THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.

The South Australian arrived at Port Adelaide on Sunday, 1st instant, from Adam Bay, via King George's Sound. She reached Palmerston on the 5th December, 1864, and her appearance with reinforcements and supplies and intelligence was hailed with unqualified pleasure by the members of the original expedition, whether good men and true or malcontent. She found the party in good health, but certainly not hard at work. It is to be hoped, however, that the first difficulties have been overcome, and that as the men are by this time housed they will be prepared and disposed to proceed with the work of surveying, &c., as soon as the subsidence of the wet season will permit them. Mr. Ebenezer Ward, Accountant, Clerk in Charge, and Postmaster, and Mr. Francis Humbert, master of the Yatala, have been relieved from their duties, and return by the South Australian to Adelaide. The following men have been discharged and permitted to return to Adelaide at their own cost:—John D. de Skelton, John Absalom Howe, Thomas King, John Cowey, and Henry T. Styles.

We have authority to state that the reinforcement and supplies by the South Australian have placed the Government Resident in possession of every necessary for the safety of the party and the prosecution, so far as the season will permit, of the preliminary work of settlement. The South Australian Government will, however, apply to the naval officer in command of the station to appoint a successor to Commander Hutchison, whose health compels him to return to England. It is expected, notwithstanding this delay, that the Beatrice can be dispatched to the Northern Territory in about a fortnight with a mail and several small matters which it is desirable the Government Resident should have in store. It is further expected that in the course of the next two months a vessel bound to India may be chartered to call at Adam Bay. From the voluminous correspondence placed before our readers they will no doubt be glad to gather that men experienced in sheep-farming are of opinion that wool will not suffer deterioration in the Northern Territory. Some doubt is expressed as to whether the sugarcane can be cultivated profitably there; but no doubt is felt as to the fitness of the soil and climate for growing cotton and rice. It is thought also that wheat may be cultivated there; and as for building materials, Mr. Finniss speaks hopefully of a sandstone which he has observed on the Palmerston Peninsula, and lime, he says, can be obtained by burning coral, which is found there in exhaustless abundance.

The following official correspondence has been supplied to us for publication:—

"To the Hon. H. Ayers, &c., &c.

"Palmerston, December 8, 1864.

"Sir—I do myself the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter, dated 28th October last, sent by steamship South Australian, which arrived here on the 5th instant at noon. This reinforcement was most opportune, and has completely changed the aspect of affairs. The men are a fine respectable body, and some new blood was wanted. The stock arrived and have all been landed safely. We began this day to discharge the rest of the cargo; but as at this particular period of the moon's age when the neap tides prevail we have only one tide by daylight, and as the boats can only cross the reef for about three hours each tide, I fear it will be impossible to clear her within the four lay days; however, every effort is being made.

"On the 6th I took the captain and some of the visitors to visit Port Daly whilst the stock was being disembarked. The want of fuel and the short time allowed for the stay of the ship has alone prevented the South Australian from entering, and I should have made every effort, even by cutting fuel for the purpose, but for the necessity of her leaving as early as possible to avoid the great cost of demurrage.

"I regret the serious inconvenience that has arisen from my omission to send duplicates of my despatches by the Henry Ellis. However, the reports as to the destination of the ship were so vague up to the last moment that I had doubts whether it would be of any avail to send any letters by her. Moreover, I was utterly unable to cope with the mass of correspondence which came before me. The copying press had not then been established, as our stores were not in a state to be unpacked, being under removal at the time.

"On this occasion I have endeavoured to supply the omission as regards the one I sent by Commander Hutchison; but the want of office accommodation, very insufficiently afforded by a tent full of dust and boxes, will render the duplicates incomplete.

"The Yatala has not arrived from Timor, but is hourly expected.

"As soon as the new hands are available by the discharge of the South Australian, I shall make arrangements for the survey of the City of Palmerston at this site, as I have already intimated in my despatch by the Beatrice. I am fully satisfied that I have chosen the best site on the north-west coast, having seen quite sufficient of the country to come to this conclusion. As we are getting our supplies of water from wells at the distance of more than a mile, I prepared for the difficulty of having to cart over perhaps heavy roads during the wet season by sinking a well close to the depot. We have obtained excellent water at a depth of 24 feet, about a quarter of a mile due east of the camp from the cliff, in the fullest abundance; and from excursions I have made round and across the peninsula, I find water is obtainable over its whole surface, in this the driest season of the year, at depths varying from four to 24 feet from the surface, through strata easily worked with the pickaxe.

"As some persons have hinted at the Victoria River as a site for the first settlement, I think it proper to state my views on the subject. I find that no ship can get up the Adelaide River without being towed by three boats with a favourable tide. The current is strong, and the reaches are tortuous; therefore sails are useless. The tide rises 12 feet or more. No merchant ships could man three boats with the crews they take to sea; a steamtug would therefore be required, and a careful survey must be made previous to any attempt at navigation by such means. The delays and risks and expenses of such a system would deter any vessel from visiting a settlement up the Adelaide River, where, if placed, it must be at a distance of nearly 50 miles up to attain the fresh water.

