

The "Surry" Tombstones.

(See illustrations on next page.)

Recently there was made a remarkable find of relics of the early days of the colony. Mr. D. Fox, a contractor, was working on a piece of vacant land in North Sydney formerly used as a market garden twenty years ago, when, to his surprise, he unearthed three tombstones, all carefully piled one on the other. The inscriptions on the stones were as follow:—

"Sacred to the memory of Mr. John Brooks, surgeon of the ship Surry, who departed this life August 12, 1814, aged 24 years."

"Sacred to the memory of William Patterson, of the ship Surry, who departed this life August 12, 1814, aged 24 years."

"Sacred to the memory of Mr. Robert Crawford, chief officer of the ship Surry, who, in the execution of his duty, fell a victim to a malignant typhus fever, which raged with unprecedented fury throughout the ship. Mr. Crawford departed this life August 12, Anno Domini 1814, aged 28 years. His distinguished humanity to all on board, and social virtues, induces his friend, the only surviving officer, Thomas Raine, to erect this tablet to his memory."

From the inscriptions on the stones, it would naturally be imagined that the three officers had all died on the same day; but a search into the early records of the colony's history goes to show that, although the tale of the officers' death is a very sad one, yet none of them were actually buried in the spot where the stones were discovered, and the stones themselves are, no doubt, merely memorial stones erected by their relatives or ship-mates, or, perhaps, by their brother officers employed in the transport service to which the Surry belonged. The Surrey, or, as she is named in the old records, the "Surry," was one of the oldest traders, or, rather convict transports, to Port Jackson; and between 1814 and 1840 made no less than eighteen voyages, most of which were from England to New South Wales and back. The bare record of these eighteen voyages is in itself of sufficient interest to include in this article, and it

board was at once communicated to the Governor by the naval officer in charge of the port, who had in the meantime wisely interdicted any communication between the plague ship and boats from the shore or from any other ships.

The Governor confirmed this prohibition, and gave directions that the nature of the prevailing malady should be ascertained in the best manner that the circumstances of the case would permit. Accordingly the principal naval and military surgeons and

It will thus appear likely that the tombstones just unearthed at North Shore do not mark the last resting-places of the captain, surgeon, and chief officer, and were put up as a mark of respect only at a much later period, which would account for the errors in the dates of their deaths. Probably the relatives of the dead officers in England sent out a commission to a stonemason to erect the stones, and it is very likely that these relatives or friends in England would not have been made

age; while the heroic Crawford, "distinguished for his humanity to all on board," was but 28.

The Surry would seem to have been an unfortunate ship, for two voyages later, in 1819, when she was under the command of Captain Raine, "the only surviving officer" of the voyage of 1814, she arrived in Sydney on February 4 with a cargo of male convicts, and her commander reported that a deadly epidemic of influenza had broken out on board during the voyage, and caused many deaths. The Surry continued under the command of Captain Raine till 1823, her subsequent captains being Dacre, Kemp, Veale, and Sinclair.