small mound, about 100 feet in height was immediately behind, and to the South West of the building. Rounded fragments of masonry which had probably formed the basement of a pillar were found at the foot of the hill, on the crest of which were layers of small bricks imbedded in the roots of the trees. No inscriptions, wells, or other indications of the existence of a settlement could be found owing to the perfect impenetrability of the jungle. A few coconut trees, palms and Acacias, and

and a number of larger trees not identified, covered the island. Two small water courses were seen - one on its Northern, the other on its Western aspect.

11. On its South Western side is an extensive mud bay, dry in spring tides, with broad belts of Mangrove and low flat country on the opposite shore in the same direction.

12. The only sea breeze that could reach the island is the North East wind, and that could have blown but over a small portion of its Northern aspect.

13. It thus appears to have been ill selected as a site for a settlement, two thirds of its own shore being fringed with a dense belt of mangrove, and the prevailing winds during the greater part of the year, at its most unhealthy season, blowing over the swamps surrounding the site of the settlement. Conditions more certainly calculated to secure the largest measure of unhealthiness, it would be difficult to find.

14. Photographic views were taken of the remains of the settlement, and of some native fishing huts in its immediate vicinity.

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49
15. Of the savages themselves nothing was seen, although huts and other indications of their proximity, and recent presence were found on the main land, in a bay on the North side of the Port.

16. The results of our intercourse with the natives will be mentioned in a separate paragraph.

17. On leaving Port Farnwallis Craggy Islands. we steered to Craggy Island a few miles to the Southward, for the purpose of ascertaining if it were practicable to mount the Saddle hill, the highest point of the islands, in order to obtain some idea of the interior of the Great Andaman.

18. Upon a near examination of the spot we considered it to be impracticable in the time, and with the means at our disposal - so the project was abandoned. At this point we first came in contact with the inhabitants, as will be mentioned hereinafter.

19. We then proceeded to Sound Sound Island, as the next locality on the East Coast, affording promise of an eligible site.

20. We steamed through Stewart's Sound, and right round the island which is of an irregular quadrilateral form, forming one side of a large land-locked bay.

bay, accessible at all seasons to vessels of every class. The island appeared to consist of ridges of high land running through it in all directions, and prolonged in spurs to the points of the bays indenting its margin. It was fringed with belts of Mangrove, and surrounded with coral reefs, with occasional fine sandy beaches.

21. Towards the South Western extremity is a horse shoe shaped harbour, nearly three quarters of a mile in depth and rather more than half a mile across - the shores of which we spent two days in exploring. On the Northern and Eastern aspects it is skirted by coral banks and rocks, but in the rest of its extent, it has good anchorage ground for large ships.

22. The ridge surrounding it rises to a height of about 120 feet, and we found the jungle and underwood much less tangled and dense than on Chatham Island.

23. The ridges also contained small plateaus of level ground, with good drainage and sufficient in extent to form a very large settlement, with an abundance of clay and coral for building purposes, and a rich soil for

Cultivation.

24. But, it was deficient in water, appearing to possess only the moisture resulting from surface drainage, without a running kill of even the smallest dimensions in any direction that was examined for a mile and a half. Attempts to dig and bore - the latter to a depth of eleven feet, failed to procure water.

25. There was also a deficiency of forest trees fit for building purposes.

26. For these reasons, it does not seem to us to be a desirable place for a settlement of any kind. There was no point from which a photographic view, calculated to show its characters, could be obtained.

27. In addition to local deficiencies and probable sources of disease from the belt of mangrove surrounding it in all directions - in attempting to ascertain the existence of a navigable strait between the Northern and Middle Sudans, we discovered an extensive tract of the worst description of Sunderbund, ending in putrid shallows apparently running towards the interior of the island and sufficient to poison any place lying within the influence

influence of the winds blowing over it.

28.

The ascertainment of the existence of a passage, which had been left undetermined by Lieutenant Blair was a question of some interest, as in the event of its furnishing a safe and ready access to Interview Island from the Eastern Coast, it might have led to the occupation of that great Island, had it contained the other conditions essential to the formation of a settlement. The extent of the pestilential *Sunderbund* was not ascertained, but that no navigable passage existed and that any settlement in its vicinity would be undesirable, were fairly established.

Andaman
Archipelago

29.

Having finished this work, we again steered to the Southward, towards the Andaman Archipelago, a large cluster of islands on the Eastern Coast.

30

The main land was bold, with high undulating hills, and more free from mangrove than any portion of the Islands yet seen by us.

31.

We passed round two sides of Long Island to the bay lying between it and the shore of the Great Andaman but as no indications of

running streams were seen, as the island itself was low, and as the opposite shore was skirted with a thick belt of mangrove, we did not consider it worth while to waste any time in landing to explore a place so obviously unsuitable.

32.