"In the Victorian District these difficulties are much increased, as the tides rise and fall 30 feet and upwards, and the currents are from five to six knots an hour. It would require very powerful steamtugs to overcome this, and there would be no trade to make one pay for a very long time—until, indeed, an export was created, which must be the

indeed, an export was created, which must be the work of years.

"Whatever may be the result of future settlement on this coast in the formation of new sites of commerce and new ports, I am quite convinced from the foregoing considerations, aided by the printed evidence which I have studied, and my general knowledge of the coast and its capabilities and its tides, that a first settlement at the Victoria would be a complete and fatal mistake.

"I have fully gone into the merits of this site in former despatches, and I confidently leave the correctness of the views entertained by the Government in framing my instructions, confirmed, as they have been most fully, by my own judgment on the spot, to be established by the result. I never felt more satisfied with any opinion on which I may have acted than with that which I have formed as to the propriety of the site I have selected for Palmerston.

"Palmerston, with its outer harbour in Adam Bay, where the steamship South Australian is now discharging cattle and other cargo at a distance less than one mile from the landing-place, and its inner harbour of Port Daly, connected with it by a road less than six miles in length, may safely look to the future in support of its pretensions to be hereafter a flourishing settlement.

"I have, &c.,
"B. T. FINNISS,
"Gov. Res., N. T."

The following letter, addressed to the Agent-General, is of sufficient interest to be published here:—

"Palmerston, December 9, 1864.

"Sir—My last letter to you was written on board the Beatrice off Port Darwin on the 16th October last. Since then nothing has transpired of importance to landowners in England. I mentioned to you in that letter, however, that I had decided on fixing the site of the first town at Escape Cliffs. I now confirm that statement, and have to inform you that the city of Palmerston, as it has been named by the Governor-in-Chief, will be laid out at Escape Cliffs, at the very spot where the officers of the Beagle, Messrs. Fitzmaurice and Keys, had to dance for their lives to avoid the spears of the natives assembled to attack them. We have got possession of the top of the cliff, and the natives are now a myth as regards the whole of the Hotham, or as it will now be called, the Palmerston Peninsula, for they have not shown themselves for several months. I do not think we shall have any trouble with them.

"On the 5th inst. the steamship South Australian arrived here with reinforcements of men and supplies of cattle and stores. She made the passage by Torres Straits, calling at Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. She has brought us 40 fresh hands, 14 horses, and 400 sheep, all of which have been safely landed from the anchorage, something less than a mile from the cliff. I am now in a position to proceed with the surveys, and they will be pushed with all possible vigour. I propose to lay out about two-thirds of the city fronting the sea at the cliffs, which is a fine healthy situation, open to westerly sea breezes, and the remaining portion at Port Daly, an inner harbour between the mouth of the River Adelaide and the Narrows. This harbour is safe from all winds, deep, and capacious. You have no doubt received from the Admiralty Commander Hutchison's survey, which will explain its capabilities better than I can do in writing. The land around the basin which forms the harbour is low, some of it covered at high water spring tide to the depth of six inches; but there are other portions of the shore which though low are still quite free from any tidal influence. The water being deep enough for vessels of any size to lay within a few yards of the shore, capital only is wanted to make wharfs and stores for the convenience of shipping. There is a level road from this to Palmerston, less than six miles, so that the busy merchant may after office hours take his drive to the more healthy and pleasant site of Palmerston for his dinner and social enjoyments.

"I have not laid out the city at the inner harbour, because it is a low swampy country, and will probably be hotter in temperature and less salubrious than the site at the cliffs. The whole of Adam Bay is a sheltered harbour, and for some years to come it is probable that vessels will not enter the inner harbour, as they are almost equally safe outside in a tranquil sea at all times, with scarcely a ripple, and they can discharge cargoes by lighters with great facility at Palmerston itself. The stock-stations for sheep will be on the Daly Ranges, about 60 miles from Palmerston to the south, and for horses and cattle on the flats on each side of the river intervening, where the country is of the richest description, covered with tall grass, which it is scarcely possible to walk through, and abundantly supplied with fresh water from lagoons and running streams, which are found on both sides of the river at intervals of less than a mile.

"This country will form admirable breeding-stations, having direct water communication for 60 miles with the shipping. The banks of the river are steep, and the water deep.

"Settlers in the interior will have no difficulty in shipping horses and produce from the steep banks of the river directly into lighters when provided, and from the smoothness of the water in Adam Bay they can have them taken alongside vessels anchored opposite Palmerston until the wharfage accommodation is erected at the port.

