‘Cormilligan’

A ‘Sonnet Redouble’ celebrating the life and times of
William McCaw.

Many years ago a book was recommended to me, by a venerable local worthy who knew I was interested in local history. This book was written by a nineteenth century polymath James Shaw, who was village schoolmaster in the tiny hamlet of Tynron, Dumfriesshire, in the mid to late 1800’s. The book was called “A Country Schoolmaster”. It was a fabulous insight into the late Victorian mindset, and also contained a wealth of local history, topography and folklore. One of the chapters which especially enthralled me was entitled ‘A visit to the herd’s house’, this was the first time I had heard of William McCaw.
The charm of this chapter made me resolve to visit this place, which really *is* in the middle of nowhere!. After some more research, map-reading etc, I set off on a fine sunny day on my quest. Walking for several miles into the hills I eventually found the old abandoned farmhouse of Cormilligan. The house is in a derelict and rundown state, open to the elements and sadly neglected. It’s situation however really is something to behold, an atmosphere of utter peace permeates the air and you can see forever!. The biggest surprise however awaited me on entering the house. There to my utter astonishment were name after name after name, written or scrawled all over the inside gable end wall of the house. As I read, it quickly became apparent that these names had been written there by the actual living descendants of William McCaw, many, it seemed, living now in New Zealand. These descendants had returned, like the migrating salmon, to the land of their forefathers.
Intrigued, I was resolved to find out more about this story, and the more I found out the more resolved I became that I should write some fitting poetic work to commemorate this unique, beautiful, and spiritual place.
The project lay in the recesses of my mind for several years before I finally got round to getting something down on paper. This year, (2002) I resolved to commence the project. I accessed the New Zealand telephone directory via the internet and looked for some names of McCaws in the Wellington area whom I thought might correspond with some of the names written on the walls at Cormilligan. The name Stuart McCaw looked like a good bet, I rang it up. Bingo!, yes, this Stuart McCaw was the great grandson of William McCaw of Cormilligan. A correspondence began, the family in New Zealand now numbers several hundreds, they are still a very close-knit family and meet regularly for ‘clan’ gatherings. Stuart and his wife Jan, and their uncle, Bob McCaw, e-mailed me many fascinating articles from the family’s written archive, most of which was written by the original William McCaw. It records in detail his life, family events and history, and his mind-boggling decision to move the whole family lock stock and barrel to start a new life in New Zealand in 1880, when he himself was aged sixty!.
I decided to attempt a Sonnet Redouble on this worthy subject – fifteen poems in all – telling the epic tale of William McCaw’s life as a herd in Scotland, some family history and fascinating stories; the ship’s journey to New Zealand, his eight grandsons who died

during the First World War, daily working life on a 19th century farm, etc.

The poems were completed around Sept. 13th, 2002, almost 122 years to the day that William McCaw set foot in New Zealand, and after some final editing were e-mailed to the McCaw family in New Zealand. On the 28th October 2002 the poems were read at the 100th birthday celebrations of Dorothy McCaw, who is daughter-in-law to the original William McCaw of Cormilligan.

The following articles taken from the family's archive will give some insight into this remarkable man's life, and his unique place in the diaspora that occurred in Lowland Scotland during the nineteenth century.

WILLIAM McCAW

A BIOGRAPHY READ ON THE 50th. ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MARRIAGE

5th. January, 1849.