The remaining Islands of the Archipelago we did not look at. Most of them were low, the absence of safe ports was patent, and the navigation too dangerous and too intricate to permit of their being occupied as a penal settlement, according to the instructions laid down for our guidance. Even had some of the larger islands proved eligible in themselves, they would not have allowed of sufficient subsequent extension to permit of their occupation on an extended scale with reference to the amount of cultivable land near the settlement.

33.

Being within a few miles of Barren Island at this point, and considering that it was desirable to neutralize any possible bad effects from the very unwholesome places we had recently examined, we resolved to visit and explore that interesting volcano.

Barren Island

34

We accordingly steered for it on the evening of the 17th and reached it

it at 4 on the morning of the 18th. We spent a few hours in examining it and some of our party ascended the Cone, and saw the Crater which is still smouldering. It has apparently changed in some of its physical features since it was last described, but as these are foreign to the object of our mission, they are recorded in a separate report by Dr. Playfair.

35 The only fact of sufficient political importance to place on record regarding it, is, that it contains little Sulphur, and that little too inaccessible to be worked with any advantage.

36 We returned to the An-
damans on the same evening, so that the expedition cost only an expenditure of a few hours of time.

At Harbour. 37. On the morning of the 19th of December we anchored abreast of Chatham Island in Old Harbour, the site of Blair's first settlement, and as its original occupation had proved us continuously healthy, we devoted four days to a very minute and careful exploration of the islands in and at the mouth of the harbour, and of the adjacent main land.

38.

The minute and excellent survey of Lieutenant Blair we found to be a most useful and trustworthy guide to the chief physical features of the place, which can have undergone no material change in the long interval which has elapsed.

Made in 1844
(State 1844 year)

39.

Nearly every trace of the original settlement on Shatham Island has been entirely effaced. A few bricks and tiles, and a rough stone jetty were the only indications of its occupation. The island is small - about 600 yards in length by 150 in breadth, with undulating ground, and a good soil, covered with vegetation, in which are a few large forest trees. There was no indication of water anywhere, but on boring near the foot of a mound at the north end of the islet, it was found in a clay bed at the depth of twelve feet, and it instantly rose to within five feet of the surface of the artesian well.

40.

The small strait intervening between the islet and the Southern shore of the harbour is shallow, with a rocky bottom, being a continuation of Blair's reef. The water evidently came, therefore, from that side where it was subsequently discovered in abundance.

The

40. The North shore is high, rising abruptly nearly 300 feet, with ledges of cultivable land on its Southern aspect. The ridges are formed of sandstone, which was found to contain several water courses, two of which are mentioned by Blair; and to abound in bamboos, cane, rattan, and a sufficiency of large forest trees for building purposes. Good clay for bricks is abundant, and the supply of sandstone for building inexhaustible for piers, jetties, the metalling of roads and any other purposes that may be needed. The coral reefs in the more exposed bays would furnish an unlimited stock of fine lime. Further, Limestone of the finest quality is procurable on a promontory about a days sail from Old Harbour and a few miles to the North of Long Island. The luxuriance of the vegetation, and its great variety may be assumed to be good proof of the fertility of the soil, when brought under regular cultivation.

41. The rocks bordering it abound in Oysters and shell fish, and the harbour itself being quite open to the East with a strong tidal influx and efflux, will doubtless prove a rich fishery.

43. The belt of mangrove bordering this side of the port is not very

extended, and could scarcely prove a source of disease to any settlement on the Southern and Western slopes of the hills. They could moreover be cleared away without much difficulty.

44. The land at the Western end of the bay is also elevated, supplied with fresh water, and seems to be very much of the same character as the Northern side.

45. Mangrove Bay we did not examine, as although it probably leads to a Sounderbund its position in the North West corner of the harbour is such as to remove it from the course of the prevailing monsoons, and thus to prevent its becoming a source of unhealthiness to the settlement.

46. If bounded so as to shut out the sea, the extreme rise of which is only seven feet, it can doubtless be reclaimed here after, and form good rice land, as ^{at Kyauk Phyi} in the island of Ramree on the coast of Arracan, which has been rendered both healthy and productive, by an embankment of the nature referred to.

47. The land on the Southern aspect of the harbour is lower, even more plentifully supplied with water, and from the character of its dense and multifarious vegetation seems to possess

a richer and more promising soil. Among the plants identified were a few Cocoa nut trees, a thatching palm, some varieties of Acacia, tree ferns, the bamboo, the rattan cane and others not necessary to record.

48. In many places, particularly where directly exposed to the sea, there is little or no Mangrove skirting it.

49. Rossi Island at the entrance of the Harbour is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile long by $\frac{1}{2}$ mile at its broadest part, is low on the Western side, gradually rising to an elevation of about 60 feet on its Eastern shore, the rock being sandstone. It acts as a breakwater against the North East Monsoon, and appears from the hospital having been placed there formerly, to have been used as a Sanitarium for which purpose it appears to us to be well adapted. It is bounded by smooth rocks on its sea face, and contains large forest trees, with vigorous and not very rank under-vegetation.

