

right through the narrative. Boulton removed himself to Bridgetown and was finally forced to work his passage to Dublin "in a dirty miserable Brig" arriving home penniless.

The next few years were spent with his family in North Wales where his time was passed "unprofitably and unsatisfactorily *viz* hunting and shooting in the romantic vallies (*sic*) of Carnarvonshire." The death of his father, the idle way of life and the unsuccessful courting "of a certain damsel" led him in 1823 to accompany his eldest brother emigrating to Van Dieman's Land. Edwin, 1790-1868, had a grant of land at Hobart Town, soon prospered and spent the rest of his life there. John, unable to find work, was forced to go "on board a miserable dirty Schooner of 45 tons burthen, going on a sealing excursion to Bass' Straits". The crew he described as the "refuse of merchant ships, former convicts, thieves and scoundrels fit for no society, void of every good quality". Before very long two escaped convicts were to be secreted aboard. Boulton felt himself to be under suspicion from the beginning. Ill provisioned and unseaworthy the vessel rode out a violent storm during which it drifted 400 miles or so. They cruised up and down the coast of Tasmania landing on various islands and making contact with sealing parties and groups of aborigines. The physical features of islands and inlets visited are described in detail in conformity with a pattern followed throughout the narrative.

He notes that sealers became so wedded to their life that they were unwilling to leave it—"they live very hard, frequently eating shellfish, and fernroot, when they are unable to get other provisions, or to catch fish—they (in the Straits) wear their beards long, and appear to have no inclination to keep themselves tidy; their general appearance is semi-barbarous. . . . They wear a kangaroo-skin coat, caps of the same, and mocassins. . . . A good dog is worth £5. the women are very fond of these dogs, and I think have a stronger affection for them than for their masters. When a boat's crew are going on a Kangarooing trip, their appearance is very singular, clothed in skin cloaks, with their woolly headed accomplices and dogs around them. I have seen several of the offspring of these parties; they are a clever, active sort of people and have a handsome countenance, notwithstanding the ugly physiognomies of their mothers; their colour is copper, with a sort of rosy healthy hue, long but not lank hair, and their dispositions are very prepossessing. Some of them have been sent to Sydney for the purpose of being educated at the Government School." The writer provides examples of the sufferings of sealers frequently made worse by the failure of owners to return with promised supplies. He describes in detail mutton-birding on Preservation Island—these birds forming an important part of the sealer's diet—followed by an account of seal hunting and its hazards and later in the narrative an account of whaling in the Timor Sea.