I was born at Cormilligan, near Tynron, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, on the 10th. day of September, 1818. My father, Robert McCaw, was then shepherd of that place, having succeeded his father, Robert McCaw, who died in 1806, having been there from 1780. In 1820 my father died, leaving a widow and three children, of whom I am the second, being one year and five months old at the time of my father's death. Out of respect for my father and sympathy for the widow she was favoured to remain in the benefit (home), and a young man was engaged at a small wage (£10 a year), to take charge of the sheep. My mother was a God-fearing woman, and when her children came forward she used to withdraw with them to the "other room" and there engaged in all the parts of family worship. In winter it was cold and fireless, and we did not care for it very much. Children, and sometimes those who are not children, do not always know what is working for their good,

My first school was at Glenmanna, at a shepherd's house, who kept a teacher during winter for his own family and others convenient who could attend. Here I spent two or three winters and was lodged with my maternal Grandfather, one of the finest old men I have ever known. I never attended the Tynron Parish School, then taught by Robert NewalI. The school books were the Bible, Shorter Catechism. Scott's Collection and Gray's Arithmetic. There was a Latin class, but there were neither English, Grammar, Geography nor History classes, then, in the school.

In 1832 my mother married the shepherd, William Armstrong. in accordance with previous agreement, I suppose, a short while after the marriage the "Ha' Bible" was brought and placed upon Armstrong's knee. There was not a word spoken, but he quietly took up the position of Head of the Family, and there was no more of the cold room worship.

In 1833 I went to my first service as Herd-boy at Crawford Moor. In 1836 I got a full Shepherd's charge at Blackstone, Glencairn.

In 1837 my stepfather died, leaving my mother a widow a second time; and again, with three children of the marriage, curiously enough the second of whom was born on my birthday. I was then a lad in my nineteenth year, and was judged to be qualified for the vacant charge, and so went home to my mother to act the part to my stepfather's children that he had done for a time for me.

In 1844 I was ordained to the Office of the Eldership in the Reformed Presbyterian Congregation, Penpont, so that I have held that office for 54 years.

On the 5th of January, 1849, I was married to Isabella Todd, daughter of John Todd and Marion Lorimer, of Auchenbenzie, Penpont. In the first 21 years of our married life 13 children were born to us, two of whom died in infancy; and one, a little girl four years old, was called away, a call that so wounded the feelings that, with a very gentle person, bleeds even yet. Ten have been spared to us, all grown to manhood and womanhood—most of them heads of families themselves ; and of none of them, as yet, have we any cause to be ashamed.

I must say a word more about the Todd family. JohnTodd and Marion Lorimer were pious people. John was a very genial man, and an Elder in the U. P. Congregation at Burnhead, Penpont. They had a large family (six sons and five daughters) and of the eleven my wife is the ninth. All of them are now dead save my wife and a brother. It will not be out of place, and it may he of interest to mention how we were brought together. In the providence of God we met at the bedside of a dying woman. This woman had been under religious impressions in her youth, but unfortunate in her associations. She had nothing in her home and friends to nourish religious life. She was now face to face with death, and in a horror of great darkness. I spoke to her, but site could not or would not open her mind in the presence of unsympathetic friends, it was borne in upon my mind that this was the case, and I advised that they should retire to rest, as I was sure they required it, and said that we would watch during the night and call them if there was any change. When they were all gone she opened her mind freely, and said she was afraid her soul was lost. I endeavoured to direct her to Christ, and engaged in prayer. All of a sudden the light broke in upon her mind. What the words were I do not know, but there was light to the mind and peace to the conscience, and she raised herself up with a strength I did not think she possessed and threw her arms around my neck, saying "Thank you, dear brother; thank you, dear brother." Then she said: "Now, will you turn me?" We turned her to the other side; she breathed calmly for about 15 minutes, and then breathed no more. It was the kindly attention at that time to this dying woman that drew my thoughts to her who was to be my wife.

In 1880 the farm I had shepherded so long passed into other hands, and, judging me

too old for the charge (as I was told) I got my liberty, and so had to leave a place where the family had been for 100 years, having been Shepherd myself for 43. What was best to do in the interests of the large family was a serious consideration and my thoughts were turned to New Zealand. So in about four months after we heft Cormilligan we came to Glenore, on the 20th. day of September. And here we are today in 1899. For those 50 years we have been climbing the hill together, wending our way amidst its joys and sorrows, but advised by our surroundings today that the day draws near when we will "sleep together at the fit." But we are not without hope that when the clay tabernacles are resting till the Resurrection the spirits will be singing with the Ransomed and the Ransomer.