50. We found no water on it, and no vestige of its former occupation - but, from the character of the adjacent land and the shallowness of the bay separating it from the

main land to the Southward, have no doubt that boring would have found it. It is more than probable that when the early hospital existed on it that the supply of water was obtained from a well, but on this and many other points of interest and importance, the précis furnished to the Committee contain no information whatever. The original report of Lieutenant Blair most probably contains it.

51. The Committee are not aware of any physical indications by which the healthiness of an uncleared locality can be absolutely predicated - but, so far as ordinary experience can be accepted as a safe guide, Old Harbour seems to afford fair promise of proving as healthy, as any locality similarly situated in a tropical region.

52. Its means of drainage are ample and most efficient; - the removal of all effete matter beyond the reach of causing mischief will be easy, - and any possible existent tracts of marsh land, do not lie in the direction of the prevailing winds.

~~23.~~ We are, therefore, of opinion
that as a small portion of the Chatham
Island.

Island - proved continuously healthy during the time it was occupied sixty years since, - that with ordinary care in the construction of buildings, and strict attention to conservancy arrangements, a more extended and permanent settlement will prove equally salubrious.

54. Making due allowance for its higher latitude, from its similarity to certain parts of the East coast of Ceylon, and from its local peculiarities we are of opinion that economic plants, such as the Cocoa nut, the bread fruit tree, the plantain, the Sugar cane, and the date palm would certainly flourish here. Of useful plants the bamboo, rattan, thatching palms, and most of the timber trees, that bear exposure to sea air, would also grow well with a little care in cultivation.

55. It is not improbable that many tropical fruit trees of great value such as the Mangosteen, the Litchi, the Logquat, and others would also be naturalized without much difficulty.

56. Grasses would also grow for pasturage, but they would probably be somewhat rank and coarse.

57. From Old Harbour we ^{Nutland and} ^{Cingue Islands} steered again to the Southward to Nutland Island. The coast was undulating, hilly, without mangroves, and ended in a bold bluff at the entrance to Macpherson's Strait. The Southern face of the Great Sudaman was fringed with mangrove, but it was not deep, and could not in any way affect the health of a settlement at Old Harbour.

58. We devoted two days to sailing round Nutland Island, and the examination of a part of its Eastern shore, as well as of one of the Cingue Islands in its vicinity. The former is a fine and extensive tract of land, hilly at its Northern end, well wooded and flatter in the rest of its extent. It is apparently well supplied with water, must be healthy from its position, and the character of its vegetation renders it probable that it possesses a fertile soil.

59. The harbour in Macpherson's Strait is accessible from the Eastward at all seasons of the year, and possesses safe anchorage for vessels of any burthen. Access from the Western side would be difficult and dangerous in the South West Monsoon, - and the whole of that side of the island exhibited proof of the violence of the

the weather to which it is subjected, during a great part of the year.

80. The North shore of Rutland Island is unfortunately surrounded by a dense belt of Mangrove, rendering it difficult to find a suitable landing place.

81. It is, therefore, in all respects inferior to Old Harbour for a settlement; yet it may become very valuable hereafter, should the Andamans be colonized.

82. The second of the Cinque Islands would form an excellent isolated Station for very refractory convicts, who needed entire reparation. It is three miles in length by one in breadth at the broadest part - is usually well supplied with water, and is separated sufficiently from all other land to render escape from it next to impossible. It is fertile in some parts, and would most likely prove very healthy - but scarcely contains a sufficiency of land for cultivation to maintain a settlement. During the North East Monsoon it is easily accessible; but approach to it would be somewhat difficult in the South West Monsoon. A landing could always, however, be effected at it.

North East corner with a little care.

63. Its distance from Old Harbour being only 24 miles, it could without much trouble be readily superintended, visited, and supplied from that place, if necessary, at all seasons of the year.

64. We did not examine the Labyrinth Islands, as they were evidently unsuitable for Convict settlements, being closely surrounded by reefs, difficult of access, too close to each other and probably not abundantly supplied with water. They are flat, and covered with dense, lofty, and luxuriant vegetation. They may prove valuable hereafter, as from their position they must be healthy.

65. On proceeding Northward along the Western coast, which near the Southward of the Great Birdman is very free from Mangrove on its sea face, we found a fine spacious harbour not visited or described by Blair, to the South West of Old Harbour. The land at its Eastern end is within two miles of the Western extremity of Old Harbour. It is surrounded by a narrow belt of Mangrove which is so placed as not to be able to affect injuriously

Distance of
a New Harbour.

injurious to the health of any settlement in Old Harbour. A short road, ~~but~~ little more than two miles in extent, would here connect the Eastern and Western shores - a point of some importance in their future occupation, as by opening up and clearing the intermediate land, a healthy sea breeze could be obtained during both Monsoons.

