

eColenso

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Contents

- 2 The Old Student;
the bringer of weeds
- 15 The sender of weeds
- 17 The rise and fall
of Joshua Lear
- 20 The voyage of the *Prince Regent*

3rd Colenso Conference Napier 22-23 February 2019



The Old Student; the bringer of weeds

There is a manuscript in the Morrab Library, Penzance (Ref: ER234) and we publish it here with permission. The 73 year old William Colenso wrote it to the Penzance Natural History and Antiquarian Society and the secretary Mr E.D. Marquand read it to the Society on 19 March 1885. The *Cornish Telegraph* report of the meeting in the Society's minute book reads, "The paper was listened to with close attention, and at its close a vote of thanks was cordially awarded to the author, who is a member of the society and actively interested in its proceedings."

This is an important paper for several reasons. It records Colenso's early interest in plants. It identifies a manuka reputedly brought to England by Cook or Banks. It reveals the origins of some British plants that have become vigorous weeds in New Zealand.

And it vividly exposes the homesickness of the old student, Colenso, spending his 50th New Zealand Christmas eve alone, sleepless and sentimental.

A few stray thoughts on W. Cornwall (Mount's Bay) and our Cornish Botany

"To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
one native charm, than all the gloss of art."

(*Goldsmith's Des. Vill.*)

It is Xmas. Eve! And here am I alone; and yet not alone—as to thoughts and memories. My lamp is lit, and I am thinking on Eng-

land, *Home*, and Cornwall (Mount's Bay) in particular. Yet it is not exactly this Season that leads my thoughts so far far away in that direction, though doubtless this has had a little to do with it. For here it is Midsummer; the weather is fine, the thermometer this day has been at 72°; and the fruit shops in the town below (Napier), are loaded with the pleasing gifts of early summer,—Strawberries, Currants (Black, White, and Red), Raspberries, Cherries, and Plums, all fresh and tempting; with beauteous garden flowers in rich profusion: our Summer having been a remarkably fine and showery one, suitable for all floral display.

This, too, is my 50th Xmas. season in this far-off land! This alone evokes thoughts, or should do so. Nevertheless, I greatly doubt whether the Xmas. Season and its 50th celebration (rather say, anniversary, or revolution,) to boot, would have sufficed to set me so greatly a thinking on old times and old scenes, as a little simple circumstance that unexpectedly occurred this morning.—

Early this morning my man came in from visiting a retired nook or gully in one of my hilly fields, bringing me a handful of flowering specimens from a small shrub he had found there, whose beauty and novelty had attracted his eye; and to my great delight I recognized and hailed the *Cornish* stranger at first sight, by name, "*Tutsan*"! (*Hypericum androsæmum*,) very fine indeed. Now it must be, at least 52 years since I last saw this British plant growing, and then only in one well-known spot, often visited by me,—the edge of Tolcarne wood on the hill, on the left hand side of the pathway through the fields, leading up the granite steps from the highway to the Land's End, (and opposite to the high road branching off to St. Inot,) towards Newlyn—or street-on-Nowan of old time! And then, as a matter of course, whole hosts of scenes, of persons and things and *plants*, came trooping on and up, as if out of the same deep well, evoked by the spell of a mighty enchanter.—

INTERNATIONAL EFFORT UNDERWAY AGAINST TUTSAN

Tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*) is an invasive weed that originates from Europe and has become a significant pest in the North Island. <http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/publications/newsletters/biological-control-of-weeds/issue-61/tutsan>

Tutsan invades regenerating sites, forming dense stands which stop native plant seedlings growing. It prefers wetter, cooler areas and tolerates light shade. Tutsan also readily invades disturbed forest and shrubland, tussockland, bare land and rocklands, roadsides, coastal areas, steep banks, lightly-farmed land and riparian margins including rocky and open streams. It has become a serious agricultural and environmental pest in the neighbouring Taranaki region and parts of the Manawatu region, and is on the increase in the Waikato. Once established, its patches can dominate farmland especially lower fertile pasture. Although non-toxic, livestock will not eat it. Tutsan produces a large amount of seed which may be spread by birds, farm machinery, waterways and stock. Roadside mowing may also spread the seed. <http://www.waikatoregion.govt.nz/Services/Regional-services/Plant-and-animal-pests/Plant-pests/Tutsan/>

Tutsan (all-heal, cure-all, *toute-saine*: *nom vulgaire de l'hypericum androsaemum*) is one of the St John's worts; it contains a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), so extracts act similarly to Prozac (fluoxetine) as an antidepressant, though unreliably. You can read about its claimed herbal uses at <https://www.cloverleaffarmherbs.com/st-johns-wort/>.

And so I welcomed and received my unexpected Cornish stranger as my Christmas Box.

Who has not read “Tales by Hans Andersen”? and in doing so, thought with him,—even, it may be, to extremes, both high and low and far asunder. So true it is, (as Shakespeare had it,)—“One touch of Nature makes the whole world King”. Among other natural and

touching pieces and tales of Andersen, (first read many years ago, and often since looked into,) the one called “the Dumb Book”, came vividly to remembrance on contemplating this *Tutsan*: from which I beg to give a quotation, or extract, in the author’s own words. (The scene is in a forest by a lonely peasant’s hut; and in the garden in an arbour of blossoming Elder, stood an open coffin)—

“Nobody stood by the coffin and looked sorrowfully at the dead man; no one shed a tear for him: * his face was covered with a white cloth, and under his head lay a great thick book, whose leaves consisted of whole sheets of blotting paper, and on each leaf lay a faded flower. It was a complete herbarium, gathered by him in various places; it was to be buried with him, for so he had wished it. With each flower a chapter in his life was associated.

“Who is the dead man?” we asked; and the answer was,—“The Old Student.” They say he was once a brisk lad, and studied the old languages, and sang, and even wrote poems.—He was as gentle as a child, except when the dark mood came upon him, but when it came he became like a giant, and then ran about in the woods like a hunted stag; but when we once got him home again, and prevailed with him so far that he opened the book with the dried plants, he often sat whole days, and looked sometimes at one plant and sometimes at another, and at times the tears rolled over his cheeks. Heaven knows what he was thinking of. But he begged us to put the book into the Coffin, and now he lies there.—

* Presaging the words of Henry Hill’s “Tribute to the veteran” after Colenso’s own death: “The scene at the grave side was sad, and withal beautiful. An old man full of years and honors, was borne to his last resting place. Yet no wife, no child, no relative was there to mourn his passing away”. Colenso was clearly identifying with the Old Student.

