

Narrative of the Overland Expedition of the Messrs. Jardine from Rockhampton to Cape York, Northern Queensland eBook

Narrative of the Overland Expedition of the Messrs. Jardine from Rockhampton to Cape York, Northern Queensland by Francis Lascelles Jardine

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Narrative of the Overland Expedition of the Messrs. Jardine from Rockhampton to Cape York, Northern Queensland eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	7
Page 1.....	8
Page 2.....	9
Page 3.....	10
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	12
Page 6.....	13
Page 7.....	14
Page 8.....	15
Page 9.....	16
Page 10.....	17
Page 11.....	18
Page 12.....	19
Page 13.....	21
Page 14.....	22
Page 15.....	23
Page 16.....	24
Page 17.....	25
Page 18.....	26
Page 19.....	27
Page 20.....	28
Page 21.....	29

Page 22.....	30
Page 23.....	31
Page 24.....	32
Page 25.....	33
Page 26.....	34
Page 27.....	35
Page 28.....	36
Page 29.....	37
Page 30.....	38
Page 31.....	39
Page 32.....	40
Page 33.....	41
Page 34.....	42
Page 35.....	43
Page 36.....	44
Page 37.....	45
Page 38.....	47
Page 39.....	48
Page 40.....	49
Page 41.....	50
Page 42.....	51
Page 43.....	52
Page 44.....	53
Page 45.....	54
Page 46.....	55
Page 47.....	56

Page 48.....	57
Page 49.....	58
Page 50.....	59
Page 51.....	60
Page 52.....	62
Page 53.....	63
Page 54.....	64
Page 55.....	65
Page 56.....	66
Page 57.....	67
Page 58.....	68
Page 59.....	69
Page 60.....	70
Page 61.....	71
Page 62.....	72
Page 63.....	73
Page 64.....	74
Page 65.....	75
Page 66.....	76
Page 67.....	78
Page 68.....	79
Page 69.....	80
Page 70.....	81
Page 71.....	82
Page 72.....	83
Page 73.....	84

Page 74.....	85
Page 75.....	86
Page 76.....	88
Page 77.....	89
Page 78.....	90
Page 79.....	91
Page 80.....	92
Page 81.....	93
Page 82.....	94
Page 83.....	95
Page 84.....	96
Page 85.....	97
Page 86.....	98
Page 87.....	100
Page 88.....	102
Page 89.....	104
Page 90.....	106
Page 91.....	107
Page 92.....	109
Page 93.....	110
Page 94.....	111
Page 95.....	112
Page 96.....	113
Page 97.....	114
Page 98.....	115
Page 99.....	116

Page 100.....	117
Page 101.....	118
Page 102.....	120
Page 103.....	121
Page 104.....	123
Page 105.....	125
Page 106.....	128

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
PREFACE.	1
INTRODUCTION.	3
CHAPTER I.	7
CHAPTER II.	15
CHAPTER III.	37
CHAPTER IV	51
CHAPTER V.	66
CHAPTER VI.	82
APPENDIX	86
GARRAWAN.	86
FLOCK PIGEON OF THE GULF (‘Phaps Histrionica.’)	86
THE EINASLEIH.	87
THE NONDA (‘Parinarium Nonda. F. Mueller.’)	87
THE NATIVE BEE.	87
THE APPLE-GUM (‘Angophora?’)	88
TERRY’S BREECH-LOADERS.	88
THE MARAMIE.	88
SPINIGEX, Spear Grass, Needle Grass, or “Saucy Jack” (‘Triodia Irritans.’)	88
FIVE CORNERS (‘Stypelia?’)	88
THE NATIVE PLUM (‘Owenia.’)	89
THE CALAMUS (‘Calamus Australis.’)	89
THE PITCHER PLANT (‘Nepenthes Kennedyana.’)	89
THE FERGUSON OR STAATEN.	89
FATE OF THE MULE.	90
THE MIDAMO.	91
JARDINE’S JOURNAL—NOTES BY THE ETEXT-MAKER.	105
FRONT MATTER	105
CHAPTER 1	105
CHAPTER 2	105
CHAPTER 4	105
CHAPTER 5	106
CHAPTER 6	106
APPENDIX	106

Page 1

PREFACE.

