THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

The circulation of the correspondence received by the Beatrice caused considerable sensation in Adelaide on Thursday. In almost every case the letters complained of mismanagement by the Government Resident, disorganization in the party, and a want of activity, not only as to the survey, but in making the needful preparations for the wet season. Some of the letters are couched in language grossly disrespectful to Mr. Finniss; and, whilst we do not give insertion to them, we cannot withhold from our readers the substance of others less offensively expressed. They are handed about in town, they form the subject of conversation in every direction, and it is not our fault that their publication is unaccompanied by the antidote of Mr. Finniss's official statement. The uniform tendency of the letters to condemn the conduct of the officer in command has produced an effect which can only be removed by a full and complete vindication of the course pursued by Mr. Finniss. The production of his despatches may, and we trust will, prove that the delays complained of were unavoidable; that all necessary precautions have been taken for the safety and comfort of the expedition; that the important duty of selecting a site for the capital has been wisely performed; and that the purchasers of land may soon expect to hear that the survey is rapidly progressing. In the meantime, we have great pleasure in giving the following particulars from an officer who may be considered an impartial witness, and a more competent observer than many of the gentlemen who have assumed the right to condemn or complain of Mr. Finniss. Commander Hutchison, of the Beatrice, has given us the following items of information, which will no doubt be read with considerable interest:—

With regard to the eligibility of Escape Cliffs as the site for the capital, he confirms the reports

the site for the capital, he confirms the reports which have been received as to the absence of building stone; but suggests that it may be found at no great distance under the ground. At all events, he thinks that the coral which abounds in the locality might be made available, as is the case in Timor, where that material is very generally employed for building purposes. With regard to the water supply, he states that the Doctor was present when Lieutenant Howard, by digging a depth of some three or four feet, came upon a spring of that useful element; that he tasted and expressed a high opinion in favour of it, which opinion formed one of the most potent reasons with the Government Resident for resolving on removing the encampment to Escape Cliffs. Since then, however, the Doctor has conceived a strong dislike to the water, and the commander states that the means he has taken to publish his views with regard to its deleterious properties has done much to foment the dissatisfaction which exists among the party. In order, however, to afford an opportunity of testing its quality, several bottlefuls of it have been brought down in the Beatrice. There is no difficulty in obtaining such water about 13 or 14 feet below the surface, and to show that it is at least susceptible of improvement, the Commander mentions the following circumstance:—When the Beatrice left for Timor, she took a stock of Escape Cliffs Water with her, which served during the whole of the voyage. On her return theDoctor urgently requested that some water should be sent ashore, and a portion of what remained was accordingly forwarded, and upon tasting it he exclaimed, "Thank God, there is some good water to be had." Of course, as yet, it has not been definitely decided that Escape Cliffs shall form the locale whereon Palmerston is to be built. The present encampment is situated on a plain, well-watered and well-timbered; but there are in its vicinity extensive swamps. In fact, swampiness is a peculiarity of the regions adjacent to the river along its entire course so far as examined. The cliffs from which the site of the encampment takes its name are some 18 or 19 feet in height, and a flat of considerable extent lies between them and the Adelaide. A piece of

between them and the Adelaide. A piece of swampy ground, affected by the sea at high tide, lies near the Narrows, but a moderate sum expended in wharfs would be sufficient to provide a commodious harbour for the accommodation of shipping. Commander Hutchison thinks that if this part is finally selected as the port of the new territory, the capital would probably have to be built some miles in. He states, however, that the Government Resident contemplates inspecting other places before absolutely selecting the neighbourhood of Escape Cliffs; and, in fact, at the date of his departure he was about to visit Port Darwin. Port Charles had before been tried, but the water being very brackish caused the abandonment of that site.

With respect to Port Darwin, Commander Hutchison states that it is rather exposed, but that there at least no difficulty would be interposed on account of the want of building materials. There quartz reefs in abundance are to be found, and it is the locality which gives more promise of possessing valuable mineral deposits than any other hitherto inspected. Three tons of quartz taken from its vicinity was brought to Adelaide by the Beatrice, and probably some specimens will be crushed to ascertain whether they are, as supposed, auriferous.