What a strange feeling it is—and we have all doubtless experienced it—that of turning over old letters of the days of our Youth!—a new life seems to come up with them, with all its hopes and sorrows. How many persons with whom we were intimate in those days, are as it were dead to us! And yet they are alive, but for a long time we have not thought of them—of them whom we then thought to hold fast for ages, and with whom we were to share sorrow and joy.

Here the withered oak-leaf in the book reminded the owner of the friend, the school fellow, who was to be a friend for life; he fastened the green leaf in the student's cap in the green wood when the bond was made "for life". Where does he live now? The leaf is preserved, but the friendship has perished! And here in a foreign hot-house plant, too delicate for the gardens of the North; the leaves almost seem to keep their fragrance still. She gave it to him, the young lady in the nobleman's garden. Here is the water rose, which he plucked himself and moistened with salt tears—the rose of the sweet waters. And here is a Nettle, what tale may its leaves have to tell? What were his thoughts when he plucked it and kept it? Here is a Lily-of-the Valley from the solitudes of the forest;—and here's a sharp naked blade of grass.

The blooming Elder waves its fresh fragrant blossoms over the dead man's head, and the Swallow flies past again."—

Pray excuse this long extract: I think I have known and proved something of what Andersen so feelingly describes; and my thoughts this morning on seeing the "*Tutsan*" shows it. With Wordsworth I not infrequently say,—

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."



And this leads me to write a little more in the same strain and on kindred subjects.

When I first came to this (then little known) land, I saw but few plants growing wild that I recognized as being like myself natives of Britain and strangers here. It is true there were a few truly indigenous ones that were the same, both as to species as well as genera : e.g. The Sowthistle, (*Sonchus oleraceus*), the Sea-side Bindweed (*Convolvulus Soldanella*), the Garden Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), the Bulrush (*Typha latifolia*),—though more than twice the size of the English plant,—the Bur-reed (*Sparganium simplex*), and the Pondweed (*Potamogeton natans*); but these grew so largely and so commonly that they scarcely excited more than a passing thought; besides, the Sowthistle and the Nightshade, were often used boiled as greens. But afterwards, in the course of years, (omitting the early

introduction of Clovers and of Grasses,) when I by chance fell in with a stray plant from Home growing wild,—it was just the story of the Tutsan over again. Well do I remember my first seeing the charming little Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), and also the common English Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), though that was 30 years ago! How I revisited and cherished them! Also, the dear little Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), reminder of Goldfinches and Canaries! And the elegant plant Spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*), that well-remembered Alverton plant, so prized in childhood! And that well-known denizen of our British cornfields, the Cockle (*Agrostemma Githago*), the neat regularly formed Bedstraw (*Galium* sps.), and the variegated Catchfly (*Silene quingue-vulnera*), still faithfully retaining its wondrous 5 red spots! These two, the Sun Spurge and the Catchfly have now become very common, but not so the Groundsel and the Cockle. The Dove's-foot Crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*), and its cousin the Hemlock Stork's-bill (*Erodium cicutarium*), I also welcomed; these have thriven exceedingly growing to a very large size; and so has that Newlyn plant, Sweet Alyssum (*Konigia maritimæ*), which I also brought here.

Indeed, owing to our temperate climate, not a few of our British Annuals and biennials have become perennials, and consequently flourish amazingly even to the swallowing up, or displacing, much of the truly indigenous vegetation; And not a few of our British perennials attain to a great size. I have seen the Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), growing in its usual stately ranks more than 6 feet high and abounding in flowers! The Horehound (*Marubium vulgare*) becomes a big flourishing bush, and so does the Red Valerian (*Valerian rubra*), both ornamenting dry stony places; while the handsome foliage Milk Thistle (*Carduus Marianus*) luxuriantly covers yards of land. On the other hand, a few that I have only once found I have never met with again,—as the misnamed “Gold-of-pleasure” (*Camelina sativa*); Field Lady's Mantle (*Alchemilla arvensis*); Common Thorn Apple (*Datura stramonium*); & a few others.



Datura stramonium (thorn apple) and the related angel's trumpet (*Brugmansia candida*) are two of the most dangerous plants in New Zealand. <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/poisonous-plants-and-fungi/page-3>

Here I may mention a few garden(?) plants that I had introduced, importing their seeds with many others specially from Home for my garden;—as the Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*), the Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*), the purple Goats' beard, or Salsafy (*Tragopogon porrifolius*), a prized esculent of our ancestors though now disused, and an Asphodel (*Asphodelus fistulosus*),—all of which have escaped and spread rapidly covering much ground, and so doing mischief, especially this last; and so, also, have the elegant Fennel (*Taeniculum vulgare*), and the fragrant Sweet Briar, though these were not introduced by me. And it is a curious circumstance, that the Evening Primrose, in particular follows the course of the newly-made Railway; also the stony high banks in the rivers.—

Three years ago, while Botanizing in the sub-alpine forests, nearly 100 miles in the interior, and in a very secluded spot, (where I had often been before,) I suddenly came upon a young herbaceous plant (and only *one*) bearing a remarkably large leaf prostrate on the ground, somewhat in both habit and size resembling the leaf of the garden Rhubarb. It was certainly a striking object; and also new.

Taeniculum vulgare: early settlers in New Zealand introduced fennel and it has now naturalized from North Cape to Bluff. It grows so prolifically in this South Pacific climate that it is considered a weed... <http://www.terrain.net.nz/friends-of-tenenui-group/weeds/fennel.html>

I visited that spot again that year, (having marked it and the plant,) but though the young plant had grown much larger, it showed no signs of soon flowering. In the following early season I again visited that wood, impatient to know something of my new discovery, but though it was now advancing towards flowering, I had yet to wait. Late in the autumn of that year I was again there; and judge my disappointment, when I found the plant to be only a big Burdock (*Arctium Lappa*)! Still, this was a novelty to me, who had never before seen it living and in flower; I question if it is found in West Cornwall. The worst, however, remains to be told: that *one* plant has flourished there, and its hooked seeds have been carried far and wide by cattle, and the plant is now far too common in all that neighbourhood, so that it has become a great nuisance; I ought to have destroyed it when I first knew it.