"I have no doubt from what I see of the climate, and from conversations with my shepherds and stockmen, that wool can be produced here as profitably as in the northern runs of South Australia. I think also that wheat can be grown successfully. As to cotton there can be no doubt that the flats of the Adelaide are admirably suited for its growth. Rice also, but sugar I should doubt, as the soil is not volcanic, and the alternate wet and dry seasons would, I think, be unfavourable.

"I have not seen any limestone yet, but there is a white sandstone which will be found, when quarried, to produce excellent building stone. Lime, if not discovered, can be had by burning the coral, which can be collected in abundance from any of the coral reefs which everywhere fringe the north west coast.

"I see no harbour that in an equal degree with this opens access by water with so large an extent of available country. In this respect the Victoria alone could compete. But judging of the effect of the tides and currents in that river by what I see of the Adelaide River, I am convinced that no settlement there would thrive, because no sailing vessel can safely enter and depart without the aid of a steaming of great power. This disadvantage attaches in some degree to the navigation of the Adelaide River, where the tides rise only 12 feet, and rush with a velocity of only three knots at

Adelaide River, where the tides rise only 12 feet and rush with a velocity of only three knots an hour; whilst in the Victoria the tides and currents are more than double, from which must result more than double the difficulty of an anchorage. Stock will thrive in the back country of the Victoria, and in the course of years, when an export has been created sufficient to employ many ships, it will probably become a port of importance. But as we must work for the present as well as the future, Palmerston as now situated is open to the visits of ships of every description and tonnage without danger or delay. The soil of the peninsula, about 50 square miles, consists of a ferruginous sandstone, which forms an admirable dry site for dwelling houses; and although not so rich as remoter land, yet it produces native grass long enough and thick enough to render walking through it a matter of great difficulty, and trees and shrubs of many varieties, amongst them the spinal and the cabbage palm. Under these circumstances I infer that it will be suitable for many descriptions of cultivation; and as water can be obtained over the whole area of the peninsula by sinking wells from six to 26 feet deep, this portion of the district to be surveyed will be profitably occupied by future settlers. There is some very rich ground about three miles east of the cliffs, which will form the market gardens of Palmerston.

"Fishing will be profitable, if undertaking as a trade by skilled persons, especially, I think, turtle fishing and trawling for crabs, sole, and other flat-fish. The crabs are fine and large, but are not easily taken by us without proper means.

"I found the natives very troublesome at first. They were shy, and would not approach us for some time but after making and receiving signs of friendly intentions they came to us in great numbers, showing our confidence by stealing, and clamming everything that was within their reach. Their pertinacity in this respect was so great that to avoid quarrels we were obliged to suspend all work during their visits, which became at last too frequent and troublesome. Not having an interpreter between us, it was difficult to make them understand that our peaceful behaviour was not the result of inability to defend ourselves; hence a quarrel at last arose. One of them was shot, but not until they had wounded one of our party, and they retaliated by spearing our horses. I sent out a retaliatory party to clear the peninsula of the natives by destroying their camp, and in an affray which took place another native was shot dead, a noted chief and thief, to whom I had shown the greatest kindness. Since this, which is now nearly three months, we have had no communication with them. We see their fires about ten miles off, up the river, and on one of the Vernon Islands. I think that their hostility has been averted at very little cost to them, and I have no doubt our stronger party will awe them into respect, and that thus our future communications with them will be of a friendly nature. I never expect to find them useful as labourers, although some such views have been enunciated. They speedily shirk away from the labour of unloading boats, although I gave them food for every package they carried. They are too fat and well fed on easy terms from the natural products of the country to care to work. We shall require for outdoor operations a large amount of labour before which the numbers of the whole native population, if converted into the civilized habit of working for wages, would be quite inappreciable. We must have Asiatic labour, and that speedily, before we can have buildings, roads, or cultivation to any extent. Landowners who intend to settle must see to this. I have made this letter rather long for official correspondence, and have departed from the usual rule of confining our remarks to one subject; but I know every information to be given by persons on the spot will be valuable to future settlers and speculators.

"I have, &c.,

"R. T. FINNISS.

"G. S. Walters, Agent-General."

"Northern Territory, South Australia,
Depot Escape Cliffs, October 6.

"Sir—I do myself the honour to report proceedings in continuation of my despatch No. 2 of the 10th August last, which was dated from this depot. On the 16th August I discharged the Henry Ellis, finding her rather an encumbrance than a service to the expedition, as the master made too many difficulties about mooring her when required, and she had only a captain's gig in the shape of boats, and was herself undermanned by the loss of two of her seamen—one by desertion in Port Adelaide, another by drowning in Adam Bay. It would have been impossible to use her as a depot, even if these circumstances had been otherwise, as whilst any stores were on board some of our party had to remain with the Assistant Storekeeper to watch the stores, and almost every package was required ashore to supply some article of necessity for the expedition.

