

When we reached the western mouth of this northern branch of the Beagle Channel, we sailed among many unknown desolate islands, and the weather was wretchedly bad. We met with no natives. The coast was almost everywhere so steep that we had several times to pull many times before we could find space enough to pitch our two tents: one night we slept on large round bowlders, with putrefying sea-weed between them; and when the tide rose, we had to get up and move our blanket-bags. The furthest point westward which we reached was Stewart Island, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles from our ship. We returned into the Beagle Channel by the southern arm, and thence proceeded, with no adventure, back to Ponsonby Sound.

February 6th.—We arrived at Woollya. Matthews gave so bad an account of the conduct of the Fuegians, that Captain Fitz Roy determined to take him back to the "Beagle"; and ultimately he was left at New Zealand, where his brother was a missionary. From the time of our leaving, a regular system of plunder commenced; fresh parties of the natives kept arriving: York and Jemmy lost many things, and Matthews almost everything which had not been concealed underground. Every article seemed to have been torn up and divided by the natives. Matthews described the watch he was obliged always to keep as most harassing; night and day he was surrounded by the natives, who tried to tire him out by making an incessant noise close to his head. One day an old man, whom Matthews asked to leave his wigwam, immediately returned with a large stone in his hand: another day a whole party came armed with stones and stakes, and some of the younger men and Jemmy's brother were crying: Matthews met them with presents. Another party showed by signs that they wished to strip him naked and pluck all the hairs out of his face and body. I think we arrived just in time to save his life. Jemmy's relatives had been so vain and foolish that they had showed to strangers their plunder, and their manner of obtaining it. It was quite melancholy