Again: two years back when Botanizing in that locality I fell in with another introduced herbaceous plant which, while I knew it to be a foreigner, I could not quite identify in its leafing state; subsequently, however, I found it in flower; it is the Self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), and now this also is become far too common, overrunning and destroying all small and low herbage near it; as, also, does another most unwelcome stranger, though longer settled among us, the Cat's Ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*). Curiously enough, when again in those parts last year, I met with a gentleman of this town who had been up in that neighbourhood collecting ferns for his garden and he being attracted by the fine size and novel appearance of this plant (*Prunella vulgaris*), in its leafing state, had dug up several of them, and was bringing them carefully away with his ferns,—until I told him what they were.

Among our own botanical New Zealand gems, (found extensively growing in those parts,) are one or two species (or varieties) of *Pratia*, a lovely little lowly creeping and perennial plant, with small cut and glabrous leaves that completely mat the ground, studded, also, with a profusion of white Lobelia-like flowers on short peduncles; in shel-

tered and damp spots this plant is often a beautiful object, both in flower and in fruit, its large and succulent berries being of a scarlet colour; it also remains in flower during the whole of our long summer. I have often thought,—what a lovely bedding-plant it would make at Home! Particularly in our damp and mild Cornish climate. So beautiful does it appear to me in some open yet sequestered spots that I know, and so imploring! that I have hesitated to walk or step on it, although the tangled and prickly bushes alongside were very difficult to get through. Of late, however, I have had the unhappiness of seeing it increasingly invaded by both the Self-heal and the Cats ear! which show it no mercy. I have already and several times, sent to England the seeds of this plant (*Pratia*), and I propose sending some to Penzance very shortly for distribution.

Note: a detailed account of this pretty little plant will be found in a Paper of mine, “Transactions N.Z. Institute”, vol. xv. pp. 316, 318.

Among the numerous British and Foreign plants that I have introduced here in years long past, I think, in writing to Penzance on this subject, I should mention two,—the Primrose and the Blackberry,—as the seeds of both of them came from Penzance in a letter, from my brother, to whom I had written for them. Those of the Blackberry in particular having been collected for me, at my request, from those very prized bushes on the steep hills on the S. side of the Newlyn river, above the high road and nearly opposite to “Zimmerman's Cot,”—which spot I had so often visited when a boy! The Blackberry is now acclimatized, and spreads largely and is much prized; the plant here grows to an enormous size, certainly, in some spots, as big as a Cornish Cow-house! and bears plenty of fruit. The little pale-eyed and lovely Primrose is much respected in several of our shady gardens, and has often called forth the involuntary sigh! Although, no doubt, to some one of the “Peter Bell” stamps, (to be found here at the Antipodes as well as at home.)—

“A primrose by a river’s brim,”
(or in a garden’s shade,
“A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.” (*Wordsworth.*)*

I remember well, that several years ago, the first English Primrose plant that flowers at Melbourne (in the neighbouring Colony of Victoria), was the cause of hundreds flocking to see it; and of many tears of affection! and it was sold for more than its weight in gold!—

One other little circumstance I think I may also mention, especially in writing for a Penzance Antiquarian Society,—and partly as a reminiscence of old Cornish times. During my youth I not infrequently visited Kenegie, (then the property and country-seat of Mr Arundel Harris-Arundel, (“Squire Harris,” *in vulgo dicto,*) though he had ceased residing there;) several things tempted me into that neighbourhood: (1) love of rambling alone in strange out-of-the-way places: (2) the enchanting view of Mount’s Bay from Gulval Carn, (put into verse by the Rev. C.V. Le Grice, whom, with Mrs. Le Grice, I knew so well!) and also from Castle-an-Dinas: (3) to mount up and sit astride on the two stone lions at the Entrance gate, &c., &c. In the parterre at Kenegie, just outside the green-house, and in front of a trellis on which was trained a fine *Pyrus Japonica*, was a circular bed, a half-mound, and in the centre of it a very strange-looking foreign tree, or stout gnarled shrub, bearing curious-looking and aromatic berries, or capsules, by some called, “the spice tree”; this shrub (so the story ran) was brought (in its seed) from the S. Seas by Capt. Cook, or by Sir Joseph Banks. That shrub was my youthful wonder, and I wished much to see its flowers, which I never did. Guess then my delight, when, soon after my landing here in New Zealand, I found it commonly growing

* Peter Bell is the main character in Wordsworth’s even-more-controversial-than-usual narrative poem *Peter Bell: a Tale in Verse* (from which Colenso’s quote is taken), published in 1819. Bell was “a hard-hearted sinner, impervious to the softening influence of nature”. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Bell_\(Wordsworth\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Bell_(Wordsworth)).

about me, bearing both fruits and flowers in profusion. It is the *Leptospermum scoparium*, of Forster, and was used by Capt. Cook when here as a beverage instead of tea, and also in his manufacture of Spruce Beer for his ship’s company. (See, *Cook’s Voyages*, 4th ed., 2nd Voy., vol. I., pp. 99-101; plate, No. XXII).



Kenegie Manor today: I cannot identify an old manuka from online photographs but there is a NZ theme with at least cabbage trees, flax (green and variegated) and toitoi. ... the Kenegie gardens included a gazebo, at the base of which a pair of stone lions sat on plinths—they are now at Trerice, an Elizabethan manor house near Newquay. William Arundel-Harris (1725-92) passed the house to his son. In about 1918 it became an hotel; was used as a hostel in WW2 and from 1954 was a hotel. The main house has now been divided into flats and the grounds extensively developed as a holiday village with chalets all over the grounds. <http://landedfamilies.blogspot.co.nz/2015/10/193-arundel-of-menadarva-trengwainton.html>



↑ Mount's Bay from Gulval Carn. Steel etching by W Willis 1835. You can see the view on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v47FggkkUzU>.
↓ The Kenegie granite lions that Colenso sat on, now at Trecice manor.