"Captain Phillips was settled with on the 16th August in the following way:—Five hundred pounds (£500), as due under the charter; four hundred and sixty-four pounds (£464), hire for one month under the original agreement; and thirty pounds twelve shillings (£30 12s.), for supplies had during the voyage and pending her stay in Adam Bay. The total sum paid to Captain Phillips, therefore, amounts to nine hundred and ninety-four pounds twelve shillings (£994 12s.), which was done by a bill on the Agent-General for £1,000 at par, the balance being returned to the accountant here. Having found all that was needed for an infant settlement at this place, viz., a convenient harbour, fresh water in sufficient abundance and easily obtainable, an apparently healthy, cheerful site, and good soil in abundance, I made this my permanent depot, and collected all the party here on the 31st August with the cattle and stores—I regret to say, however, with the loss of three horses and three bullocks, which I am satisfied died from the effects of eating a poisonous weed which appears to grow chiefly at the Narrows near salt swamps, and probably in similar situations elsewhere.

"The labour of getting our stores collected—I cannot say secured—at this place has been immense, under all the disadvantages and difficulties that opposed us.

"The goods were first landed in boats from the anchorage outside, nearly a mile from shore, across a mud-flat, which was only accessible twice a day when the tides flowed. Thus very seldom could more than two trips be made by each boat, when the goods had to be carried by hand through the water to high water-mark. The varying heights of the tides at neaps and springs rendered high water-mark a constantly shifting line. From the point where the goods were landed, they had then again to be handled at a subsequent time, and carried to a derrick, which I had caused to be

had then again to be handled at a subsequent time, and carried to a derrick, which I had caused to be made to hoist them up the cliff, about 25 feet high, for a distance of about 100 yards over deep heavy sand. When collected on the top of the cliff they were again removed by animal power to our position, about 400 yards south of the landing-place. I found my party quite insufficient for the labour. There are eleven officers in the expedition. Three men on horseback were required all day to watch and protect the cattle on their feeding ground three miles off, and another party of four was constantly employed digging wells and fetching water to the camp. These casualties with cooks, shepherds, and sick, rendered my effective strength quite insufficient for the work to be performed. Hence there has been much damage to the stores from accident, water, weather, and I am sorry to say plunder in some cases.

"I have not yet got my stores housed, or indeed any of the party; that is work yet to be performed, whilst change of weather is threatening. The wooden houses are not yet landed at this depot.

They were taken out of the Henry Ellis by the men of the Beatrice through the kind assistance of Captain Hutchison, and safely stacked on the beach at Point Charles, the only eligible place at the time they were landed to which they could be conveniently conveyed. The Yatala and the Julia, with seven of my men, are at this moment employed rafting them off, and I expect to have them here to-morrow.

"I stated in former despatches that the Beatrice had proceeded to Timor for supplies. She returned on the first day of this month with supplies of fresh provisions, fruit, and vegetables, greatly to my joy, for her presence was much needed, and I had strained my eyes for days watching her approach.

"My anxiety was occasioned chiefly by the failure of our stock of food. We have abundance of flour, tea, and sugar, but our salt meat, of which we had only brought a stock of pork, had become tainted and unwholesome, both in the large and in the small barrels; and our small stores—rice, cheese, jams, and peas—were exhausted. Our sheep, now reduced to half a dozen, were husbanded; but even when killed afforded very little nourishment, as from the grass having been of necessity burned they had to subsist on leaves and shrubs.

"The health of the party from these combined causes, exposure on exploring trips amongst swamps, insufficient animal and succulent food, hard labour in a tropical sun, and perhaps also from a changing season, had begun to fail, and with it their spirits and energies. None of these causes had been assigned by the surgeon of the expedition, Dr. Goldsmith, to account for the sickness, which he attributes solely and exclusively to the quality of the water. But I am quite satisfied that he is mistaken in this opinion, and his own reports, which I transmit by this mail, admit the fact. The alarm created and excited was sufficient to cause despondency, and I have no doubt that it had such an effect.

"From the very day of the arrival of the Beatrice a change has been operating for the better in the health of the men. This morning Dr. Goldsmith only reports one sick of my party, viz., Mr. Pearson, who has been on the sick-list since his wounds. I have given the men as much fruit and fresh vegetables as they can consume. We killed our first buffalo on the morning after the arrival of the Beatrice, and we can, with the aid of fishing and kangaroo hunting, now make our supplies of fresh meat and vegetables hold out for three months.

"On the 9th Commander Hutchison proceeds to Timor on his way to Adelaide, and I have ordered the Yatala to accompany him as far as Timor for additional supplies, to enable me to hold on for a further three months, by which time I presume the first reinforcement from Adelaide will reach us.