In ascending the Adelaide, Commander Hutchison found that well-grassed arable plains, about six or seven miles in breadth, clothed in vegetation, and well adapted for rice and other tropical productions, skirted its banks on either side. Beyond these were to be seen hills of considerable elevation and apparently rich in verdure; but time would not allow of the dispatch of exploring parties to them. The plains were intersected with beautiful rivulets, which formed confluences with the river, and the Commander is of opinion that the swamps are more likely to be caused through their overflowing their banks in the rainy season than through any inundation of the river itself. He suggests that the plan which will be found most practicable when the country comes to be settled will be for the settlers to fix their residences in the hilly districts, and form communications with their holdings on the plains. At all events, he thinks there will be no difficulty in the way of

thinks there will be no difficulty in the way of forming roads in the new territory.

On the question of climate, the Commander speaks favourably, but strongly deprecates the want of due care among the members of the party to ward of diarrhœa and such like complaints. One fertile cause of illness is the immoderate use of water. At first, in spite of warnings, they were wont to imbibe excessive draughts of inferior water; and he thinks it not improbable that this was the prime origin of the unfortunate Bastian Boucaut's fatal illness. From the time of the Beatrice's arrival in May until her departure in October dry weather had prevailed, and throughout that time the country had presented a very beautiful aspect. At the date of her setting sail the rainy season was about setting in.

With regard to the natives, he reports that they very greatly resemble the aborigines of South Australia, and in their predatory habits is only another way of saying that they resemble savage races all the world over. Owing to want of vigilance in the guard, or for some other reason, they were enabled to gratify this propensity at the expense of the party; and the novel character of the booty presented to their cupidity seems to have strongly whetted their acquisitiveness. In one raid upon the encampment they carried away such a number of things that their track was strewed with articles dropped by them on their way back. He is confident, however, that no great impediment to colonization is to be apprehended from the blacks.

With reference to the chances of procuring labour, the Commander observes that the jealousy felt by the Dutch authorities is likely to prevent any extensive importation of coolies. His opinion, however, seems to be that this is not likely to have any injurious effect upon the new settlement. As yet little or nothing has been done in the way of survey, as the Government Resident considers the party too weak numerically to warrant him in sending out the surveyors to prosecute their important duties.

On the arrival of the Henry Ellis it was suggested that the Government Resident should proceed to examine the country. Commander Hutchison con-

examine the country, Commander Hutchison consenting to superintend the disembarkation of the stores; but the want of judgment in the stowage of the vessel frustrated this arrangement, as the horse gear could not be got at until nearly all the other things had been removed. Commander Hutchison bears testimony to the diligence and activity of Mr. Finniss, and states that he has been always ready to do anything tending to facilitate and forward the course of settlement. He complains, however, that he has been greatly embarrassed by the opposition of some members of the party. He attributes the disaffection prevalent among the expedition to the conduct of Mr. E. Ward at the inquest on the aboriginal; and to show the mode in which that investigation was conducted, he states that the *post-mortem* examination of the deceased black's head was effected with the aid of a mallet and cold chisel.

Lastly, the Commander speaks in high terms of the conduct of the men belonging to the Beatrice, and also of Mr. Graham, acting master of the Yatala. He is himself suffering from illness; but we are happy to say that it is not so severe as to confine him to bed or to preclude the visits of friends.

The following is an extract from an official letter addressed by Mr. Finniss to the Chief Secretary, dated off Port Patterson, October 12:—

"As Captain Hutchison is now leaving me I can only add to my former despatch respecting the site of the town that I see nothing in Port Darwin or Port Patterson to cause any alteration in my opinion as to the superior advantage of Adam Bay for a place of settlement, and I accordingly take the responsibility of advising you that I shall fix on Escape Cliffs for the main part of the town, and on Port Daly, inside the Adelaide River, for the remainder of the allotments. The superiority of Adam Bay and Escape Cliffs consists in their affording ingress and egress to and from the distant interior by water communication, which will be ultimately navigable by the largest vessels, and which in the meantime will be available for lighters bringing down stock from the interior to the ship's side when anchored either in Adam Bay or Port

side when anchored either in Adam Bay or Port Daly.