↑ Castle-an-Dinas iron age fort. At <http://www.themagicofcornwall.com/blog/?p=713> you can see the view north from Castle-an-Dinas, the horizon besmirched by the white satanic mills of a 21st century wind farm. The view to the south is below.



Perhaps Charles Valentine le Grice's *Mount's Bay* was the "verse" that Colenso referred to (<http://www.sonnets.org/legrice.htm#020>),

Bay of the Mount! whose opening coasts are spread
From Mousehole Island to the twin-starred Lizard,
Whose waves are speckled with the mullet red,
From head to tail all good—except the gizzard;
Whose sons the patriotic flame display
Which warmed the breast of Hampdens and of Sidneys,
Whose sloping headlands with potatoes gay
Bloom with the scarlet robe, and silvery kidneys:
O! land of yellow ling, and powdered hake!
O! cornucopia of clouted cream;
O! nurse of matrons skilled the pie to bake
Beneath the furze-fired kettle! Not a ream
Of folio paper from the stores of Hewett,
If I could write thy praise, would give me room to do it.

Now we understand why Colenso didn't quote from the sonnet. When he did quote lines, they usually hailed higher ideas than potatoes, fish, cows' horns of clotted cream or Cornish pasties.

And as I commenced with the *Tutsan* and its one habitat formerly known to me at Tolcarne, I think, in conclusion, I may just jot down a few more old local Mount's Bay plants with their habitats, though, I suppose, no longer to be found there! after the lapse of half a century, and its increasing "civilization" caused by the advent of the Iron Horse!—

E.g. On the Eastern Green, between Penzance and Marazion, I have found the Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), the wild thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*), the Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Trifolium ornithopoides*), the Enyngo (*Erygium maritimum*), the Borage (*Borago officinalis*), and

the rare sea spurge (*Euphorbia paralias*),—long a puzzle to me, and over at St. Michael's Mount the elegant drooping feathery Tamarisk shrub (*Tamarix anglica*), which, of late years, I have repeatedly rejoiced to see here in a neighbour's garden. But far above them all (in my young estimation), was the fine floating white water lily (*Nymphaea alba*), which I not unfrequently admired (but never sacrilegiously gathered) in the still waters of the big reedy lagoon between Long Bridge and Marazion Bridge; going out of my direct way in my frequent visits to Marazion to see it in its solitude and grandeur; taking a course, now perhaps obsolete and scarcely even remembered,—and which, therefore, I may be permitted to mention;—leaving the main road and going down to Long Bridge, and there climbing and dropping over it on to a long narrow dyke which ran the whole length of that lagoon (though sometimes it was under water in several places,) often did I contemplate that fine and beautiful water-plant; occasionally thinking on the poet Cowper's adventure about one on the banks of the river Ouse, as recorded by him in his short poem on "The Dog and the Water Lily"; Cowper being, even in my boyish days (as he is still) a favourite poet of mine,—having also had while very young at School to learn by heart some of his poems, which I still remember.—

But my choice floral prizes were not by any means confined to the Eastern Green; there were others also to the West of Penzance and much nearer to it,—as the Barberry (*Berberis vulgaris*), and the handsome and pleasing Traveller's Joy (*Clematis vitalba*), both near to Alverton Bridge, or rather to the entrance into Love-lane; and down in that Lane the Periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), the Daffodil (*Narcissus pseudo-narcissus*),—found, also in the steps above the Paper mills at Castle-Horneck,—and, again, the Barberry; while at the Minney the quaint-looking Water Betony (*Scrophularia aquatica*) had its home; and in the old hedge of the hilly roadway field leading from the South Parade to the Minney the Yellow star-flowered Stone-crop (*Sedum*

The Dog and the Waterlily ("no fable") by William Cowper, was published in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1791.

THE noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When, 'scap'd from literary cares,
I wander'd on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs, adorned with ev'ry grace,
That spaniel found for me)

Now wanton'd lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse display'd
His lilies newly blown;
Their beauties I intent survey'd,
And one I wish'd my own.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escap'd my eager hand.

Beau marked my unsuccessful pains
With fixt consid'rate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a chirrup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and follow'd long
The windings of the stream.

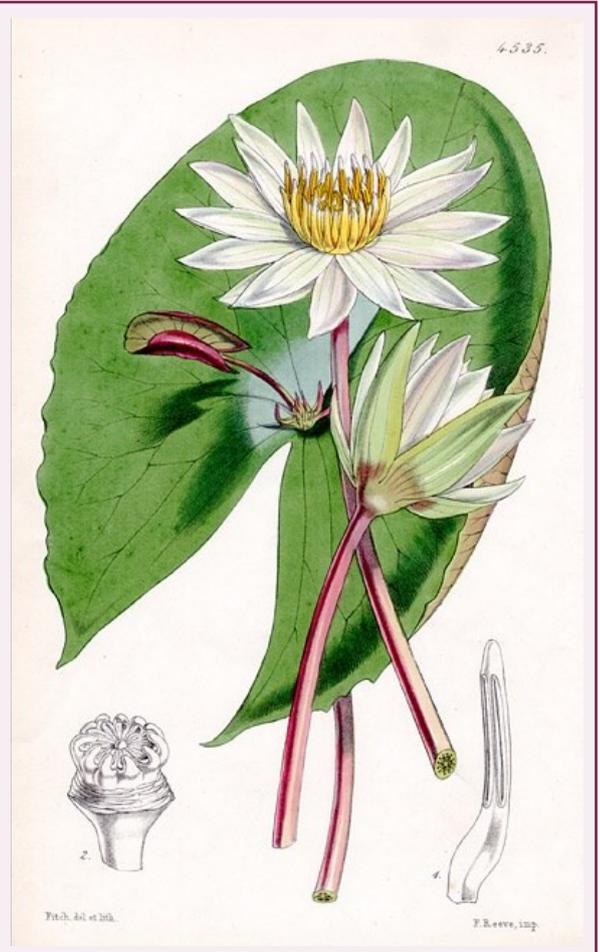
My ramble finished, I return'd.
Beau trotting far before
The floating wreath again discern'd,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropp'd
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropp'd
The treasure at my feet.

Charm'd with the sight, the world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed,
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed;

But, chief, myself I will enjoy,
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all.