88. The new harbour is unfortunately accessible only from the South through the passage between the Labyrinth Islands - a navigation far too difficult and dangerous to be used by vessels in distress during the South West Monsoon. On attempting to run parallel to the Coast in steering Northward, the coral reefs which are here very extensive were found to be too near the surface to admit of the passage of a vessel of even such light draft as the "Pluto"; the water shoaling suddenly from 8 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms. An attempt to stand to sea in the direction of the North Sentinel failed from the same cause, so we had to return through the Labyrinth to the Southward.

Port Campbell.

89. We next proceeded to Port Campbell, a very fine harbour, but at

all times difficult of entrance or exit, on account of the direction and extreme narrowness of the deep water channel at its mouth. It is therefore unsuited for a settlement, so we did not examine it minutely.

68. After this the Committee Middle Strait proceeded through the Strait separating Middle from South Suvadawan, to ascertain, if possible, the physical features of the interior of the Island.

69. The Strait was in the greater part of its extent bounded by very deep patches of stunted Mangrove - the growth of that plant being evidently checked by the quantity of fresh water that falls into the Strait during the rains. At present they must render all land lying in a North Easterly direction extremely unhealthy. If reclaimed, hereafter, they might form rich rice lands.

70. On leaving the Middle Strait, Interview Island, we again proceeded Northward to Interview Island, the last place examined by the Committee.

71. This fine island, lying parallel to and at a small distance from the Main land forms a large and secure harbour open for ingress and egress at both North and South extremities, but

but well sheltered from the violence of the South West Monsoon. It is surrounded by a belt of mangrove every where, except at its Southern end, where the land is higher and more healthy looking. It is covered with dense vegetation, and seemed to be well watered. In all its other characters it bears a strong resemblance to the remaining islands on the Western shore being little elevated, and bearing evident marks of the exposure to the violence of the elements to which they are subjected in the South West Monsoon.

72. It is more thickly peopled than most parts of the coast, but appears to share the general deficiency of animal life remarked in the whole group.

73. It may prove a valuable settlement hereafter, and from its free exposure to the sea in the greater part of its extent would most likely be healthy; but it is in all essentials, so manifestly inferior to Old Harbour, that a very minute examination of it was deemed unnecessary.

Landfall Island 74
and the Coos.

Landfall Island and the Coos were not explored. The former only was looked at, but as both of

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them are too directly in the track of Commerce, and are deficient in harbours, they are evidently not suited for convict settlements - no time was, therefore, wasted in exploring them.

75. The land on the Northern General ap. part of the Western shore is every where much lower than the corresponding portions of the Eastern coast.

76. An attempt to approach the opening in the Western end of the Strait supposed to exist between the Northern and Middle Andamans, failed, - the Steamer grounding on a coral bank at a distance of two miles from the entrance. As the Strait, in these circumstances is utterly useless for the purposes of Navigation, no further time was spent in exploring it.

77. In conclusion the Committee are of opinion that Old Harbour is the only place that possesses the greater number of the requisites for a Penal Settlement, and they accordingly recommend its occupation for that purpose, in preference to any other of the localities visited and examined.

78. They cannot refrain from Tribute to taking advantage of this opportunity ^{Lieutenant} Blair.

to

to record their admiration of the great judgment of Lieutenant Blair in originally selecting that spot, and of his accuracy as a Hydrographer.

79. They also beg to suggest that, as considerable practical inconvenience may result hereafter from the identity of names in the two former settlements, that the name of the old harbour may be changed to Port Blair, in honour of the distinguished officer above mentioned.

Ethnology of
the Andamanians.

80. So little is known of the inhabitants of the Andamans, and that little so mixed up with fable and fiction, as to have induced the Committee to pay more than ordinary attention to all measures calculated to open an amicable intercourse with them, and to throw light upon their habits and customs. From first to last they rejected every attempt at conciliation, and either avoided, or forcibly opposed all attempts to hold communion with them.

81. Traces of them were found on Chatham Island, and the shores of Port Cornwallis generally, but no native was seen there.

82. The first contact with

them occurred at Craggy Island. On rounding that place to anchor under its shelter, a large party of them were surprised fishing on a reef running out from the main land, with a few separated from them on a sandy spit of the Island. The latter we conjecture to have been women, and they had a small canoe lying on the beach. As soon as the Steamer had anchored, the Committee landed in two well armed boats. The people who had been seen on the Island had disappeared in the dense jungles which covered the islet. In the canoe, which with its contents was left exactly as it was found, beads and looking glasses were placed, and the party immediately re-embarked, to show the natives that their intentions were friendly, and free from even the semblance of hostility.

