

Choosing a gentle breeze, the fern is fired: if it burns well, all the thick and matted dead stuff at the bottom, with the leafy part of the live fern will be consumed, leaving only the shrivelled 'Tutu' and the cane-like fern stalks, which, as softened by the fire, should be cut at once, either with a strong hook, or still better with a short scythe . . .¹⁶

The Fortunes of the Ranger and Crusader is a tale of adventure and shipwreck at sea. An emigrant ship, the *Crusader*, and a troop ship, the *Ranger*, set off for New Zealand. The *Crusader* is wrecked on the Auckland Islands. Some of the *Ranger*'s boats, separated from their ship, also end up there. After many adventures and some privations, the emigrants eventually reach their original destination.

The germ of Kingston's idea is not difficult to trace. Captain Thomas Musgrave's *Castaway on the Auckland Isles* was published in Melbourne in 1865 and in London the next year.¹⁷ It is an edited version of the journal Musgrave kept during an enforced sojourn on the Aucklands after the shipwreck of his schooner, the *Grafton*. In 1872, Kingston's *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*¹⁸ was published. It includes an account of Musgrave's experiences. The same year, *The Fortunes of the Ranger and Crusader* came out.

It borrows heavily from Musgrave but there is no evidence that Kingston knew of the existence of an alternative and highly romanticized version of the shipwreck published in Paris under the name of Musgrave's French mate, M. Frederic Raynal.¹⁹ Even had he known of it, he was surely too good an Englishman to have used it. With the spirit of Musgrave's journal, Kingston is harsh. He excludes from his tale any real hint of desolation and despair, and presents a cheerful adventure tale punctuated with prosy moralizing. It is detail that he borrows. Musgrave mentions a fear that the seals will storm his tent; Kingston's seals do just that. Musgrave describes friendly robin-like birds constantly pursued by hawks; Kingston's castaways protect the birds by shooting hawks. Musgrave and his men nickname an identifiable king seal 'Royal Tom'; Kingston names his 'Tippo Sahib'. Musgrave uses a root native to the island as a substitute for potatoes and for manufacturing sugar; the *Crusader*'s doctor does likewise. There are numerous such parallels.

The most striking, perhaps, concerns a discovery Musgrave made when he returned to the Aucklands on a rescue ship, the *Flying Scud*. On the other side of the island to his former camp, he came across a tumbledown hut with the mummified corpse of a sailor inside:

The body lay on a bed of grass, with some boards underneath raising it a few inches from the ground . . . within his reach were two bottles containing water, one nearly empty, the other was full. Close by lay a small heap of limpet and mussel