Kew artist Walter Hood Fitch's
incomparable lithography →

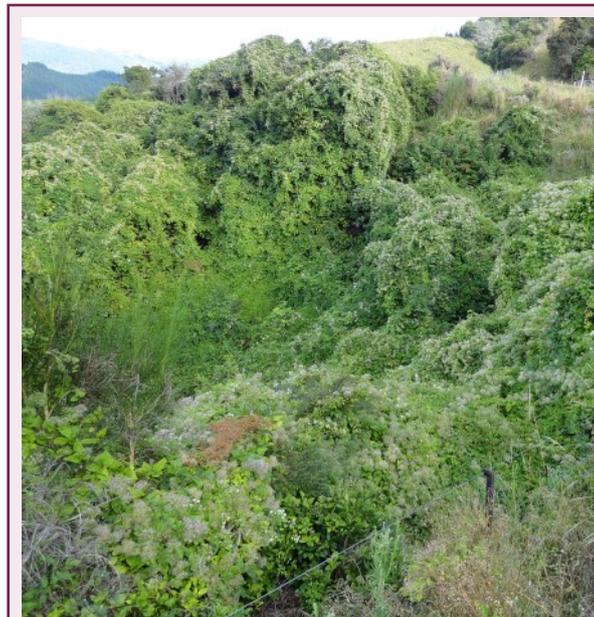


acne), the child's wonder! was plentiful, and with it a small (and scarce) Blue-bottle (? *Centaurea* sp.), that I never found anywhere else. And close by, in a narrow muddy and all but impassable lane, leading from that pathway towards the Western Green, grew the Columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*), the wild Hyacinth, Bluebell, or Cuckoo flower (*Hyacinthus non-scriptus*); and in the marshy land adjoining, the yellow water-iris (*Iris pseudo-acorus*), and the common Reed (*Arundo phragmites*) were found. This last very valuable to me, (*i.e.* to us, boys,) as, cut up into lengths, it formed the cases of *small* squibs in preparing our boyish fireworks for St. John's Eve! And of it I have also made useful pens for writing when hard pushed,—good quills being scarce and dear, and steel pens unknown! And still further West, up on the heights of Tolcarne, in a very secluded spot not far from the *Tutsan's* home, grew the Snowdrop (*Galanthium nivalis*), Spring's harbinger; and at the bases of the cliffs between Newlyn and Mousehole, the little lowly cushioned Seagillflower (*Armeria maritima*), flourished in safety, unvisited unnoticed! And I suppose this, at least, still abides at home!—

But I must close my long recital with two of my favourite and most valued wild Western flowers:—one, a very graceful and delicate Geranium (possibly *G. striatum*), from the shady grove at Castle-horneck; and one, the sweet little climbing and trailing Ivy-leaved Toad-flax (*Linaria cymbalaria*), from the hedge outside “the Lodge.”—Near Castle-Horneck entrance gate, formerly, in my Penzance days, occupied by Miss Tremeneere. And I may also mention, that some 25 years ago, in writing to Penzance, I requested specimens of this last little gem from that same locality, and they were sought, gathered, and sent out! And I have them here, with a few other prized dried specimens of wild flowers from Home),—to look at, occasionally, after the fashion of Hans Andersen's “Old Student” (*supra*).

“*Exeunt omnes!*”—as the old printed plays had it at the close: it is now Xmas. Day in the morning,—and I am physically tired.

Wm Colenso.



Traveller's joy (*Clematis vitalba*): old man's beard is a vigorous growing vine which forms a tangled smothering mass over trees and shrubs blocking out light and eventually killing supporting plants. One plant is capable of blanketing an area of 180 square metres. It seeds profusely and the seed can remain viable in the soil for several years. Stems can provide up to 10m of growth in a season. Introduced from Europe as a decorative plant, old man's beard has developed into a major weed problem particularly in the central regions of New Zealand. <http://ecan.govt.nz/publications/General/old-mans-beard-factsheet-jan12.pdf>

A year later, on 14 December, 1885 Colenso would read before the Hawke's Bay Philosophical Institute,

A brief List of some British Plants (Weeds) lately noticed, apparently of recent Introduction into this Part of the Colony; with a few Notes thereon.

It was published in *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* 18: 288–290 and is clearly based on his Christmas letter to Cornwall.

IN my travels or wanderings on foot during the last 2–3 years, mostly in and about the Seventy-mile Bush and its neighbouring localities, I have occasionally stumbled on a British plant that I had never seen before in New Zealand, that is since I left England, upwards of fifty years ago. On three occasions in particular I was at first, and for some time after detecting the plant, induced to believe that I had gained something additional to our indigenous Flora; but on examination, etc., I found out my mistake. I shall, however, only mention those few that are of recent introduction, at least here in Hawke's Bay; as far too much, in my opinion, has been already often said and repeatedly published respecting those British and Australian weeds, which have long been established in New Zealand, some of them even before it became a British colony! otherwise I might easily do as others have done before me: make out a long and wearisome reiteration or useless catalogue of hard names. [see box—Ed.]

On the contrary (and as Sir J.D. Hooker in writing on this subject has shown), an increase of knowledge, if not a real benefit, is obtained, by noting the fact of the *introduction* or *first notice* of any of our Home and foreign common weeds into the colony.

Ranunculaceæ.

Ranunculus hirsutus, Curt. (Pale Hairy Crowfoot). Only *one* plant, and that a very large one, quite a little erect bush of above a foot high, containing very many flowers. (This is one of the three plants already alluded to, that on first sight I supposed to be indigenous, it had so much in common with our larger New Zealand *Ranunculi*.) In an open sunny watercourse near Norsewood; 1884.

Cruciferae.

Coronopus didyma, Sm. (Wart Cress). A single plant only, but a pretty large prostrate one. This plant is not generally spread at Home, being confined to the south-west of England. I found this during the present summer (1885) at Napier.

Camelina sativa, Crantz. (Gold-of-Pleasure). Of this also I only detected a single plant, and that a few years ago near Napier; it was of large size (for the species) and full of flowers and fruit; I have not observed it since. I gathered and dried the whole of it. Its common English name seems wonderfully misplaced. [289]

Linææ.

Linum angustifolium, Huds. (Narrow-leaved pale Flax). First observed this summer here in Napier.