83. During and previous to the time occupied by this proceeding, the men on the reef - ten or twelve in number - exhibited every sign of the most implacable hostility. They gesticulated violently, vociferated, waived bows and arrows, and one of them brandished a spear, with a metallic head, which gleamed brightly in

in the rays of the setting sun. Another of them waded to his waist in the sea, howled defiance, and shot a couple of arrows in the direction of the Steamer.

84. They were all naked, and intensely black. They appeared strong, well built, sturdy men of middle size - and did not exhibit the smallest fear of us.

85. We approached to them as close as the surf on the reef permitted, waving handkerchiefs, and shouting the word "Cados" which is given in a vocabulary published in the Asiatic Researches by Colebrooke as signifying "Friend" in the language of the natives of the Andamans.

86. All was in vain, and as the Committee were most desirous to avoid collision with them in their angry mood, which might have been caused by a belief that their women were in danger - the boats were withdrawn, and pulled to the Southward to seek a safe landing place preparatory to searching for signs of fresh water. Five of the savages ran along the beach for more than a mile, and then disappeared in the jungle.

87. On rounding a point some two

miles from the reef, a shelving, shingle beach was found on which a landing was effected. There was a large hut close to it, which was scrupulously respected, and presents ^{never} placed in it. Sentries were posted near the boats to prevent surprise, and the party proceeded Northward along the shore to look for a watering place. The advanced guard had scarcely walked a hundred yards, when arrows were fired at them from an open patch of jungle. The attack was immediately repelled by a volley of musketry, which did no damage, but frightened away the savages, who were not again seen that evening. As it was getting dusk, it was not deemed prudent to run any further risk of collision. The party was, therefore re-embarked without further adventure.

88. On the following morning, the canoe was found to have been re-moved, and for some time no natives were seen. As the Steamer was leaving they re-appeared, and repeated their pantomime of hostility and defiance.

89. Thus ended the first attempt to become acquainted with the dreaded Anthropophagi.

90. The four mittie are particular in relating the incidents connected with

with their first essay, as the same spirit of conciliation marked all their efforts and in every instance in which collision occurred, the aggressors were the savages.

91. On four occasions they attacked the approaching party and were repelled without bloodshed. On two others they disappeared, leaving their huts with fires still kindled, and their canoes at the mercy of the Committee. Bows, Arrows, Nets, and such of their utensils or weapons as were calculated to throw light upon their customs, were taken. Their canoes and dwellings were respected, and presents were invariably left in them.

92. The last attempt to approach them was the least happy in its results, and occurred where an untoward end was least to be expected.

93. It happened at South Reef Island, near the Southern extremity of Interview Island. All published accounts of the Andamans agree in representing the inhabitants of Interview Island as more sociable, less savage, and more disposed to friendly relations with strangers, than those of any other portion of the Andaman group.

They have been described as aiding in discharging the cargoes of wrecked vessels, and performing other acts of amity, which led the Committee to believe that they differed essentially from all others of the aborigines with whom they had vainly striven to establish friendly relations, and that their advances would at length be met in the spirit in which they were offered.

94. After steaming round Interview Island to ascertain its general physical characters, the "Pluto" passed to the Southward of South Reef Island, and had turned again to the North, when a large group of natives, about 30 in number, were observed assembled together on the beach, gazing quietly at the Steamer as she passed. There were seven canoes lying on the beach, and the party were evidently waiting for low tide to fish upon the reef.

95. The Committee left the Steamer in the first Cutter. The second Cutter followed as a support in case of need, under the charge of Mr. Folgrave, Midshipman of the "Semiramis".

96. On approaching the island the natives had taken to their canoes, the boats followed, and soon gained upon

upon them. All arms were carefully concealed, and all gestures calculated to alarm the natives were avoided. When within a hundred yards of them they exhibited bows and arrows, and began the usual gestures of hostility, exactly as witnessed on the East Coast.

97. Three of their canoes were isolated from the rest. The men in the ^{first} Cutter ceased rowing, and the boat drifted quickly towards them. Bandkerchiefs were waived, presents were held up and shown, the Shiboleth "Padoo" was shouted, and no act of hostility was committed by any one in the Cutter.

98. The leading canoe was seen to be gradually edging away and when within about fifteen yards of us, the men in all the canoes simultaneously started up, and discharged a flight of arrows at the first Cutter, with considerable force and precision. Lieutenant Heathcote, a seaman, and Dr. Monat's Lemadar were struck with arrows in the first Cutter, and one man was wounded in the same manner in the second Cutter, which had come up by this time. As the savages were well supplied with arrows

and were about to repeat their aggression,
 the Committee opened fire upon them.
 Two of them were shot dead, the rest
 abandoned their canoes to swim to the
 shore, which the greater number of them
 were seen to reach in safety. The mo-
 ment the Natives were unable to con-
 tinue the action, the Cutter's crew were
 ordered to cease firing, and no pursuit
 was attempted, as the savages were con-
 sidered to have been sufficiently pu-
 nished for their aggression.