"Large ships can discharge cargo in Port Daly close alongside as soon as wharfs are made, and in the meantime by lighters from the anchorage opposite the cliffs. As soon as I can muster a few spare hands from the work of the camp, I shall commence the survey. I enclose a sketch of the site of the town and port traced from Captain Hutchison's chart as regards the coast line, and I wish to guard against any publication of a mere design, which, whilst it will be carried out in its general plan, will be materially altered in detail when the ground inside is properly surveyed."

The following extracts from a letter addressed by the Government Resident to his son in Adelaide were published yesterday in the evening papers. The letter bears date on October 12, and appears to have been written on board the Beatrice after the closing of the mail:—

"I understand that the Government do not intend to send any reinforcements until they hear from me again, which will not be till the end of November; and, as they will learn, at the same time Hutchison intends to return, being ill. They will probably wait his arrival in Adelaide before they send out another expedition. I am glad of this, although the feeling of desertion, and the conduct of my officers whilst we were looking for a site, created great despondency. Surrounded by hostile natives, without proper food—for all our salt meat had turned bad—and for six weeks I have been living on bad damper and a little sago with tea and sugar. The health of the party failed. Dr. Goldsmith alarmed the camp with a report that the water was deleterious and the cause of sickness; amongst other things the statement of copper being in solution really frightened some of the old women, of whom I have not a few. . . . I say I am glad the Government have removed the uncertainty in which I was placed, because I have taken measures to bring things in order on my own responsibility. First, I have suspended Mr. Ward from office and the captain of the Yatala, and I intend to do the same by the Doctor the moment another medical man appears. I have had to discharge Mr. Charles Pennycuick, a nephew of the Farrells. Although I tried to serve him, he

had to discharge Mr. Charles Pennycuick, a nephew of the Farrells. Although I tried to serve him, he joined the Ward clique, and so I got rid of him. I got three months' supplies of vegetables and some fresh meat—buffaloes, and fowls, and goats—from the Beatrice, and I have sent the Yatala for more, so that my men may be in health for the next six weeks. The only danger that threatens me is the want of shelter. We have not strength to build the huts which are necessary for the men as a protection from the sun and rain expected in December, for I have to send out three armed horsemen to watch the horses at their feeding-ground, three miles from camp, the grass about us being all burnt. Then I have frequently to send four men to fetch water every day—a service which also requires protection. Then I have a camp guard of two sergeants and three men, so as to have one sentry day and night. This, with cooking, &c., seldom leaves me more than six men for work. The party is too weak for surveying, so I cannot do anything in that way. When I get back I shall see what can be done; but then the bad weather threatens, and operations must stop, probably till February. I am all right, the vegetables having restored me completely to health. I cannot even get the medicines from the Doctor which I want, and which I learn how to use. He will prescribe for me, and put me on the sick-list, which won't do, and I will not trust his skill to treat me. The water here is perfectly good. I tested it, and found no trace of copper; hence I found him (the Doctor) out. It was only done to drive us from the cliffs, embarrass me, and give him and Mr. Ward the choice of the settlement—that, in short, I could not have moved. We should have remained to perish if the water were bad. All hands have been well since the arrival of fresh food. The Henry Ellis, Beatrice, and Yatala have filled up with water, and use it without any evil consequences."

A letter dated Escape Cliffs, October 6, having dwelt upon the short commons to which the party were reduced prior to the return of the Beatrice from Timor with scanty supplies, goes on to say—

"It's an awful sell this place; or I know the most of us think it so, for our trouble in coming. The

of us think it so, for our trouble in coming. The affairs of this "exhibition," as we call it, are anything but in a flourishing condition. There is a general feeling of petty jealousy and suspicion shown here that I think was never so fully developed among such a small number of men isolated from the busy world as we are. The officers are totally ignored by the Government Resident, their opinions are not solicited, nor are they treated with that respect due to their position. While B. T. F. is at loggerheads with most of his officers, he solicits the advice of his sycophants—a chosen few of the labourers; and of course the manner in which the officers are treated when compared with the men causes a bad feeling, and I dont think that there was ever such a lot of men together who were so utterly careless as to what happened, or so indifferent to the progress of the 'exhibition' as there are here; and they are scarcely to be blamed, for things go on in such a peculiar way that few can keep any interest in it; for my own part I wish I was out of it.