Hypericineæ.

Hypericum androsæmum, Linn. (Tutsan; Park-leaves). One fine plant only here at Napier, in my field; first observed at Christmas, 1884, bearing flowers and fruit.

Umbelliferae.

Torilis nodosa, Sm. (Knotted Hedge Parsley). One small plant only seen, and that in a very strange out-of-the-way spot for a foreign weed to be found in, at the base of a high cliff, side of the River Mangatawhainui, Seventy-mile Bush; 1884. This little plant gave me

A "brief" paper on weeds

Colenso indicated his paper was "brief", contrasting it with the "long and wearisome reiteration or useless catalogue of hard names" in papers by his botanical rivals GM Thomson and Thomas Kirk published in the *Transactions* (Notes on the Local Distribution of Certain Plants common to the British Islands and New Zealand, by Kirk, Volume 4, 1871; On some of the Naturalized Plants of Otago, by Thomson, Volume 7, 1874; On the Naturalized Plants of Port Nicholson and the adjacent District, by Kirk, Volume 10, 1877).

He had written to JD Hooker 12 July 1884, sending new ferns, but expressing his anxiety that John Gilbert Baker, keeper of the Herbarium at Kew, the fern expert, would lump them with described species. Then, working up to the strongest language in his extant writing, he attacked those "chattering neophyte botanists", "Science teacher" Thomson and "Professor" Kirk,

... in these new (?) ferns, now described by me – *Lomaria oligoneuron*, *Lindsæa trilobata*; and *Polypodium rufobarbatum*; no doubt Mr Baker will again (at first sight) deny their being valid species. One thing however, is certain: – i.e. if I am wrong, you will have to amend your published chars. of our Ferns and so far I shall have been of service. And I may further observe, in writing on this subject to you – my old often proved & valued friend – that I cannot shut my eyes to two facts bearing hereon: – 1. that Mr. Baker made similar errors on Ferns of mine (& of others too) in past years. Ex. gr. *Hymen. villosum* *Lindsæa viridis*, *Polypodium*

sylvaticum, etc., though lately restored by him, & inserted in his pubd. Papers. And, 2. – that this is just exactly what ½ doz. of the chattering neophyte-botanists here in this Country, N. & S. of me, have done! and published in our Papers, &c., concerning my new ferns, &c., &c., (having moved thereto by sheer envy – as I take it), – although they have been obliged to allow – that they had never seen my ferns! – and for their conduct some of them have been privately taken to task by their patrons. You cannot form a correct idea of how these fellows, – first schoolmasters, then dubbed "Science-teachers", (Pshaw!) then "Professors" &c., – how they have banded together against me! and that (as far as I know) only because of the success that has attended my labours in the dense unvisited forests and ravines, where these precious carpet knights (who make so much fuss of a one-day's outing with a lot of ladies!) dare not show their noses!! They write over & over, usques ad nausum. of the introduced Brit. weeds, & such easy compilations – and Hector publishes their trash (some of it) in, the "Trans."! (through influence of "Board"). They also write I know, to Kew, – and I regret to see Mr Baker too readily adopting their views of my ferns &c. Those are the Tyros whom I had in view when I wrote p.32 in my "3 Literary Papers", and they know it. Gods! how I helped them all at first. This their old letters to me will show. They belong to the cunning mole-working class so well described by Sir Wm Fox as "Brain-suckers"! But enough of this.

some trouble; for, on my first meeting with it (young and leaves only), I supposed it to be *Daucus brachiatus*, Sieber, (an indigenous common northern plant that I had never met with in these parts,) or, something new; so I watched it carefully. On a subsequent visit I procured a tiny bit in flower, and on a still later visit its curious fruit, when I soon found out what it was.

Rubiaceæ.

Galium aparine, L. (Goose-grass, or Cleavers). This fine species of *Galium* grows strongly here at Napier. First noticed in 1884.

Compositaceæ.

Crepis pulchra, Linn. (Small flowered Hawk's Beard). Sparingly in my field at Napier.

Crepis tectorum, Linn. (Smooth Hawk's Beard). With preceding; this plant becomes a biennial in New Zealand. At first I had supposed this plant to be a *sp. nov.*, from its large size and woody stems, and being a perennial.

Hypochæris glabra, Linn. (Smooth Cat's-ear). With preceding; first noticed in 1884.

Lapsana communis, Linn. (Common Nipple-wort). In one spot only, in an open grassy glade in a thick wood, south of the River Mangatwhainui, near Norsewood; first noticed in 1883.

Arctium lappa, Linn. (Burdock; Clot-Bur). I first saw this plant in 1882, in a dense and unfrequented part of the Seventy-mile Bush. There was only one plant of it, a young one, having 2–3 large prostrate leaves resembling rhubarb. I could not tell what to make of it! I gazed on it with astonishment, much like Robinson Crusoe on seeing the print of a human foot in the sand! I had seen nothing like it in New Zealand. [To the best of my recollection I had never seen the burdock growing in England.] I visited that one plant several times during the first six months, with great expectations, but [290] could

make nothing of it, as during that period it showed no signs of flowering. Subsequently, however, it flowered. I collected and dried specimens, and brought them to Napier, not, however, without some amount of misgiving. On due examination, I found out what it was. Unfortunately I did not go again to those localities until the following Spring; and, as it had seeded plentifully, and the cattle had got into that wood, they carried off its sticky burs in all directions; so that from that *one* plant hundreds have been disseminated, filling the neighbourhood with a much worse weed than the introduced thistle. Like many other of the foreign weeds, it flourishes exceedingly, and grows to a very large size, 4 feet high, thick, bushy and strong, inso-much that a few plants growing together offer quite an obstacle to the traveller that way.

Among sundry other plants of this extensive and easily introduced Order, that have also found their way here during the last few years, (although previously known in other parts of the colony,) may be mentioned:—

Chrysanthemum leucanthemum, Linn. (Great Ox-eye). In great quantity about Waipawa and Waipukurau, quite whitening the fields at Woburn with its flowers.

Achillea millefolium, Linn. (Common Yarrow or Milfoil). At Norsewood; where, however, it bears purple flowers, and looks well.

