

Edward Clarke, author of the *Thames Miner's Guide* (1868)

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In 1975, Capper Press published a facsimile edition of the *Thames Miner's Guide*, an anonymous book published in 1868 by W. C. Wilson, in Wyndham Street, Auckland. The book consists of 101 pages (218 × 138 mm) with two folding maps: a map of the Thames Gold Field, and a Prospector's Map of the Province of Auckland by Captain F. W. Hutton. The *Guide* provides much technical information about gold—its chemistry and its mineralogy, techniques for finding it, mining it, extracting it and refining it. The geological nature of the goldfields on the Coromandel Peninsula is described in detail, there is a hasty sketch of the history of gold discoveries in New Zealand, and the book contains much incidental information about life on the goldfields. The *Thames Miner's Guide* appears to have been popular, since several copies of it are kept in the Auckland Public Library and the University of Auckland Library—one of those copies has retained its paper binding stating the price to be 'half a crown' (2 shillings and 6 pence).

Hocken's *Bibliography of the Literature Relating to New Zealand* (Wellington, 1909) lists the book anonymously, and the identity of its author remained unknown until the recent publication of a letter which Edward Clarke wrote from Auckland to his aunt Mary Ann Evans in London, on 31 July 1868. Clarke was then sub-editor of the Auckland newspaper the *Daily Southern Cross*, and in that letter he told his Aunt Mary that he was then compiling that book:

Parnell, Auckland | July 31st 1868.

My dear Aunt

I was very much pleased to receive your letter dated May 7th and trust to be able to keep up a correspondence, for nothing gives me greater pleasure than to hear from Old England, and I long to visit it again, I arrived in the Australian Colonies in 1861, put up with many hardships and with very little success until I arrived in Auckland in November 1864. An engagement was obtained for me upon the staff of the *New Zealander*, as shorthand reporter, which I held till the newspaper became defunct. I had one other engagement previous to my present occupation.

I married in 1865, the daughter of a respectable settler who holds a good position in society, and a man of considerable property.¹ My wife's maiden name was Ellen Nicholls, (a Cornish family)—she makes me a good wife, the only falt she has, is a quick temper, very high spirited and a great screw, but a first-class housekeeper, her health has greatly improved, and we are both very comfortable.

My engagements at the present time are very numerous—being connected with