"It is a strange fact, but nevertheless true, that we have been on shore nearly four months now, and we are just as far advanced as when we landed. Indeed, the day for commencing surveys seems further distant than the day we landed. I think there will be very little done this year, and, putting aside all the petty feelings and disturbances, how is it to be accounted for? Who is to blame? We have been here so long, and what have we to show for it? Nothing. Our provisions are fast expending, and we are in danger of suffering from the want of them. We have drawn our screw, &c., and are not even prepared for the coming wet season. Our stores are lying about on the ground, all without covering; no log houses are put up; we are still all living in tents, which the first good breeze will capsize, as this is sandy ground and bad for tent-pegs. I anticipate a very dull, hard time of it for the next four months, till a vessel arrives from Adelaide, or till the Yatala gets back.

"Ward, our Clerk, has been suspended, and is going in for big correspondence. There will be some large rows before long. I have heard of some stinging letters going by this mail.

stinging letters going by this mail. . . .

"I believe Escape Cliffs is to be the site of the capital of this great empire as is to be, but a funny capital it will be. There is nothing here requisite for one at least, as far as we are aware. Capitalists or landowners intending to build here will do well to bring stone, lime, and even water. If such men as McKinlay or Goyder had been here we should have known the country for 100 miles round. At present our explorations could be measured by yards."

The writer goes on to lament the time wasted in marching up and down before the Government Resident's three tents, for which duty three sentries and two sergeants are told off each day, whilst the important work of the "exhibition" is neglected. He concludes with the wish to be soon able to see Adelaide again.

The following is an extract from a very long and violent letter:—

"On the 8th, every officer being in camp, Finniss sent away a highly-armed party of 17, under command of his son, aged 18 (chainman), to kill, burn, and destroy all the natives they could find, or something like it. The greatest disgust prevails here at the result, for one poor old unarmed nigger whom we knew was barbarously butchered and tortured to death; and the native camp from which they fled in alarm ransacked and destroyed. When they returned and told their horrid tale, Finniss said, 'Well done, Freddy; I knew you'd teach them a lesson. Gentlemen, will you take a glass of sherry?' Of course they would; and he afterwards gave them an extra glass of grog on which to carouse over the memories of their inhuman deed. . . . I will say no more on the revolting subject. The Protector of Aborigines is taking the necessary measures to have the whole affair legally investigated. It is useless to attempt anything of the sort here, for Finniss is quite reckless how far he uses—I should say abuses—his authority to frustrate justice.

"Another serious matter here is the water we are supplied with. Early in September a good deal of sickness, chiefly dysentery or similar gastric irritation, prevailed in camp. The Doctor

gastric irritation, prevailed in camp. The Doctor made an examination of the water, and found it to contain sulphuretted hydrogen and traces of copper, and there was no longer any doubt what caused uneasy stomachs. Goldsmith officially reported all this to the Government Resident, and as usual got snubbed for his pains. At this time several men, amongst them B Boucaut, brother of J. P. Boucaut, were ill, and it is on record in the official sick reports that the cause of the illness was attributed by the Doctor to the deleterious matter. Finniss would do nothing. 'We all must lie down and die, Doctor,' he said one morning. A few days afterwards, Boucaut, whose illness had progressed from gastric irritation to remittent fever, did die, and a good many others were seriously bad at the time.

"It is understood that he has selected Escape Cliffs as the site of the City of Palmerston, and if so, what I believe Manton told him will be proved

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—that scarcely a section will be selected here. The anchorage and landing are bad; the port, already named Daly, is the mouth of the River Adelaide—seven miles away, is out of the question, a mud swamp. The soil at Escape Cliffs is sand and ironstone pebbles, and falls to swamps as you go inland. There is some good land on the beach where I landed, and we found fresh water last June, but there is very little of it, as it turns out. Water is two miles away, and not plentiful, and of bad quality; no building stone or lime; no feed for even our present stock near the city, so called; and no chance of gardens or cultivation at all there. And in face of all this and of all the mischief that has been done – destruction of stores, scarcity of supplies (we were almost starving till the Beatrice came back from Timor the other day with about three weeks' provisions), hostilities with niggers, the country unexamined, not even a store erected, and no work done, but thousands of pounds wasted – Finniss is actually going away for a cruise in the Beatrice as far as Talc Head to look for quartz, and takes the Julia with him for turtle-hunting and to bring him back."