Centaurea solstitialis, Linn. (Yellow Star-thistle; St. Barnaby's Thistle). Napier.

Labiatae.

Prunella vulgaris, Linn. (Self-heal). This weed, long known in the north of New Zealand, I first noticed about five years ago, and then only a few, and in two or three adjoining spots. When I first saw it, being young and only showing leaves, I did not recognise it. On a subsequent visit it was in flower. In the following year I was again sojourning in that same locality (Seventy-mile Bush), when one day a

gentleman drove up to the house where I was; he had been up in the forest collecting ferns and plants for his garden, and among others he had carefully taken up some young *Prunella* plants; but on my telling him what they were, he quickly abandoned them. This plant, too, has spread wonderfully in a short time, supplanting, overrunning, and destroying the low indigenous herbs; which is the more easily done through it being a perennial.

Even on his first journeys Colenso had noted how European weeds flourished here: he wrote this metaphor for colonisation in 1842, at a time when he was identifying strongly with Māori, the "original possessors of the soil",

After leaving "... the Maungatautari district.... I observed that pest to agriculture, the large-leaved *Rumex*, very plentiful here. The natives say that the Ngapuhi tribes (who live in the north parts of the island, and with whom they were formerly at continual enmity), introduced it in order to spoil their lands. I doubt, however, the cause assigned for its introduction here in the very centre of the island, but not the fact. At Poverty Bay and parts adjacent, the natives assert that the seed of this plant was originally sold them by whites for tobacco seed! It is now to be met with in several districts, in common with many other noxious European weeds. I have often noticed in travelling, certain spots abounding with the rankest vegetation, but without a single indigenous plant. The new comers appear to vegetate so fast as quite to exterminate and supersede the original possessors of the soil.

The sender of weeds

William Colenso didn't just import plants to New Zealand: he also sent New Zealand plants home to Cornwall, as these clippings attest,

Cornishman 19 February 1891

Mr F. Holman read an interesting paper on "Gardening Reminiscences," in which he said that he.... devoted himself (with the assistance of the late Mr Vallance, head gardener at Tresco, Scilly) to the cultivation of some of the plants and shrubs which flower so luxuriantly in the Islands as well as to growths from seeds sent from New Zealand by the Rev. W. Colenso and others given him by Mr John Symons: and, in this attempt, he had been generally so successful that he looked forward in a few years to his garden attaining a sub-tropical appearance....

Cornishman 19 February 1891

FLORAL.... Of *Libertia orbicularis*, some seeds of which were sent by the Rev. William Colenso from New Zealand to Penzance, Mr Frederick Holman told the Penzance Natural-history society, on Friday, that he raised three strong plants in his North-parade garden. One he sent to Mr Vallance, then head-gardener at Tresco abbey. The other two are doing well and flower every year. The flowers are white and star-like and are borne on a reed-like stem.

Cornishman 18 July 1901

Of the hardy sort of New Zealand flax the common kind is not hardy in cold soils or northern inland districts, being frequently levelled to the ground or killed outright by frost. But *phormium Colensoi* (so-called after the good and true friend of Penzance, the late Rev. W. Colenso) is



Morrab Gardens, Penzance.

... 1913, with NZ flax & cabbage trees

hardy nearly all over Great Britain and Ireland, and is especially happy near the sea. It flowers freely, and its great lance, shaft-like spikes are now fully 10 feet in height, and the short lateral branches at the top bear numerous clustered flowers, of a dull red or chocolate colour. *Phormium tenax* the common New Zealand flax, *p. Colensoi*, and *p. Veitchii*, the golden-striped variety, are all worth culture in tubs or pots for terrace, walk, or conservatory decoration.

Cornishman 22 September 1949

I went for stroll along the winding paths [of the Morrab Gardens] this afternoon. The magnolia on the front the Morrab Library had put forth its great alabaster flowers, and in its shadow the oleander bloomed beside the Persian pomegranate and the yellow kowhai, one of the forty-eight New Zealand plants in the Morrab acres. Some of the Antipodean shrubs were sent to Penzance by Rev. William Colenso, who in return gave New Zealand the English primrose; and if the emigrant to that country is delighted to find the primrose growing there, the New Zealand visitor to Penzance is no less thrilled to come upon so many familiar plants in a garden ten miles from the Land's End. The wattle, his national emblem [*sid*], prospers there and there, too, the South African will find the blue and white agapanthus in bloom this week near the Boer War memorial. Not far from the waving white plumes of the pampas grass, south-east of the bandstand, the yucca holds its candelabra to a blue September sky, while the mimosa from the Southern USA waits for February and the mild air of a Cornish spring. The Himalayas and the Andes are here in this park where the most exotic flowers bloom as naturally as the Cornish heath *Erica vagans* and the pink and white belladonna lilies to which the natural poetry of the Cornish has given the name of Naked Ladies.

The rise and fall of Joshua Lear

Rev. William Colenso, Member of the House of Representatives in the new capital, Wellington, wrote to his friend Edward Catchpool, Postmaster at Napier, on Friday 4 August 1865, sending a book (*Robinson Crusoe*) via Captain G Mundle's vessel to his son Willie, to be collected from Catchpool and delivered by one "Lear":

In haste I write this P.S.—Yesterday I sent to Mundle a Book for my Boy (a Rob. Crusoe) directing it to you—will you kindly ask M. for it? Lear will call on you for the Book.—

Willie was 14: his birthday was 29 May so this wasn't a birthday gift. He had been sent down to his father two years earlier, just as Colenso was elected to the House, so Willie's gifts may have been to make up for his father's absences. Who looked after him when Colenso was in Wellington? Was it Lear?

There is a letter from Colenso to McLean (#1025789), undated but probably from about this time,

In your note of Wednesday last, You ask for the name of a man who was in my employ & who had saved some of your sheep:—

This man's name is Joshua Lear—he is still in my employ (himself and wife living with me as servants.)—I suppose, by your enquiry, you may be thinking of rewarding him—but I question whether he did more than his bare duty (under the circumstances).