NOTES ON "CORMILLIGAN"

This place is so often mentioned in these pages that a short description of it will be interesting. Cormilligan is a small sheep farm in the N.E. of Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in the parish of Tynron and, as stated in an old Scottish ballad, is

"Surrounded wi' bent an' wi heather
Where, muircocks and plovers are rife."

The farm encircles the headwaters of a small burn which, gathering its water from the surrounding hills, discharges them into the "Shinnel," then into the "Scaur," then into the "Nith" and finally into Solway Firth near the town of Dumfries, having made a somewhat rapid descent of over 100ft in the twenty two miles of its course. In McCaw's day the farm was practically self-contained (probably is so still). A "Kailyaird" of about half an acre and a potato field of a couple of acres provided vegetables for man and beast; 60 hens, six pigs, and four milking cows supplied other necessary foods, while the "Moss-hags" near at hand yielded sufficient peat fuel to keep the kitchen and ''ben-the-hoose" fires burning brightly. Meadow and bog-hay (spreat) cut by the scythe in its season gives the domestic animals ample winter-feed. All had to be won by manual labour in addition to the constant care of the sheep. There was no agricultural work done on the farm apart from the kailyaird and the potato patch but a horse and cart were kept for hay harvest, leading in of peats and other miscellaneous works which served the requirements of Cormilligan and the adjoining farm at Kirkconnel. On Sundays the horse and cart are requisitioned to transport the Cormilligan family to church (Reformed Presbyterian), a distance of eight miles. Although isolated (its nearest neighbour is one and a half miles distant and out of sight), the inhabitants never felt lonely for in the home there is a large family of stirring boys and girls that kept ennui at the outer edge of the horizon. The nearest school was three miles distant and was presided over by James Shaw, a native of Barrhead, near Glasgow, an antiquarian, botanist, poet and the author of many contributions on scientific, political and religious subjects to the leading journals of the day, as well as being an accomplished scholar. Everyone of the McCaw family for longer or shorter periods came under his tuition to their advantage. In one of his

articles to the "Dumfries and Galloway Standard." about the year 1854, he wrote the following description of Cormilligan and its inhabitants :-

"A lovely afternoon was last Tuesday, inviting birds to sing, flowers to hold up their heads and sedentary men to walk. The sunshine was beating redly and fiercely upon the hills; not a breath of wind disturbed the air and the thin blue smoke of cottages went up by spiral wreaths to heaven. The larch was shedding its thin leaves, making our roadsides brown, in well protected dells a few trees were still holding out their green banners; the red rowans were withering on their stems. But all these ornaments of nature we had to leave behind after passing through the hamlet of Tynron-Kirk, past Bennan, Strathmilligan and Kirkconnel, with its site of an old Catholic chapel. Yet the trees loth to bid us goodbye and in sturdy rows from Strathmilligan to Kirkconnel kept up a goodly show on the left. At a gate locally called "the liggat" we entered on the moor. Fitful patches of heather darkened it; fitful patches of russet ferns embrowned it and, here and there, its winding stream (Cormilligan Burn) reflected the light of day, but otherwise it was silent and desolate like a shipless sea. The regular or cart road, if so it can be called, to McCaw's house, now proceeds from the gate referred to before along she side of the burn. We chose, however, to take a pathway through the heather and over a small hill named "The Bennan", which is a near rut. The trail is quite easily distinguished by day but it would be difficult to follow it by night except with the aid of a lantern. We now arrive at the Shepherd's Post Office which consists of a recess under a large stone which with half a dozen companions mark the summit of the hill. The neighbouring shepherd, when he gets a letter or newspaper from the postman for Cormilligan, hoists a tall pole with a cross head among the rocks and deposits the letter or packet beneath the stone. McCaw is then appraised of news as he can see the upraised pole from his doorstep. The shepherd's home is a one-storied slated whitewashed range with a porch. It consists of a "but-and-ben" with a small closet bedroom between, a byre, a peat-house, a hen-house and a sow-house, all surrounded by a stock yard where in is stored, neatly thatched, the winters provider for the cows and stirks. A stack of brackens (ferns) was piled beside the swine house. Around the house on the adjoining fields were very clear traces of the old-fashioned days when ploughing was done with two horses in a line. The kailyard was surrounded by a strong stone dyke and one could easily trace the parentage of it to the slatey trap of the district. A few trees, mostly Scotch firs, hung out their branches, bent to leeward, by the strong winds. Two small streams called "Jock's burn" and "Marmunnick burn" run near the housing, junctioning, at no great distance, with Cormilligan burn, the principal watercourse in the valley. The site of the house is 1000 feet above sea level. The shepherd being out 'marking' sheep, we amused and instructed ourselves with his library. It is like the library of none of his class that ever we took stock of. A handsome copy of Locke's "Essay on the Understanding"; many presentation volumes for Sabbath School labours, and a large percentage of theological works rewarded our gaze. While we looked at the books his hospitable better half piled on the fuel and many a dark-eyed little cherub was quizzing us from every conceivable cranny and opening for, in this respect McCaw's quiver is full of arrows!. A