99. One of the Natives, when
 in the water, seized a strap thrown
 to him from the second Cutter, and
 was taken on board. The Committee
 deliberated anxiously as to the dis-
 posal of this man - whether to re-
 lease, or to carry him to Falcutta. They
 ultimately decided on the latter course
 as the one required by the interests of
 humanity - although attended with hard-
 ship to the individual, until he can
 be instructed sufficiently to know the
 reasons which led to his removal from
 his country and his kindred.

100. In the future occupation
 of the island, it is of the utmost im-
 portance to the wretched outcasts oc-
 cupying its shores, that the means
 of

of communicating with them should exist. They are at present either so savage or so ignorant as to regard all new comers as enemies - to resist all attempts at intercourse as aggressions, and to put themselves out of the pale of humanity, by the violence and mistrust of their proceedings. The contact with civilization in such circumstances, can only end in their destruction; - whereas, if they can be persuaded that no harm is intended to them, it is not visionary to hope that the means of reclaiming and restoring them to a place in the human family which they do not now occupy, may be found.

101. It may also be the means of saving the lives of those who may hereafter be cast away on their dreaded and inhospitable shores, should the savages be taught, that to treat them kindly will be rewarded, while murder and violence will meet with the most certain, swift, and stern punishment.

102. To ascertain their manners and customs, and to establish their identity with any existing portion of the Negro race - to which they clearly belong - would solve the mystery of ages, and

and lead to a knowledge of the probable manner in which Asiatic Islands, came to be occupied by an African people.

103.

To gain some knowledge of recent shipwrecks, and what became of the unfortunate cast-aways is also of the deepest interest, and may lead to the rescue of any unfortunate individuals who may be in captivity among them, should such exist. This is by no means improbable, as we have every reason to doubt that the savages are cannibals, and found evidence that shipwrecks are not uncommon on these islands.

104.

All these objects can only be accomplished through the instrumentality of a Native of the Islands, old enough to be acquainted with their manners, customs, language and traditions, if any exist; and not too old to be beyond the reach of instruction. To himself, once the shock of the severance of his ties and associations is past, the end can only be one of advantage - in rescuing him from a precarious existence in the lowest scale of humanity, and in rendering him the instrument of much probable future good to his own race.

105

For these reasons, the Committee venture

venture earnestly to hope that their proceedings will meet with the approval of the Right Honorable the Governor General of India in Council, and that steps will be taken to train and educate the individual referred to, so as to gain a knowledge of his language, and to send him back to the Andamans to be the means of communication between the settlement and the inhabitants.

106. The identity in the construction of their huts and implements of all kinds, in the making and management of their canoes, and in their habits so far as they could be learnt from the little the Committee were able to see of them, lead the Committee to believe that the same tribe occupy the whole of the group examined.

107. They are evidently dwarf Negroes, with all the physical characters of Africans. They appear not to exceed five feet in height, to be strong and tolerably well built, - and all those we saw were in good condition.

108. They frequent reefs and rocks where shell fish exist in abundance and are easily caught. When they have exhausted one place they migrate to another. At Port

at Campbell, we found one village recently abandoned, and another in course of construction, the palms covering the huts being green and fresh. The latter was within a mile of the former.

109. In no place did we discover the smallest attempt to cultivate the soil, or to penetrate to the interior. The few paths we found were short in extent and led to water courses - beyond them the primeval forest was untouched and untrampled by man.

110. Their huts are rude, and open on all sides. In general they consist of four posts, the two anterior being much higher than the two posterior ones, which are close to the ground. The former varied from three or four to about ten feet in height. The thatch generally consisted of a few palm leaves, lightly bound together and overlapping each other.

111. In every village, there were one or two huts of large dimensions - some twelve or fourteen feet square, with well thatched roofs plaited on a rattan frame.

112. One quadrangular hut was seen supported on corner posts, with the eaves of the thatch within a foot and a half of the ground. Most of the others were quite open in front, and at the

the sides, the rear being protected by the thatch reaching nearly to the ground.

113. In many of the huts bunches of the skulls of fish, pigs, and tortoises were hung up. The skulls were variously marked of red color. Near all the huts were found an abundance of empty shells.

114. The canoes are scooped out of the trunks of trees and vary considerably in size. The process must be extremely tedious as it is performed by a dwarf adze with a wooden head in which a small, sharp, semicircular blade of iron beaten out, is placed. This is sharpened on a stone, which was invariably found with it. The canoes are propelled by bamboo poles, and paddles - the latter consisting of a handle about three feet and a half long, with a small blade, either pointed or circular at the end. Many of them were ornamented by cross lines of red paint.