Lear owned land. In 1861 he was granted 60 acres under the Naval and Military Settlers' Land Orders [*Hawke's Bay Herald* 19 November 1861]. The *Provincial Government Gazette* No 288 Tuesday June 3 1862 shows a Return of Lands Sold from 1 to 31 March, 1862: No. 1090 is a £60 purchase at Northern Ruataniwha by Joshua Lear [*Hawke's Bay Herald* 3 June 1862]. The *Hawke's Bay Weekly Times* of 27 January 1868 shows he was granted Block 7 at Wakarara by the Crown Lands Office.

He is listed on the Napier Electoral Roll in 1861–2 along with William Colenso of Waitangi. That is to say, he was a land owner.

In 1865 William Colenso attested that Lear owned town sections at Hampden and was therefore named on the Electoral Roll for Clive. [*Hawke's Bay Herald* 11 April 1865].

Colenso wrote again on 14 August 1865 to Catchpool,

P.S. Lyon will pack a small parcel for my Boy, to your address or care, in a case which he is sending to Stuart & Co. for Howick:—please receive it and send it on to Sutton's by one of the Traps for Lear.

William Lyon was a Lambton Quay Wellington bookseller; Stuart & Co. were Napier merchants; F Sutton had a shop in Shakespeare Rd Napier.

TO LET,

DEVON COTTAGE, situated in the Milton Road, adjoining the private residence of Mr. D. E. Lindsay. Immediate possession can be given.

375 Apply to JOSHUA LEAR.

In November 1867 Lear was advertising a property to rent in Milton road, the road Colenso lived in. [*Hawke's Bay Herald* 19 November 1867].

In 1869 he bought two shares in the Hawke's Bay Gold Prospecting and Mining Company.

From July 1870 he was advertising his newly acquired Napier Hotel in each issue of the *Hawke's Bay Times*, and was granted a Liquor Licence.

NAPIER HOTEL.

JOSHUA LEAR, PROPRIETOR

J. L., HAVING taken the above Hotel, hopes, by strict attention to business, and keeping the best of Liquors, Wines, Ales, &c., to merit a fair share of the public patronage.

N.B.—GOOD STABLING,

Hastings-street, Napier,
July 1, 1870.

33

The following year he was distressed about timber thieves.

NOTICE.

ANY Person or Persons CUTTING or REMOVING TIMBER of any description from Block No. 7, Wakarara District, after this date, will be prosecuted according to law.

JOSHUA LEAR.

Napier, Jan. 24, 1871.

148

In 1874 he was granted a Liquor Licence for the Royal Hotel in Napier [*Hawke's Bay Times* 24 April 1874], but on 12 December 1875 Colenso would write to Andrew Luff,

Lear is in a sad way: nearly blind, only knows one by voice; has lost every thing; not having A1. At present he sits all day in the verandah of the Royal when fine, in the sun: I only first heard of it 3 or 4 days ago.—I fear he took to drinking heavily, after his wife's death; placed immoral unprincipled persons in charge—they receiving all the monies, & trusting whom they pleased, & it ended (as Mrs Ford told me) in L. giving up everything, Ho. &c., Milton Road, to Swan, & to Neal & Co. who got all!!! I was led to give the poor creature money to buy shirts.

Colenso wrote again to Luff in October 1877,

I had a painful job last week; Lear had been seen several times of late by my man, sleeping about our fences & under trees, &c.—at last he spoke with L., who sd. he had been 3 days & nights wandering,—Gray having turned him out,—& that he wished for death, &c, &c. (I had previously helped him.) So I saw Scully who sent 2 p.men, who hunted him up & took him away. I then saw S. again, not to have L. brought up as a vagrant & sent to Gaol, but to place him in the "Old Man's House," which S. had done. It is a sad sad story! L. was well off here, a free-holder & w. money.—another victim to P. Houses,—or, rather, to discontent & seeking to be rich! (a lesson to us all.)

By 1884 the Royal Hotel was in the hands of William Ebbett and Lear was his employee. Ebbett was charged with assaulting one Patrick Frawley, but got off lightly on what appears to have been evidence from Lear that directly contradicted evidence from police witnesses.

Joshua Lear, employed by defendant, deposed that he heard high words between Frawley and defendant. Frawley made use of bad language, and struck and kicked defendant, who did not retaliate, but treated him very very civilly.

("Patrick Frawley, on remand, was brought up charged with lunacy. As defendant was recovered from his temporary demention he was discharged." *Hawke's Bay Herald* 19 August 1884).

On 12 August 1890 Colenso wrote to Harding, "I note in last evengs. 'D.T.', the death of Lear, from cancer."

LEAR.—At the Refuge, Napier, on the 8th inst., Joshua Lear, of cancer, formerly landlord of the Napier Hotel, aged 67 years.

This then was Joshua Lear, perhaps Willie's minder when his father was at Wellington, but later "another victim to public houses—or, rather, to discontent and seeking to be rich."

A lesson to us all, indeed.



The voyage of the *Prince Regent* ?



The 22 year old printer William Colenso set sail from Gravesend in the *Prince Regent* on 19 June 1834. His diary of the voyage is sketchy, with long gaps, occasioned perhaps by his awful seasickness. The route can be traced from brief entries...

22 June: off Beachy Head

24 June: off Isle of Wight

1 July: Bay of Biscay

7 July: Lat 14.16 Long 15.6.

27 July Lat. 9.8.

9 Aug: crossed Equator.

11 Aug: Lat 3.46 S Long 16.18 W.

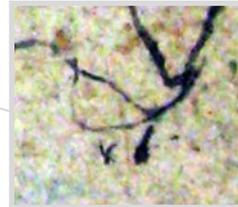
9 Sep: rounded Cape of Good Hope.

24 Oct: Land in sight. 35.40 151.42.

25 Oct: entered (Sydney) Heads & bore off Pinchgut Isle.

There is a faded sketch on the back of a water splattered manuscript journal for 1833–34 (written, in Colenso's already parsimonious way, on opened-out envelopes [ATL MS-Papers -9131-1]); it looks like a map of Tasmania and SE Australia.

If so it suggests that after crossing the southern Indian Ocean and Great Australian Bight, the *Prince Regent* had to make "x6" attempts to round Tasmania.



The pencilled weekdays beginning "23 W" would only occur in July in 1834, so appear unrelated. They may refer to a week becalmed, or of very slow progress toward the equator—from 7 to 27 July they sailed only 4.36 degrees southwards.