

The Sydney Herald 26 June 1840

## PORT PHILLIP.

### THE PROGRESS OF DISCOVERY.

We have sincere gratification in announcing the arrival in Melbourne of Count Streleski the enterprising pedestrian naturalist and his friends and compagnons de voyage, Messrs. Macarthur and Riley, from an exploratory tour through the terra incognita on the south east coast of New South Wales, in the course of which they have made several highly important discoveries, and have undergone excessive privations. Some interesting particulars of the journey, gleaned in conversation with the travellers, we hasten to lay before our readers, and we hope to be able very shortly to publish a more detailed account of the important discoveries they have made. The present tour was undertaken by Count Streleski in continuation of those geognostic and mineralogical researches which had previously carried him over 2000 miles within the limits of the colony, and now induced him to start from the Murrumbidgee, to explore the unknown, and by white men untrodden territory lying between the Hume and the south eastern coast of New South Wales. At Ellerslie, a station belonging to H. H. Macarthur, Esq., M. C., the Count was joined by Mr James Macarthur, and Mr Riley, both of whom were eager to share with Count in the toils and gratifications of such an under- taking. The party seems to have started well provided with provisions and pack horses, and all well mounted excepting the Count, who having with him a considerable number of valuable instruments necessary for the prosecution of his observations, which on account of their delicate construction required the greatest care of carriage, preferred pursuing his journey on foot with his budget on his back. From Ellerslie the party descended into the beautiful valley of the Hume, or Murray, and followed its picturesque windings for about fifty miles. Here the travellers encamped ; the Count and Mr Macarthur ascended the Australian Alps, and on the 12th of February, about noon, they found them- selves sitting on the most elevated peak of Australia, at the height of 7800 feet above the level of the sea, beyond the reach of vegetation, surrounded by perpetual snows, with a serene and lucid sky above them, and below, an unbroken view over an extent of about 4000 square miles. On the summit of the Alps Count Streleski secured many valuable meteorological and magnetic observations—the trigonometrical survey, which the Count had begun and carried on from the Murrumbidgee, received new supports from this predominant point ; valuable materials for future publication were also obtained in aid of the Count's barometrical survey and his geognostic and mineralogical investigations. From the Snowy Range, retracing their steps for about thirty miles to the westward, the party struck for the south, through a broken and uninhabited country, opening as it were by their first track, perhaps a future communication with the Murray. Arrived at Omeo, the country afforded new mid ample harvest of observation and gratification, from its peculiar geognostic character and connecting links of the survey. In three days' journey from Omeo, in a south- east direction, the party crossed the dividing range, and in four days more found themselves in a new and splendid country clothed with the richest pasture, and intersected with numerous rivers—an immense inland lake and its ramified lagoons ; in fact opening up in every direction fresh fields for the operations of the settler, such as no other part of the colony, which had come under the notice of the travellers present- ed. The country from latitude 37 deg. 10 min. S., assumed the most cheering and gratifying aspect, but the rivers which beset the country from N. W. to S. E. greatly retarded

the progress of the travellers, whose provisions now began to fail. On the sixth of April, it was determined to place all hands on half rations (a biscuit and a slice of bacon per day), but now difficulties and new delays soon rendered it evident that even with this precautionary measure, it would be impossible to make the stock of provisions last out the journey. The greatest impediment the travellers had to contend with was the exhausted state of their horses ; each day saw one or other of the party dismounted, to follow the Count on foot—but this, far from removing, only increased the impediments to their progress, for the men unaccustomed to walk, like the horses, began to feel the effects of the wear and tear of the journey. In this situation it became necessary for the travellers to relinquish (which they did with regret) their original intention of prosecuting their researches as far as Wilson's Promontory, and thence commencing the exploration of the sea-coast, its inlets and outlets, and to take instead the straight course for Western Port, the nearest point whence fresh supplies could be obtained. The open forests, plains, and valleys, through which the party, if well supplied with provisions, might have travelled at leisure, had now to be exchanged for a rocky and mountainous path, through which a passage could not be effected without infinite difficulty. The horses, now completely exhausted, served more to retard than to accelerate the progress of the travellers, and they were finally obliged to abandon them in a valley of tolerable pasture and well-watered, about, seventy-five miles beyond Western Port ; here also they were forced to leave the packs with the men's wearing apparel, and the Count's mineralogical and botanical collection, taking with them only their blankets and the residue of their bread, which, notwithstanding the allowance had been greatly restricted, did not last longer than four days from this time. From this place, the Count and his companions took, and at all hazards maintained a direct course to Western Port, in the hope of bringing their sufferings to a close as speedily as possible ; but unfortunately this course led them for days together through a dense scrub, which it was almost impossible to penetrate. The party was now in a most deplorable condition. Messrs Macarthur and Riley and their attendants had become so exhausted as to be unable to cope with the difficulties which beset their progress. The Count being more inured to the fatigue and privations attendant upon a pedestrian journey through the wilds of our inhospitable interior, alone retained possession of his strength, and although burdened with a load of instruments and papers of forty-five pounds weight, continued to pioneer his exhausted companions day after day through an almost impervious tea-tree scrub, closely interwoven with climbing grasses, vines, willows, fern, and reeds. Here the Count was to be seen breaking a passage with his hands and knees through the centre of the scrub, there throwing himself at full length among the dense underwood, and thus opening by the weight of his body a pathway for his companions in distress. Thus the party inch by inch forced their way, the incessant rains preventing them from taking rest by night or day. Their provisions during the last eighteen days of their journey consisted only of a very scanty supply of the flesh of the native bear or monkey, but for which, the only game the country afforded, the travellers must have perished from utter starvation. This food which the travellers describe as somewhat of the toughest, was but scantily obtained, and the nutriment it afforded, was altogether insufficient for the maintenance of the health and strength necessary for undergoing such fatigue. On the twenty-second day after they had abandoned their horses the travellers came in sight of Western Port, and the sensations which were created by the first view of the water on which a small vessel was riding at anchor, and the blue smoke curling among the trees, may be more easily imagined than described.—It was upon Mr. Berry's tent the party had stumbled, and to his hospitality and kind attention to their wants they owe their recovery to health and vigour.

Messrs Macarthur and Riley, acknowledge themselves to be under great obligations to Count Streleski, to whom under Divine Providence, they attribute their safety. Although furnished with sextant and artificial horizon, the state of the weather was such that during the last twenty- two days, notwithstanding the utmost exertion of the travellers, the latitude and azimuth could only twice be ascertained, but such attention was paid to the variations of the compass, and laying down the course upon the chart that the latest observation did not differ from the meridian of Western Port more than two miles. In the course of a few days the public may expect a more circumstantial narration of the journey, and an opportunity will be afforded for the inspection of the chart of the new and valuable country which the Court, in honour of His Excellency the Governor, has designated Gipps' Land. We have much pleasure in stating, that in the opinion of Count Streleski there exists no impediment to the immediate occupation of Gipps' Land, by the enterprising settlers of Port Phillip, and that it is much more easy of access from Melbourne than from Maneroo, or the Omeo country. The brilliant prospects which the discovery of so splendid a country in the (hitherto considered barren) region lying between Australia Felix and the outer coast stations of New South Wales, opens up to this province must be obvious to all, and we trust Count Streliski and his gallant companions will not be allowed to leave Melbourne, without some public testimonial of the approbation of the colonists.

( The Count arrived in Melbourne 19 May 1840)