115. The canoes which put to sea are armed with an outrigger, very similar to that used by the Birmans.

116. In the canoes were found small hand nets, bows and arrows, nets containing empty shells, old nails, bits of stone, and similar rubbish.

117. One large strong net, with immense meshes, and singular floats, was taken. It appears to be used for catching turtle, as it must be too large for any fish under the size of a shark, and not strong enough to capture the latter. The floats are pieces of wood, four feet in length, with a sheaf of shavings at the end. The net had stones attached to it as weights.

118. Their weapons consist of bows and arrows, of two kinds. One form of bow is flat and gracefully formed, the other much stronger and rougher.

119. Photographs of all these will be submitted, as soon as they can be taken.

120. The arrows are of several kinds and generally about four feet in length. Some of them are of simple, hard, pointed wood let into a straight reed. Others are pointed with iron, and barbed. Some of the barbed heads are attached to the reed by a strong cord wound and tied to both the head and shaft of the arrow.

121. In some of the huts were found what appear to be shields of hard red wood, of considerable size, but of which the probable use is not well determined.

122. They manufacture a tough cord from a strong fibrous bark, and
scoop

scoop out blocks of wood for vessels to contain fresh water. The usual drinking cup is an empty Nautilus shell.

123. They have small wicker baskets which are fastened to the waist when they are fishing, by a coil of strong coarse flat cord, of which three or four folds were seen round their bodies. To the end is attached a piece of iron beaten into the form of a knife blade, probably to open shells.

124. The only vegetable food found in their canoes or habitations was the fruit of the Mangrove, a large leguminous bean, and some ^{ml. 6} spinach. The former is sliced in shreds, and placed to soak in fresh water in a small, closely woven net. We did not ascertain whether they were eaten cooked or raw.

125. The inhabitants seen by us were all entirely naked. The top of the head and the anterior part of the chest were covered by a red clay, which was found kept in large shells. Their bodies are scarred in lines by a cutting instrument, being a savage form of tattooing.

126. All hair is removed from their scalps and bodies, with the exception

of the upper lip of the men, where a scanty amount of stunted woolly hair was seen.

127. No indication of cannibalism was found in connection with their dwellings - not a human bone or relic of any description being found, either of their own dead, or of the bodies of the people wrecked on their coast.

128. The two largest villages seen were on the Southern shore of Old Harbour - the one containing twenty-two - the other fourteen huts. In general three or four huts were all that were found together.

129. We had no means of estimating even approximately the probable population of the Great Andaman, and from the migratory habits of the people it will be difficult to form any accurate conclusion on the subject. They were in larger numbers on the Western, than on the Eastern Coast, so far as we could see.

130. The island called the Great Andaman is about 125 miles long, with a breadth varying from 5 to 16 miles.

General Physical characters of the Great Andaman.

131. Its length runs North and South in the 93° of East Longitude and between the 11^{th} and 14^{th} parallels of North Latitude.

132. Strictly the Great Andaman is formed by three islands distinguished

as North, Middle and South.

133. The two latter are separated by a strait averaging a quarter of a mile in breadth and extending for 12 miles North West and South East. It has a considerable depth of water all through, but the Eastern entrance owing to the presence of a bar, has only a depth of one and a half fathoms. The two former are separated by a labyrinth of narrow canals meandering through the swamps, but there is no distinct passage or strait, of which the existence is indicated as probable in Lieutenant Blair's chart.

134. Looking at the Great Andaman as one Island, a section of it from East to West would exhibit something of this form.



The highest land wherever seen is on the Eastern, and gradually descends towards its Western shore.

135. The water shed is therefore chiefly towards the West, and consequently it is on that side of the island that marshy localities will most probably abound.

abound.

136. A section of the island from North to South shows the existence of several elevated ridges which all have one characteristic in common, their highest point is towards the North and they gradually decrease in height to the South until they terminate either in low marsh land as at Andaman Strait, or in undulating land of moderate elevation as to the South of Old Port Formwallis.

137. Rutland Island, which in fact might be looked on as a continuation of the Great Andaman, has also its high mountains which gradually sink towards the South into a succession of low undulating hills.

138. To the North of Port Formwallis the Island is formed of a series of low hills, having the usual outline common to trap formations.

139. Immediately to the South from that Port, the land rises until about 7 miles to the South it reaches its highest elevation in the Saddle mountain, the height of which is 2400 feet. It then gradually decreases for the next 14 miles when the hills terminate and there is some extent of land similar in character to the Sunderbunds, low swamps covered

89 12 15 21 1
181 86 22

Landfall Is.
↓
Port Cornwallis
↓
Saddle 2400 ft.
Horizontal Scale 4 1/2 in. to 4 miles.
Vertical. " 5000 ft. to "

↓
Anderson's
Street.

↓
Middle St.

↓
Old P. Cornwallis

↓
Rutland I

89 185-21
87 103 288

covered with Mangroves, and intersected by narrow canal like passages filled or half empty as the tide rises and falls.