stout lass with a fine round Scotch face and regular features helped to pile on the table the material for such a tea as promised to tax all the active and latent powers of our digestive organs. After the shepherd entered we conversed on a great variety of topics from the papers read at the Ethnological Section of the British Association meeting in Dundee, to the late dog show at Thornhill. Our host displayed neither fanaticism nor indifference but made moderate, well-balanced cautious remarks. The evening ended as we retired to rest in the beautiful rite of family worship. Next morning we were up early to have a view from Cormilligan Bale (the highest point on the farm). We could not have had a finer morning. The Stewartry (Kirkcudbrightshire) from North to South seemed stretching away from our feet. The homesteads of Connerick, Benbuie and Glenjaun were lighting their kitchen fires beneath us. A white smoke was rising from Moniaive (six miles away). Little glimpses of lochs like half-opened eyes were afforded us. Then came the gathering of the sheep for 'marking' in which the wonderful use and sagacity of a well-trained dog displayed itself. The sun broke out warm and brisk, making streams and their pebbly channels glisten and the very faces of the white sheep shine with a deeper innocence. As we stooped down to drink from the prodigal cup of the crystal burn, we almost broke the Tenth Commandment from secret envy of a shepherd's life, but the feeling was drowned one far deeper as we heard ourselves murmuring :-

'Thy works still shine with splendour bright
As on Creation's earliest day;
Angels are gladdened with the sight.
Though fathom it no angel may.'

Our visit to the shepherd will live long in memory.

In another article on the parish of Tynron, Mr Shaw writes :- "The principal tributary of the River Shinnell is Cormilligan burn. Far up in a side strath of that name lives a shepherd theologian. William McCaw, whose little work on the 'Evidence of Christianity' has reached a new edition. His house (the house of his birth) is lonely as a Pharos and all around is as destitute of smoke and cock-crowing as prophetic Peden once declared the half of Scotland would be. The shepherd sees his 'hirsel' (flock of sheep) but no house save his own throws a shadow upon it. Here, from amidst heather and 'spret' he has gathered a garland for the temple of truth. Like most others, we have wondered at the circumstances in which the book was produced. As if to compensate the shepherd for the plain, cheerless prospect from his door there is a view from the hill which is almost unsurpassed in Scotland. Cormilligan Bale is the name of several hills surrounding his house. On a clear day the whole extent of the Stewartry of Kirkcudkright can be seen while beneath your feet, the villages of Moniave, Dunscore and Durisdeer are perceptible and, with the aid of a glass, part of the "Queen of the South" herself (Dumfries) can be seen."