"I send Mr. Davis, the assistant storekeeper, with all my remaining funds on board the Yatala as supercargo. The Yatala cannot be completely repaired at Timor, as Captain Hutchison informs me that they have no sheet copper or copper rods. Iron will be substituted, but will not last 12 months; but as her speedy return is a matter of importance, owing to our necessities and the expected chance of monsoons, there seems to be no alternative. Perhaps Major Douglas could send copper pintels for the rudder and sheathing copper for her bilge and keel from Adelaide. If so, she could be repaired here by her own carpenter. The little fleet will be accompanied as far as Port Patterson by the Julia with 16 hands, including myself. I avail myself of this opportunity to take a view of other harbours, assisted by the judgment of Captain Hutchison, before I finally declare the site of the capital. I shall return in the Julia with my mind fully made up on this subject. In a separate despatch at the last moment I shall communicate the result of our united examination. With respect to the progress of the surveys I have much to say, but very little time in which to write. Nothing has been done in the way of surveying at present, nor can I commence, even assuming this to be the site for settlement, until I get the stores and party under shelter from the rains. The hurricane squalls, as they are termed, blow from the north-east with considerable violence, and it will be unsafe to trust to the insufficient shelter of tents in a climate in which health can only be maintained by care, good shelter, and good food combined.

"I do not like, under all the varying circumstances that may occur, to promise any particular time for the completion of the surveys of the town and port. I can only venture to say that I hope they will be completed before the 1st of March next. I have a season to meet which I know nothing of, and I have but a small party, entirely inadequate to spare too much for the field under the circumstances that have occurred and may occur. But of this the Government may rest assured, that no exertion on my part shall be wanting to get the land ready for selection as early as possible. I have taken up this service in the full conviction that my reputation and honour and welfare are involved in its success; and though I have had to struggle through more difficulties than were foreseen, I am not daunted with the prospects before me, nor do I entertain the slightest doubt of the ultimate accomplishment of all that was expected.

"With respect to the rural surveys, I shall want at least 40 fresh hands, all hardy labourers, and no officers, with provisions, tools, drays, cattle, and horses. I have as many with me as I can possibly find work for, with the addition I allude to, for the next 12 months. They will only impede me. They will require food, shelter, and attendance if

they will require food, shelter, and attendance if they come, and have nothing to do. When I require more it will be easy to communicate with the Government. But in the meantime they will be a positive obstruction. One thing must be supplied to me immediately, viz., a lighter or punt of about 20 tons, and drawing less than three feet water. Without such a convenience I cannot move a single party across the Adelaide River, or any of the rivers. The punt should be, say, from 25 to 30 feet in length, and about eight feet wide clear inside. She must be made to carry a dray loaded and bullocks. There are no means of conveniently or safely landing or embarking horses and stock without such a boat, or of landing cargo except at great loss of time and damage; moreover, the stations inland can only be supplied in this manner. Without roads in this intersected country drays are almost useless, and pack horses can scarcely travel at present on account of forests and creeks with muddy banks and freshwater swamps. I can push on the rural surveys up the east side of the Adelaide River, where there is abundance of fine land at a distance of five or six miles from the river, and so gain the Daly Ranges on this side. But all surveys on the west side must be suspended until I have such means of transport. The seas here are tranquil as a lake; but the waters of the rivers are turbid, subject to a rise and fall of tide varying from 16 feet here to much more down the coast, and the reaches of the rivers tortuous, so that sailing vessels have no chance of using a wind; they must be towed. A punt should have a strong mast and gaff, to be used to hoist cattle and heavy goods, and she should also have a stage in her stern to let down when necessary to admit horses and drays to enter and be withdrawn when alongside of the banks of the rivers, which are deep enough to admit of this stage reaching the firm ground. I have dwelt in detail upon this, because it is an absolute necessity for the surveys. I am now altogether without funds, or at least shall be so in a few days. A supply should therefore be sent. Bills on London, &c., can only be negotiated by sending a vessel to the islands at a great cost. For supplies to be derived from them they will of course answer; but I ought to have cash. The men have their dealings with themselves and with the stewards of ships, and they like to send their own cash to Timor for supplies. I would suggest, however, that, instead of paying the men who desire to remit to Adelaide by procuration orders, as I am doing at present, a credit should be established at one of the Banks—say the English, Scottish, and Australian Bank—in Adelaide in the name of the Government Resident or the Accountant here, and that he should have the authority to pay by cheques drawn against such credit, which should always be watched by the Treasurer in Adelaide, and varied in amount according to the growing expenditure of this place.

"I have now, in conclusion, a suggestion to make with regard to the mode of selecting rural lands. If I am to defer notice of selection until 250,000 acres of land at least are surveyed, this will be the result:—The surveys will be obliterated long before completion by fires which must overspread the country or no one can move through the long grass, by excessive growth of underwood, by heavy rains saturating the ground and destroying spade marks, and by white ants, which, in three months, leave the wood of this country nothing but a shell. Stone is not to be had except at long intervals, and that of such a hard texture as not to be easily broken by a hammer.