The following is an extract from a letter specially referring to the late Mr. B. Boucaut:—

"I may tell you as a reason, perhaps, why your

"I may tell you as a reason, perhaps, why your brother has been the first to pay this fatal penalty, that from the first moment of the settlement of the depot here he was deputed to fetch water for the camp. He used to go with a cart and horses to the wells, about two miles, every morning for water, and getting hot with the journey he used to drink a great deal both at the water and on his return. It is generally believed that up to the time of his illness he had drank more of the water than any one else in camp. It is very bad, and there is no doubt it contains copper, although Mr. Finniss will not admit that; but even he has, since your poor brother's death, so far endorsed the Doctor's opinion as to issue a general order, recommending the men to boil the water and filter it before using it.

"I am very sorry for your loss, and for the loss the expedition has sustained in the death of your brother. I think he was a general favourite with the men, and am sure he was respected by the officers for his obliging nature, his zeal, and general usefulness. He is buried beneath the shadow of a clump of palm-trees, about a quarter of a mile from the north-east extremity of Escape Cliffs. Mr. Finniss ordered out a firing party to follow their comrades' remains, and he attended in his uniform of Lieutenant-Colonel."

The writer gives an account of the sale of Mr. B. Boucaut's effects, which was conducted by Mr. King, his intimate friend, who retained, we are authorized to state, such articles as the family of the deceased were likely to wish preserved and forwarded to them.

With regard to the water, it may be satisfactory to the friends of the party and the public to know that a well had been sunk, and water of good quality discovered, to which the Doctor attributes the disappearance of the disease, which had excited great consternation in the party.

The following passage from a letter is curious:—

"I suppose you have heard also how Hutchison and Howard, of the Beatrice, tried to help him out. The fact I believe is that Finniss went up the river to that fatal place by Hutchison's advice, and so you see the shoe pinches more men's corns than one. I think, too, this pretty accurately explains

you see the same policies more men's corns than one. I think, too, this pretty accurately explains the return of the Beatrice at this moment, and Hutchison's determination to take none of the officers as passengers. The Doctor would have invalided Pearson on account of his wounds, but it was no use trying for a passage."

It is understood by the party that Mr. Ward's defence consists in the fact that he was a summoned Juror on an inquest, and simply acted according to his conscientious views of the duty imposed upon him by the oath administered by the Coroner. He complains of the arbitrary and unwarrantable conduct of the Government Resident in suspending him from office, after he had referred the subject-matter of complaint to head-quarters, and five weeks after the inquest, the rider to the verdict being the alleged justification of that extreme exercise of authority. He pleads that the rider to the verdict was simply an embodiment of evidence given by every witness examined on the inquest; that it was unanimously adopted by the Jury (of which Mr. Stephen King was Foreman); and that when it was read to the Coroner, he expressed his full concurrence in it, as is recorded in the minutes of the proceedings.

We have seen a cleverly-executed outline drawing received by the Beatrice's mail, headed "Sketches from ye Northern Expedition," and inscribed underneath "How we do it in the Northern Territory," Adam Bay, 1864. The sketch is divided into two scenes, one representing the Government Resident's tent, in which Mr. Finniss is discovered recumbent in an easy chair, enjoying that blissful dreamy state which usually follows active exertion by elderly gentlemen at the dinner-table. The furniture is simple, but adapted to minister to the gratification of an experienced good-liver. A cask of Simms's ale stands in one corner; in the other is a wine-cooler filled with claret flasks; on the table is a pleasing array of bottles; and a tumbler, containing, doubtless, some cooling drink, is within easy reach of the ruminating commandant. The centre pole of the tent is decorated by some dead wildfowl, evidently awaiting their turn to contribute to the enjoyment of "the monarch of all he surveys."

enjoyment of "the monarch of all he surveys." The other picture is, we trust, a greatly exaggerated fancy sketch. It represents several poor fellows stricken down by starvation, malaria, and bad water; whilst the king of terrors, enveloped in a miasmatic mist, brandishes his fatal dart, copper-pointed, over one member of the expedition more wasted and woe begone in appearance than his invalid companions. Can such things be concocted at and sent from the settlement without some good grounds for the serious charges they imply against the Government Resident? If so, there must be a spirit of discontent in the party which calls for treatment more prompt and severe than Mr. Finniss seems to have exercised.