DESCRIPTIONS ON FAMILY GRAVESTONES.

(1) On a gravestone in Balmaclellan Churchyard, Parish of Kirkgunzeon, Kickcudbrightshire

> "Here lies the body of John McCaw in Glaisters who died March 1736, aged 80. Also Margaret Grierson, his wife, who died April 1767. Also John McCaw, son of William McCaw, Blackmark, who died 1760. Also the body of Robert McCaw who died at Cormilligan, the 4th of July 1806, aged 80 years. Also the body of Ann, Cunningham, his spouse who died February 8th 1814, aged 61 years.

(2) On a gravestone in Tynron Churchyard, Dumfriesshire :-

"In memory of Robert McCaw, who died at Cormilligan 14th February, 1820, aged 32 years. Also of his grandchildren, Agnes, an infant who died 7th October 1860, and Sarah who died in the 4th year of her age, 29th December 1868. Daughters of William McCaw, Shepherd, Cormilligan. Also the above William McCaw who died at Bell's Neuk, Milton, Otago, New Zealand, 6th April 1902, in his 84th year. Also Isabella Todd, his wife, who died at Bell's Neuk, Otogo, N.Z.. 18th January 1911, aged 84 years."

(3) On another gravestone in Tynron churchyard :-

"In memory of Andrew Armstrong who died at Minnygrile, 29th March 1828, aged 57 years. Also of Agnes Hunter, his spouse, who died 6th December 1836, aged 60 years. Also of William Armstrong, their son, who died at Cormilligan 13th February 1837, aged 40 years. Also Mary, his daughter who died at Cormilligan, 18th November 1845, aged 11 years, and Mary Carrie, his spouse, who died at Penpont, 16th January 1870, aged 73 years."

The Voyage to New Zealand

LETTER FROM MR. McCAW

(From "The Dumfries and Galloway Standard.")

1880

Sir,

Remembering with gratitude the deep and kindly interest which yourself and many of your readers took in our welfare when we left Scotland, I have no doubt a few lines from the land of our future prospects will be received with welcome. As many things will demand attention, if spared to reach the shores of New Zealand, I will avail myself of present leisure and jot down a few things by the way which I hope may be interesting.

On Thursday the 10th of June, 1880 we sailed from Glasgow in the ship "Sterlingshire," (Capt. Alexander), and anchored that night in the Greenock Waters. At 8.30 next morning we were fairly off. The sail on the Firth of Clyde was delightful. The day and scenery equally beautiful, but at night, to avoid a head wind, we had to steer for the West of Ireland. The sea was rough, and next morning sickness was general. It was soon over with the most, but lingered long with a few unfortunates. The incidents of the voyage have been few. The principal is the lamented death of a fellow passenger, Mr. John Gibson, a flesher from Edinburgh. He had been ailing for some time previous to embarkation, but was encouraged to proceed, in a hope that a sea voyage and change would do him good. The Sovereign Dispenser of Events, however, had determined otherwise. The Medical Gentleman on board was most attentive, but ulceration of the stomach had laid hold of the vitals and he died on the morning of the 25th of June. The widow requested a coffin, which was granted, into which the remains were put and committed to the deep on the afternoon of the same day.

The sights of the voyage have not been many; but when there is little to be seen but the blue sea and the blue sky everything else which attracts the eye is looked upon with interest. For the first three weeks ships were sighted frequently, and we signalled one or two; but now we seem to be on the wide ocean alone. We had a pretty good view of the Island of Madiera. We were near enough to see some of the white-washed houses perched on the shoulders of the lofty mountains, picturesquely situated at an altitude of several hundred feet on the tops of the precipitous rocks which form its base. We sighted some islands of less note, chiefly barren rocks. Sometimes our attention was called to a small school of whales or sporting porpoises, or a flock of flying fish. Several of the latter came on board to us as if to gratify our curiosity. It is a small fish, much like a Lochfyne herring, with neatly folded wings combining strength and transparent delicacy in a remarkable degree. Our passage through the tropics was slow, but, on the whole, comfortable. We had neither scorching heat nor dead calms. The midday air was hot, but the evening breezes cool and refreshing. A few nights before we came to the Line we lost view of the "North Star," and now "The Plough" and all the stars of that part of the Northern Hemisphere have disappeared. The Sun and the Moon themselves we have left behind us. It is true we have got "The Southcrn Cross", but to us it has been simply disappointing. I had heard it eulogised as a constellation of extraordinary attractiveness and brilliancy, and I find it to