"These difficulties can be partially, perhaps wholly, met by altering the regulations by legislation, if necessary—giving power to the Government Resident to call on holders of land orders to select, as soon as blocks of say not less than 20,000 acres shall be ready, on a month's notice. The order of choice could then be determined in Adelaide, and the numbers of the land orders, with the order in which they were entitled to be used in selection, communicated to the Government Resident. There are some details of minor importance to be attended to in this scheme, such as the opening of a block for selection, how long the holders of land orders may withhold the exercise of their right; if any proprietors with a large block of land, when it came to their turn, they might indicate the locality for survey under certain restrictions to prevent the cost of distant operations away from settlement, supplies, and where the survey parties might be exposed to danger from natives. I know that too much capital is involved in this undertaking, and too lively an interest felt in its success, to feel it necessary for me to apologize for the length of this communication, because it contains, unlike some of the letters which I have lately been compelled to write, much matter for consideration.

"I have, &c.,
B. J. FINNISS, Government Resident.
"The Hon. H. Ayers, Chief Secretary."

Extracts from a letter addressed by Dr. Goldsmith, Surgeon and Protector of Aborigines, Northern Territory, &c., to the Hon. the Chief Secretary, Adelaide.

"Camp, Escape Cliffs, Northern Territory,
December, 1864.

"Since I had the honour of addressing you by letter dated October 5, I am happy to inform you that there has been a great improvement in the state of health of the members of the expedition; but unfortunately we have latterly been short of provisions, from the effect of which the men are getting into a debilitated state, attended with nausea and irritability of the stomach. Owing, however, to more energetic measures having been adopted for the procuring of fresh food, and by the use of tonics in the shape of quinine and wine, I am happy to be enabled to state that the symptoms have all vanished, and I trust our present immunity from sickness may long continue.

"I forwarded by the Beatrice's mails, which left in August, a list of medicines and medical comforts required for the expedition, to which (as it is probable they will not be forwarded till after the South Australian arrives in Adelaide) it will be necessary, there should be some alterations and additions, as I have been enabled to obtain some medicines from the Beatrice, and the opportune arrival of the steamer with fresh provisions will render the procuring some of the medical comforts unnecessary.

"I therefore now enclose a list of medicines and medical comforts which I consider necessary at the present time, and which I shall be glad to receive.

"We have had no communication with the natives since my last letter. They have been seen, however, on the Vernon Island, which they frequent for the purpose of fishing and catching turtle. They are not near so numerous as the letters which I have seen in the Adelaide papers would seem to intimate.

would seem to intimate.

"Abstract of Sick Reports, October 8 to December 8.—October 8th, Mr. Pearson, debility; 16th to 19th Captain Humbert, debility; 19th, Atkinson and Ware, bilious attack; 26th, 27th, and 28th, J. Howe, farmiculæ and debility; 27th and 28th, J. Gilbert, sore heel; November 12th, Wiltshire, diarrhœa; 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th, W. Smith, carbuncle; 15th, Brennan, rheumatism; 16th and 28th, T. King, nausea and gastric irritation; 18th, W. P. Auld, gastric irritation; 18th to 24th, J. Cowie, hæmorrhoid; 24th to 26th, T. King, sore arm; 29th, S. Baker, debility. Since when no sickness."

Extracts from a private letter from the Government Resident to the Hon. H. Ayers:—

"Palmerston, December 11, 1864

"The wooden houses are not yet erected. The first will be finished by Christmas Day, having been begun a month since and continued by three of the new carpenters. I shall, however, by billeting the new hands on the old and by erecting huts get all safely in shelter very shortly after the departure of the steamer.

"I shall put three survey parties to work immediately, and I think there is very little doubt now that the town will be laid out ready for notice of selection in about two months, unless any very extraordinary sickness or weather sets in, which, however, I am not prepared to expect.

"The Governor's speech on the departure of the expedition has done much good in this camp, and the lively personal interest which he evinces in the success of the expedition relieves men from any idea that the Government are indifferent to proceedings here, but are on the watch to render aid and assistance the moment the want becomes known."

[From our own Correspondent.]

"Northern Territory, December 8, 1864.

