

reports of its healthiness and general eligibility, which formed at, and after, its first establishment such a mass of evidence in its favour—notwithstanding the laudatory testimonials of Sir J. Gordon Bremer, who from the first strenuously supported it—in the face of this it has since been found to be by no means equal in salubrity to what was first anticipated. It, on the contrary, rather promises to entail expense on the Mother Country without realising any important advantages to its interest. Although, therefore, a large amount of correspondence has been adduced from official and Parliamentary documents to justify its retention, subsequent experience has not furnished sufficient reasons for giving any stimulus to its advancement, and it seems doomed to remain a mere military post, or coasting station for steamers.

It has been alleged, by what would seem to be competent authority, to be a spot unfavourable to the health of Europeans—a sickly climate, whose swampy and unwholesome atmosphere, generating malaria, is, at certain periods, fearfully destructive of life.

Port Essington was founded for a military settlement; but the supineness and indifference with which it has been nursed up must be allowed to show, on the part of the proper authorities at home, great neglect, for, if worth preserving at all, it surely should have been supported with some vigour. The present establishment at Port Essington, it appears, arrived at that place in November, 1844, and relieved the original party, then reduced to about 30 men. It consisted on its arrival of two subalterns, one surgeon, and 52 rank and file, of the Royal Marines, which were placed under the command of Captain MacArthur, with the local rank of commandant, whose previous enthusiastic description of the settlement made to Sir George Gipps, the Governor of New South Wales, at Sydney, and by him transmitted to the Colonial-office, were chiefly, perhaps, instrumental in its retention.

Are parsimonious establishments like this, however, indicative of a just sense of the importance of a settlement which was intended to be a trading emporium with China and the Indian Ocean for British goods? Either let the settlement at Port Essington be kept up with an expenditure of care and pecuniary means in some degree at least commensurate with its alleged advantages, or let it be finally abandoned.

In some respects its situation, no doubt, is highly eligible. Placed on the northernmost verge of Australia, near the entrance of Van Diemen's Gulf, and not far from Melville Island, which has been spoken of as a perfect garden—its contiguity to the various rich and noble islands of the great Eastern Archipelago, which stretches on either side of it, points it out as peculiarly eligible for the China and Indian trade. But, on the other hand, the existence of unhealthy morasses in the immediate neighbourhood, especially during the wet seasons that periodically deluge the soils, may be thought to render the situation inexpedient for a rising Colony. If, then, a due regard to the sanatory condition of a new Colony should form matter of primary consideration previous to its permanent establishment, it must be granted that Port Essington has drawbacks to contend with of a very serious nature.

Mr. George Windsor Earl, amongst its first sanguine projectors, and