consist of a few stars of the second or third magnitude said to be seen in the form of a cross, but needing to he pointed out to most people before they take any notice of it.

We have rushed out of the heat of summer into the depths of winter with a rapidity which takes one by surprise. We have had bitterly cold days and snow showers, and the sun setting at 4.30p.m. in the beginning of August. We have had gales and rough seas, but not what they call storms. Sleeping without rocking is unknown here, but there is a school of instruction in the knowledge of rocking without sleeping, and the lessons are free, liberal and compulsory. A gale of wind will rend an old sail, or break the arm of a mast, and the angry billows frequently lash themselves over the bulwarks, and a few slight accidents have been the result. For the most part, however, they have been nothing worse than somebody getting a ducking, or a catastrophe among the tin and cooking utensils, more amusing than serious.

We accomplished the Atlantic part of the voyage in forty-eight days and one-half, and on the 29th July crossed the 20th line of East Longitude, so entering the Indian Ocean.

Next day a large whale put in an appearance close to the ship and astonished those who were prepared to look at him by his huge dimensions. There was a rush to the deck to see the monster, but the leviathan made himself scarce, to the no small disappointment of the majority.

In the fine summer evenings the scene was enlivened with music and dancing, and the singing of Scottish songs was sometimes kept up till a late hour; but the winter weather has sent the nightingales to rest, to recuperate their voices for the coming spring. As a pastime draughts playing has taken the place of songs. There are a good many players on board, and a grand match was arranged to include all who were willing. Eighteen players were enrolled and paired against each other, the best of three games to be decisive. The match occupied the greater part of three days, but time being of no importance all due caution was exercised by the contestants. The recognised rules were strictly enforced. At the conclusion of a well-contested match, a sailor (Harry Harvey), the only member of the crew who took part was declared the champion. It was confidently expected that John Wilson, of Moniave, would have won the laurels, a first-rate player from Glasgow having fallen before him in the first tie, and had never lost a game until he met the sailor. In subsequent trials of skill, however, he has carried it over the laureate by two to one.

Our principal cargo is large metal pipes, a consignment for the Wainua-o-Mata plant for tile water supply of the City of Wellington, N.Z. To save space small pipes have been put inside the large ones, and although securely packed they at times, under very stormy conditions, break partly loose and roll and dash and smash with a noise that is prodigious until again secured. While this is going on in the hold, and the deck flooded with heavy seas, and the frosty air biting everywhere, comfort is a scarce commodity while blue cheeks and chilblains are greatly in excess of the demand.

We have 52 passengers on board, and half that number of seamen. The officers of the ship are frank and agreeable, the passengers civil and obliging. Some of the sailors can swear a bit among themselves, but they can be, and are, polite and respectful to those who are so with them.

Now, I may say a word or two about ourselves. I have proved a very poor seaman, - the worst on board. Sea-sickness stubbornly refuses to part company with me and gives me a fresh blow almost every other clay. To avoid my enemies, sickness and cold, I took refuge for three days beneath a load of blankets till the strength of my foes was somewhat exhausted. I have got the mastery a little today (August 7th.). I have become very fastidious in my taste and sparing in my diet. I am something like the Weather Prophet's dog which left mutton bones to feast on grass :-

"So strangely altered is my taste
I leave the tea, on arrowroot to feast."