"My last communication finished with the closing of the mail on the 8th October. On the morning of the 9th the Beatrice, Yatala, and the expedition-boat, the Julia, sailed. The Government Resident proceeded on board the Beatrice. It was intended for all to keep together until they made Port Darwin, where some tons of rock from Talc Head were to be put on board the Beatrice for Adelaide, when that vessel and the Yatala were to proceed to Timor. On the same afternoon our buffaloes were lost, and they have not as yet been found. On Saturday, the 15th, the Julia returned with the Government Resident. It was reported that on only two occasions had any of the party landed—once at Talc Head, and again at some other place; and on neither occasion proceeded a mile inland. This is the sum total of the exploration of the coast to the south-west of our present depot, or site of the City of Palmerston, as I believe it should more properly be called. In proper order I will give you the sum of the exploration to the north east. On the 19th, a store, which was commenced on the 9th October, was finished, and the stores housed; and not much before it was time, for on Saturday night, the 22nd, we had the first good fall of rain that we have experienced since leaving Adelaide. We were now suffering very much from the want of food, and on the 27th October a party was dispatched to the Narrows to fish and hunt. They returned late at night on the 28th, so that the fish and kangaroo could not be got from the boat until the following morning. Owing to the heat of the weather the fish were so far decomposed as to be unfit for food; the kangaroo, however, afforded a good and very welcome meal. On the 3rd November another party was dispatched to what we have been in the habit of calling Chambers's Bay (although very many are very sceptical as to the fact of Stuart ever having been on the Adelaide River, many things going to prove the correctness of such an idea). This party were instructed to fish and hunt, and send the fruit of their labours overland to the camp from time to time. The locality however, was not favourable, and only a very limited supply was received from this source. On the 8th November the Government Resident left in the Julia, and after landing at Chambers's Bay, where the hunting party were encamped, proceeded on towards the mouth of the South Alligator River, on nearing which they returned and again landed at Chambers's Bay, remaining all night, and returning to Escape Cliffs on the morning of the 12th. This is the whole exploration that has been done to our north. The party did not land at any place except Chambers's Bay. It is rumoured that the object was to land if any place resembling Point Stuart could be seen, but as no place at all resembling that point was to be observed this party did not land. No other event of importance enlivened us until the arrival of the South Australian, which we first sighted on Monday, the 5th December. The mails were landed and distributed before noon, and we were regaled with some animal food in the shape of fresh mutton, a treat we all enjoyed, and it is to be hoped that now things will go on more smoothly. The amount of work done up to [illegible] but 12 x 12, and a log store more than twice that size; three side-walls of one of the woolen houses for the Government Resident erected, and the roof covered in; a tall cabbage palm, 58 feet long, having been reared for a flagstaff; and a well about 25 feet deep sunk about a quarter of a mile from the camp. In this well we get water better than what we had from the shallow wells about two miles away; but yet it is not good; it has the peculiarity of turning black when mixed with a little brandy, and it appears very singular indeed when one puts a glass to his mouth supposed to contain brandy and water to see it have the resemblance of weak ink.

"Up to this date nothing has been done in the surveying line, and I can see no prospect that anything will be done before February or March; for we have every reason to believe that the rainy season must set in within a very few days, and if we have anything like tropical rains it will be impossible to work during the wet season. Then it is rumoured that the Government Resident has some intention to have huts erected for the men; but, judging by past experience, this, which would be a very beneficial measure, appears highly problematical. You will, no doubt, hear many complaints that this place was pitched upon as the site of the future city without sufficient information about the rest of the coast; but on this I will not give an opinion. I simply recommend every intending settler to bring stone, lime, distilling apparatus, and building timber with him, or be content to live in a reed thatched log hut. The climate is warm, but I believe very healthy, and outdoor work could, as far as we have means of judging up to the present, be prosecuted early in the morning and after 4 in the afternoon. The soil, however, in the vicinity of the town is an arid

[illegible] soil, however, in the vicinity of the town is an arid sandy scrub, interspersed with swamps and salt creeks, and the interior of the country would be inaccessible during the rains. I hope the holders of land orders will continue to feel every confidence in the present Administration, and consider that their interests have been duly studied in the selection of the new capital.

"I may mention that the horses and sheep per South Australian were all landed safe; 307 out of 310 put on board were landed. Messrs. Stow and Stuckey arrived with the intention, I believe, of selecting the town allotments; but alas, there were no allotments to select, and instead of finding us encircled in a stockade with guns mounted and all preparations for withstanding a siege they found us sleeping in security, without palisades or earthworks, not even a watchman patrolling at night, the military guard having been dispensed with some considerable time before. Several members of the old expedition go home with the steamer, and one or two who came out by the South Australian go back by her; whether they have made their fortunes or are disgusted with the place they can best inform the Adelaide public.

"A good deal of discontent, or rather grumbling, has been occasioned by the fact that 25 per cent. has been added to the original price paid in Adelaide for the slop clothing supplied to members of the expedition.

"The mail closes at 12 to-day, 11th December. Mr. Ward (late Clerk in Charge) and Captain Humbert return in the South Australian, their services having been dispensed with. It seems rather hard that an officer should be dismissed here, where he can get neither work, food, nor lodging, and perhaps have to wait months for a passage and then pay his fare back; but possibly it may be a mistake, and that the Governor intended that the passage back should be paid by the Government."

Another correspondent has favoured us with the following letter:—

"Adam Bay, December 8, 1864.

"Dear Sir—With considerable difficulty I proceed to write you a few words, on the truthfulness of which you may rely as far as human beings can be relied on. The vessel coming back by way of King George's Sound precluded me from keeping my engagement to send a telegram by way of Brisbane. You can make what public use you please of the facts I send you. I dare say you will be in possession of the facts, which are the most startling, such as the deaths of Mr. Boucaut and the cook of the Yatala; also of the affray at Chambers's Bay, where another native was killed. I just enumerate these in case any accident should have happened to the Beatrice.