140 A few miles to the South the land again reaches a considerable elevation and retains it for 18 miles when it resumes a lower character, but we are unable to say to what extent as this portion of the coast opposite the Archipelago was not examined.

141 At the Eastern entrance of Middle Strait, hills are again prominent, become more so a few miles to the South, pass Old Harbour, and terminate at Macpherson's Straits.

142. Of the Geology of the Island we have not had sufficient opportunities to warrant any detailed description.

143 Specimens of rocks have been collected from every locality where we landed, but it will require some time, and the assistance of a practical Geologist to arrange and classify them.

144 In an economical view, the discovery of extensive beds of silicious sandstone, and limestone is important as affording a supply of materials necessary for a settlement.

145.

46

The hills throughout the island are covered from their summit to their base with luxuriant vegetation and will supply any amount of material for building and other purposes. They include Bamboos, Palms and Rattans, as well as Timber trees.

146.

On the East coast as far South as Long Island, there is a great deficiency of water; we noticed few running streams.

147.

It is probably in consequence of this that there are so few birds in that part of the Island.

148.

At Old Port Formwallis where water abounds, there were numerous birds, but our occupations did not permit of any collection worthy of note being made.

149

The only Mammal whose existence we ascertained was the Pig, their skulls being found suspended in the huts of the savages.

150

Throughout the expedition we found the "General Chart of the Andamans" by Lieutenant Archibald Blair (a manuscript copy of which was obtained from the Surveyor General's Office prior to leaving Calcutta) of the greatest use. It has always proved a safe and certain

Hydrographical
Features of the
Great Andaman.

certain guide to all those parts of the islands which had been examined by him in detail, and it was only in those spots where his survey has been less minute that we have found it to be at all defective, and all these localities have been found to be of such a nature as to be of no practical utility, either in themselves, or from being beset with dangers which render them so. Thus we found the Strait which connects Port Audaman with Stewart's Sound to be impassable even for a boat at low water, and the Western coast in the parallel of Old Port Formwallis is so deeply fringed with coral as to render the fine harbour which was there discovered, and has been before alluded to, all but useless.

151. But those places which have been attentively surveyed, as evinced by the fullness of the detail represented on the Chart, such as Old and New Port Formwallis, Rutland Island, Port Campbell, &c., we found to be in exactly the same condition as delineated by Blair nearly 70 years ago. This was particularly observable in the Middle Strait, where Islets of only 50 yards in length appear in precisely the same

state, both as to size, elevation and position as that represented by the first Surveyor, the very vegetation upon them would give the idea of its being the growth of only last Monsoon, and the only signs of age are the dead stems and branches of trees standing amongst the low Mangrove, stunted by want of the free access of the waters of the ocean.

152. The permanency of the features of this passage is no doubt attributable in the first place to the hard sandstone formation, which is prevalent in the neighbourhood and which forms the foundation of these islets as well as the points which govern the windings of the Strait; further, the tides are weak and carry no silt with them and the drainage is merely that of the adjacent hills, which would amount in the aggregate to 50 square Miles, and this being distributed along the whole length of the Strait is far too small to affect it.

153. The whole of the shores of the Andaman are skirted by continuous coral reefs. Coral abounds in every bay and is strewn in broken pieces on every beach. These reefs are far more extensive, and form dangers to a far greater distance from the land on the West side than on the East, depths of 100 fathoms being found in certain

in many places on the Eastern shore within 3 miles of the Coast and generally at a distance of five miles, whereas on the Western shore the reefs extend and form dangerous patches at a distance of twenty and twenty five miles from the land, a fact the probability of which is sufficiently indicated by the geological features of the Islands, the general dip of the stratified rocks being to the Eastward and at a high angle, sometimes as much as 45° .

154. We were unable to make any observations on the growth of the Coral both on account of the Chart being on too small a scale for such a purpose, and our own time not permitting.

155. Navigation amongst Corals must at all times be hazardous and the most minute survey, may fail to detect some of the isolated rocks formed by the insect, and of the approach to which no warning is to be found, and the banks which exist so far to the Westward must always prove an impediment to the prosperity of a colony established at Inter-view Island, or in any part of the Western Coast.

156. The Hydrographical features of the several places visited have

so direct a bearing on the point we are called upon to decide, that it has been thought better to include them in the general description of those localities where they will be found.

157. We are happy to have it ^{Absence of} in our power to report that, notwithstanding ^{Sickness.} the constant exposure of our party in boats, and in penetrating primeval jungle never before traversed, not a single case of sickness occurred from beginning to end.

We have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servants.

J. M. M. M. M.

President,
Surgeon, Bengal Army.

Geo. R. Playfair. M.D.

Surgeon Bengal Army
J. M. M. M. M.
H. J. N.