On this scale of dietary I have grown neither strong nor fat, but I can still stand upon my legs and find it unnecessary, and deem it inexpedient to subject them to a severe trial. I have left the rheumatisms 5000 miles behind me. In this respect my good wife has not been so fortunate, but in other respects, notwithstanding her frailties and fear of Old Ocean, she has turned out to be, by far, the better sailor. She has proved herself to he quite seaworthy, and might have been classed A1. at Lloyds. We are known among the passengers by the familiar designations of Grandfather and Grandmother, and we receive all the honour and respect which is due to old age. I am the Patriarch of the ship, and have the honour and privilege of conducting Worship both on Sabbaths and in the evenings. Thus I have the opportunity of doing something in the service of Him Whom, in common with all Christians, I rejoice to call Master. Results are in the hands of God. I am hopeful.

(This far till the Wheels of Providence perform some more revolutions).

Pacific Ocean, August 27th. 1880.

"We have crossed the Indian Ocean in twenty-nine days. Someone has said:

"Two things disturb monotony
When on an Ocean trip;
Sometimes, aIas! we ship a sea,
Sometimes we see a ship."

But these lines do not exactly describe our experience, in the 6000 miles that now lie between us and the Atlantic our monotony has never been disturbed by the sight of a ship, while shipping seas has been such a constant experience that it, itself, has been the monotony - but a dull but a very disagreeable one. On the evening of the 17th we encountered a strong gale right ahead. The seamen furled the sails and hove to, but were not able to keep their ground for several hours. Then there was pitching and tossing, metal pipes and tin cans going topsy-turvey, till one might have thought that some monstrous whale was crushing the ribs of the iron ship between its jaws. The nerveless were

frightened, that was all. In the morning the storm abated and we were again slowly on our way. Our general experience of sea life is better described by another poet;

"Now high, now low, to the depths we go,
Then we rise to the surge again
We make a track on the Ocean's back,
And we play with the hoary Main."

We passed Tasmania this morning but did not see it. We are now in the Pacific. It shows no signs of displeasure at our intrusion, and is giving us no cause to quarrel with the name which Magellan gave it when be entered its waters after a storm and found it 'PACIFIC'".

September 22nd. 1880.

"We are all in New Zealand safe and sound, and I am once more writing under a roof, which for the time being I can call my own. We left Glasgow on the 10th. of June, and stood again on terra firma on the 13th of September. On the 27th of August we were calculating with some confidence on being in Wellington in six or seven days, but calms and head winds kept us back, so that the last part of the journey was somewhat tantalizing, though it was very fine weather. We sighted land on the 4th of this month, but had to zig-zag to the northward for two days. On the 7th we had a delightful but slow sail from Cape Farewell to the entrance to Cook Strait. The sea was placid as a lake in Summer, the sky cloudless and the sunbeams mild. To the far North stood Mt. Egmont in solitary grandeur, covered with snow so far as it appeared to us above the horizon. On the right hand we had a rugged, rocky barren coast close at hand, with the snow-capped mountains $_0$f Nelson in the background, shooting up their peaks to the sky and gleaming in the rays of a cloudless sun. At night we entered the Strait and got half-way down till we encountered a head gale. We went on zig-zagging, but losing twice as much as we gained. We lost 60 miles. At the entrance to the Bay the wind blew again, and we had to anchor for 36 hours. A steam boat took us up on the Sabbath morning, and we anchored again till next morning before tying up at the wharf. The day was beautiful and the scenery grand. Wellington forms a semi-circle some four miles in length around the head of the Bay. It is hemmed in behind by a circular ridge of green, steep hills with only one outlet. It was the admiration of all, and our song that Sabbath night was the 30th verse of the 107th Psalm. Here I drop the curtain, reserving some gleanings for some other day".

N.B. (Excerpt from James Shaw's 'A Country Schoolmaster', published 1899, and letters and extracts from the 'Memoir and Remains of William McCaw'.)