"We anchored in Adam Bay, about a mile from the settlement on Escape Cliffs, on Monday, 5th instant, at 7.30 a.m., in seven fathoms of water, a coral reef being about midway between the vessel and shore. The passage was an exceedingly calm one, and would have been very pleasant had it not been for the indifference of the captain to the comfort of the passengers; so much was this the case that a statement of the state of things was drawn up to be forwarded to the Government, which was signed by nearly every one of the fore-cabin passengers. Salt provisions of the worst quality were served out to us in Moreton Bay, and continued to the end of the passage, notwithstanding some of the meat was taken to Mr. White in a state of decomposition, and his promise given that we should have one fresh meal every day as soon as the sheep were put on board. It was only varied by about five or six fresh meals.

"Everything here at present is in a state of confusion from our sudden though welcome appearance. As the camp has been so long without fresh meat, it was surprising to see the party looking so well. The report from the Doctor on the day of our arrival was 'No sick,' which Mr. Finniss assured me had been the report for some time past. I think, under the circumstances, this augurs well for the healthfulness of the site for the township. In fact, Mr. Finniss was the only person whose appearance was at all impaired, and he looked rather careworn; and no wonder, considering the insufficiency and insubordination of his party, and the almost insurmountable difficulty he has had to contend with in deciding upon the sites for the port and township. He was kind enough to favour me with a seat in his boat the day after we landed, which his men pulled to a place on the Adelaide River called "The Narrows," at the entrance to which is the selected site for the port. It is about six miles by water and four by land beyond the township. (The South Australian could have lain alongside there to discharge by placing a short stage from the mainland to the vessel. She would have done so, I think, had it not been for the want of coal. All the sheep and horses were landed safely by the boats, and the cargo was not much damaged, though some of the party have suffered serious loss through accident or the negligence of those engaged in landing the goods.) There could be a tramway laid down to the township. Mr. Finniss seems carefully to have weighed all the pros and cons. after careful consideration of other situations before arriving at his present conclusions. There can be excellent water obtained for miles round the township by easy sinking. This water, I do not hesitate to say, is decidedly good. (Perhaps you have got some in Adelaide by this time in the Beatrice.) The reports about the water containing copper are emphatically denied by Mr. Finniss, and he certainly ought to be a judge of the presence of that mineral. I have also been informed that the sheep brought by the Henry Ellis, from being so much crowded, were quite destitute of wool. Some killed three months afterwards had upon them an average crop, if not more, and the quality was not in the least deteriorated. This is a very important fact, and ought to be widely circulated.

"I forgot to mention that I saw, on the trip to the Narrows before mentioned, two crocodiles or alligators, one of which was so close to the boat that he was fired at by the boat's crew; but their revolvers had no effect. It was about 12 feet, and was at first supposed to be a turtle, as they are very numerous about here—not that there is any similarity, but because he only just showed his head at first. Dogs, &c., have fallen a prey to these formidable creatures. White cockatoos, whistling teal, cranes, and other birds were seen by the party. Seven or eight signal-fires were observed in different directions; what these can mean seems to be involved in some mystery. The banks of the river were fringed with enormous mangroves, interlaced with very large climbing plants, and at the roots were masses of small oysters attached to the projecting root-stems, underneath which were crawling small variously-coloured land crabs, &c. The captain said it was a West Indian scene.

The captain said it was a West Indian scene.

"The soil is a mixture of sand and ironstone pebbles, and seems capable of growing almost anything. There are the common cress, pumpkins, water-melons, tamarinds, and one cocoa-nut tree (both the latter raised from seeds from Timor) growing near the Governor's tent and elsewhere on the cliffs. But the time of year is only just now coming on for planting. I turned over two or three spades of this soil to plant some pineapples in. It was red and moist, and tremendously hot. The plants I have mentioned are of course small. The ants are very numerous and destructive; they are green and light brown. Flies are abundant and terribly annoying, although of small dimensions. The fly known as the March fly is plentiful. The mosquitoes, small in this locality, are a nightly pest and a formidable opponent to your rest. They seem determined to occupy every unprotected part of your body. But I suppose they will, like the natives, retire before the influence of the civilizing whites. Several persons in the camp have their eyes closed and features distorted by the sandfly. The weather is hot, but it is made tolerable by a pleasant sea breeze. There are some extremely discontented people here; but I think the principal portion of the new party have too much good sense to be led away by them. I hear that Ward is going to enlighten the people of Adelaide when he arrives. I rather expect that his statements will not be taken much notice of. I cannot find time to write much more. By-the-by, the telegram I sent from Brisbane you might not have thought very important. Nautical men on board said we were in imminent danger of going down stern foremost, as the mass of coal on board prevented the water from running away; so that probably had it not been for the assistance rendered by the seamen of the party in throwing the coals overboard we might never have seen Adam Bay. The Yatala has been away to Timor about nine weeks."