

February 7th.—The “Beagle” sailed from Tasmania, and, on the 6th of the ensuing month, reached King George’s Sound, situated close to the S.W. corner of Australia. We stayed there eight days; and we did not during our voyage pass a more dull and uninteresting time. The country, viewed from an eminence, appears a woody plain, with here and there rounded and partly bare hills of granite protruding. One day I went out with a party, in hopes of seeing a kangaroo hunt, and walked over a good many miles of country. Everywhere we found the soil sandy and very poor; it supported either a coarse vegetation of thin, low brushwood and wiry grass, or a forest of stunted trees. The scenery resembled that of the high sandstone platform of the Blue Mountains; the Casuarina (a tree somewhat resembling a Scotch fir) is, however, here in greater number, and the Eucalyptus in rather less. In the open parts there were many grass-trees—a plant which, in appearance, has some affinity with the palm; but, instead of being surmounted by a crown of noble fronds, it can boast merely of a tuft of very coarse grass-like leaves. The general bright green color of the brushwood and other plants, viewed from a distance, seemed to promise fertility. A single walk, however, was enough to dispel such an illusion; and he who thinks with me will never wish to walk again in so uninviting a country.

One day I accompanied Captain Fitz Roy to Bald Head; the place mentioned by so many navigators, where some imagined that they saw corals, and others that they saw petrified trees, standing in the position in which they had grown. According to our view, the beds have been formed by the wind having heaped up fine sand, composed of minute rounded particles of shells and corals, during which process branches and roots of trees, together with many land-shells, became inclosed. The whole then became consolidated by the percolation of calcareous matter; and the cylindrical cavities left by the decaying of the wood were thus also filled up with a hard pseudo-stalactitical stone. The weather