

north of Prince of Wales Island.¹ It appears evident that some further investigations of tidal phenomena in this neighbourhood are requisite in order that some means may be found to enable the seamen to calculate with certainty the time and height of high water, and the change of the streams, a matter of considerable importance where these run with great velocity through narrow channels.

Behind the shore of the small bay in which Somerset lies, the land rises steeply, and is covered with wood, except where clearings have been made around two conspicuous sets of wooden buildings, the one the residence of the magistrate, the other the barracks of the water police.

The country is wooded in every direction, but with constantly recurring open patches covered with scattered Acacias, Gum Trees, and Proteaceæ with only grass growing beneath. In the dense woods, with their tall forest trees and tangled masses of creepers, one might for a moment imagine oneself back in Fiji or Api, but the characteristic open spaces, with scattered *Eucalypti*, remind one at once that one is in Australia. The principal features of Australian and Indian vegetation are, as it were, dove-tailed into one another. In the woods, the tree trunks are covered with climbing Aroids, and often with Orchids. Two Palms, an *Areca* with a tall slender stem not thicker than a man's wrist, but 50 feet high, and a most beautiful *Caryota*, strong evidence of Indian affinities in the flora, are abundant. The cocoanut palm, as is well known, is not found growing naturally anywhere in Australia, though it is abundant in islands not far from Cape York. At Cape York some trees had been planted, but they did not appear to thrive. One of them, already more than eight years old, at which age it ought to have been bearing fruit, had as yet a trunk only a few feet in height. A Rattan Palm (*Calamus* sp.), trailing everywhere between the underwood, is a terrible opponent as one tries to creep through the forest in search of birds.

The number and variety of birds at Cape York is astonishing. Two species of *Ptilotis* (*Ptilotis chrysotis* and *Ptilotis filigera*), different from those at Fiji, but closely resembling them, suck the honey from, or search for insects on, the scarlet blossoms of the same *Erythrina* tree as that at Fiji. With these are to be seen a *Myzomela*, and the gorgeous little Brush-tongued Parroquet (*Trichoglossus swainsoni*), which flies screaming about in small flocks, and gathers so much honey from the flowers, that it pours out of the bird's beak when it falls shot to the ground. Amongst the same flowers is to be seen also a true Honey Bird (*Nectarinia frenata*), with brilliant metallic blue tints on its throat. The common White Crested Cockatoo (*Cacatua galerita*) is here wary and difficult to get near, though not so much so as in the frequented parts of Victoria. The Great Black Cockatoo (*Microglossus aterrimus*) is to be found at Cape York, but none were seen. The Pheasant Cuckoo (*Centropus phasianus*) rises occasionally from the long grass in the opens, and though of the cuckoo tribe, has exactly the appearance of a pheasant

¹ Australian Directory, vol. ii. p. 337, 3rd ed..