

Among other accidents, the shipping of a sea caused much fright among the women on board, and threw one poor girl into hysterics. They were all glad to pass within the island of Nobbo, off the mouth of Hunter river, and to get on shore at Newcastle.

The town of Newcastle is a small village of seventy or eighty houses, built on the side of a hill; it contains two taverns and several grog-shops, a jail, convict stockade, hospital, court-house, and a venerable old-looking church. On one of the neighbouring hills is a flag-staff, and on another a windmill. The business of a coal-mine and that of the building of a breakwater for the protection of the harbour, give the place an air of life and animation.

Our travellers put up at Rowell's "Commercial Hotel;" and on proceeding to make inquiries relative to the mode of reaching Mr. Threlkeld's, they were referred to Dr. Brook, the surgeon of the hospital, and a friend of Mr. Threlkeld. He offered them every attention, and advised them to wait for Mr. Threlkeld's conveyance. This delay gave them an opportunity of seeing something of the place, and the natives, as well as to make drawings. The view of the surrounding country from the windmill was extensive, overlooking the town; the Hunter river was seen winding through a well-wooded country, rising occasionally into low hills. At a bend of the river the steamer was seen aground, on her way to Maitland, about twenty-five miles farther up the river. The coast trended to the north, and was visible as far as Port Stephens, about fifty miles distant.

There are two coal-pits, one on the hill, the other in the valley. The former is the older, and has been worked about eight years. Both are the property of the Australian Agricultural Company, and are under the direction of Mr. James Steel. The coal is first seen along the cliffs, forming black horizontal strata, separated by sandstone and clay shale, from twenty feet to forty feet in thickness. They formerly quarried it from the cliff, but the greater part of the coal is now obtained by mining.

From the older coal-pit they have excavated an area of twenty-four acres. The shafts are carried down about one hundred feet, to the fifth or lowermost coal-seam, which is about sixty feet below the level of the sea. The coal is at first taken out in small narrow areas, the passages in which are but four feet high, leaving about as much standing as is removed, the roof above being of fragile shale, and requiring propping every three or four feet. The work is all performed by convicts, who, after digging the coal out, take it in small carriages on railways, which pass to the shaft, where it is raised by steam-power. The lower bed only is considered sufficiently extensive