

AUSTRALIA.

THIS includes the semi-continental mass of land hitherto known as New Holland, and the islands of New Zealand, New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Queen Charlotte's Islands, Solomon's Archipelago, New Britain, New Ireland, New Hanover, Admiralty Isles, and Papua or New Guinea.

In no part of the globe can greater extremes of barrenness and fertility occur than in the various islands comprehended in Australia. On the shores of New Holland, its most prominent feature, we find fruitful plains covered with verdure eastward, and on the south and south-western coast nothing but naked hillocks of sand. This island, if such indeed it is to be called, almost equal in size to the whole of continental Europe, presents of itself an unequalled and almost unexplored field for geological enquiry.

The natives of Australia are, for the major part, of a negro character; and nowhere is human nature found in a more depraved state. An enormous head, flat countenance, and long, slender extremities, mark their physical conformation, together with an acuteness of sight and hearing. Captain Cook's description of this race has been verified by every succeeding observer. "The skin," says he, "is the colour of wood soot, or what is usually called chocolate colour. Their features are far from disagreeable; their noses are not flat, nor are their lips thick; their teeth are white and even, and their hair naturally long and black; it is, however, cropped short." It seems that a decidedly inferior variety of the human race is found in Australia, and has spread itself to a considerable distance north and east among the islands of Polynesia and the eastern archipelago. The Australian is puny and weak compared with the African negro; and his intellectual attainments are quite on as low a scale as his physical powers.

NEW HOLLAND.

THE Portuguese and Spaniards appear to have visited this region in the 16th century, but it was the Dutch who first made it known to Europe. In 1606 they coasted it along the western shore as far as 13° 45' of south latitude; the farthest point of land in their map being called Cape Keer Weer, or Turn again. In 1616 the west coasts were discovered by Dirk Hartag, commander of an outward-bound vessel from Holland to India; and in the year 1601 there was found, by some of the navigators by whom that coast was visited, a plate of tin, with an inscription and dates, in which it was mentioned that it had been left by him.

In 1618, another part of the coast was discovered by Zeachen, who gave it the name of Arnhem and Dieman; though a

different part from what afterwards received the name of Van Dieman's Land from Tasman. In 1619, Jan Van Edels gave his name to a southern part of New Holland; and another part received the name of Leu-weu's Land. Peter Van Nuyts gave his name, in 1627, to the coast that communicates with Leuween; and another part bore the name of De Wit's Land. In 1623, Peter Carpenter, a Dutchman, discovered the great Gulph of Carpentaria. In 1657, Dampier, an Englishman, sailed from Timor, and coasted the western part of New Holland. In 1699, he left England, with a design to explore this country; as the Dutch suppressed whatever discoveries had been made by them. He sailed along the western coast of it, from 15 to 23 degrees of latitude. He then returned to Timor; from whence he sailed again; examined the isles of Papua; coasted New Guinea; discovered the passage that bears his name, and also New Britain; and sailed back to Timor along New Guinea. This is the same Dampier who, between the years 1683 and 1691, sailed round the world, by changing his ships. Notwithstanding the attempts of all these navigators, the eastern part of this vast country was totally unknown till captain Cook made his voyages, and, by fully exploring that part of the coast, gave his country an undoubted title to the possession of it; which it accordingly took, under the name of New South Wales, in 1787.

Captain Cook having given a favourable account of this country, an act passed in parliament, in 1779, under the auspices of judge Blackstone, lord Auckland, and Mr. Howard, to establish a colony in it, where the criminals condemned to be transported should be sent to pass their time of servitude. Some difficulties, however, prevented its being put into execution till December, 1786, when orders were issued, by the king in council, for making a settlement on New Holland. The squadron appointed for putting the design in execution, assembled at the Motherbank on the 16th of May, 1787. It consisted of the Sirius frigate, captain John Hunter; the Supply armed tender, lieutenant H. L. Ball; three storeships, the Golden Grove, Fishburn, and Borrowdale, for carrying provisions and stores for two years; and, lastly, six transports; these were to carry the convicts, with a detachment of marines in each, proportioned to the nature of the service. On the arrival of governor Philip at the station, he hoisted his flag on board the Sirius, as commodore of the squadron. On the 13th of May they weighed anchor. The number of convicts was 778, of which 558 were men. On the 3rd of January, 1788, the Supply armed tender came within sight of New Holland; but the winds becoming variable, and a strong current

THE MURRAY RIVER IS NOT LESS THAN 1500 MILES IN LENGTH.

THE PRINCIPAL CHAINS OF MOUNTAINS IN AUSTRALIA APPEAR TO RUN TRANSVERSELY TO THE DIRECTION OF THE LANE.

IN AUSTRALIA AND POLYNESIA EVERY THING SEEMS TO RUN CONTRARY TO THE ORDINARY COURSE OF NATURE IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

IN THE INLAND PARTS OF THAT LARGE DISTRICT CALLED LABRADOR THERE ARE AMERICAN INDIANS, AND ON THE COASTS ESQUIMAUX.

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