The Settlement of Northern Australia has of late years been of such rapid growth as to furnish matter for a collection of narratives, which in the aggregate would make a large and interesting volume. Prominent amongst these stands that of the Settlement of Cape York, under the superintendence of Mr. Jardine, with which the gallant trip of his two sons overland must ever be associated. It was a journey which, but for the character and qualities of the Leader, might have terminated as disastrously as that of his unfortunate, but no less gallant predecessor, Kennedy. A brilliant achievement in exploration, in a colony where exploring has become common and almost devoid of interest, from the number of those yearly engaged in it, its very success has prevented its attracting that share of public attention to which its results very fully entitled it. Had it been attended with any signal disaster, involving loss of life, it would have been otherwise. Geographically, it has solved the question hitherto undecided of the course of the northern rivers emptying into the Gulf of Carpentaria, of which nothing was previously known but their outlets, taken from the charts of the Dutch Navigators. It has also made known, with tolerable definiteness, how much, or rather, how little, of the “York Peninsula” is adapted for pastoral occupation, whilst its success in taking the first stock overland, and forming a cattle station at Newcastle Bay, has insured to the Settlement at Somerset a necessary and welcome supply of fresh meat, and done away with its dependence for supplies on importations by sea of less nourishing salt provision.

Starting from the then farthest out-station of Northern Queensland with a small herd of cattle, these hardy young bushmen met with and successfully combated, almost every “accident by flood and field” that could well occur in an expedition. First, an arid waterless country forced them to follow down two streams at right angles with their course for upwards of 200 miles, causing a delay which betrayed them into the depths of the rainy season; then the loss of half their food and equipment by a fire, occasioned by the carelessness of some of the party; next the scarcity of grass and water, causing a further delay by losses of half their horses, which were only recovered to be again lost altogether—killed by eating a deadly poison plant; and finally, the setting in of the wet season, making the ground next to impassable, and so swelling the rivers, that when actually in sight, and within a week’s journey of their destination, they were turned off their course, and were more than six weeks in reaching it. Added to this, and running through the whole journey, was the incessant and determined, although unprovoked, hostility of the natives, which, but for the unceasing vigilance and prompt and daring action of the Brothers, might have eventually compassed the annihilation of the

Page 2

whole party. Had Leichhardt used the same vigilance and decision the life of poor Gilbert would not have been sacrificed, and in all probability we should not now deplore his own loss. But the black tribes which dogged the steps of each expedition, and amongst whom, probably, were the slayers of Kennedy and Gilbert, met at the hands of the Brothers the treatment they deserved. If the lessons were severe, they were in every case of the native's own seeking, and were administered in fair and open combat, in which few of the white party were without having narrow escapes to record; but a providential good fortune seemed to attend them, for every member got through the journey without accident. An account has been furnished to the newspapers in the form of a journal by Mr. Richardson, the Surveyor appointed to accompany the expedition, but it is much too brief and epitomized to do justice to the subject, and omits altogether the detached and independant trips of the Brothers whilst exploring ahead to find the best country through which to take the herd; and, as the Brothers Jardine themselves would probably much rather repeat their journey than write a full account of it, it has devolved on the Editor to attempt to put before the public a compilation of their journals in such form as will give the narrative sufficient interest to carry with it the attention of the reader to the end. Although the matter is ample, this is no easy task for an unpracticed pen, for to the general reader, the usual monotonous details and entries of an explorer's notes, which alone give them value to the geographer, cannot be hoped to excite interest or command attention. But the journey was full of incident, and the Brothers, although not scientific naturalists, were keen sportsmen, excelling in all exercises requiring strength and activity, who had acquired from their training in the bush that sharpening of the senses and faculty of observing, the peculiar result of a life in the wilds, which not only so well fitted them for the conduct of such an expedition, but also enabled them to note and describe with accuracy the various interesting objects in botany and zoology met with in the course of their journey. It is therefore hoped that there will be sufficient to interest each class of reader. Aided by Mr. Jardine, senior, a gentleman of large experience in both Botany and Natural History, the Editor has been enabled to supply the generic names of the birds and plants met with; which, in many cases, if not altogether new, are interesting as determining the range and habitat of the birds, and the zones of vegetation and trees; but it is to be regretted that there was no one in the party having sufficient knowledge of drawing to figure such objects, or to delineate some of the more striking scenes and incidents of the journey. As these can now only be supplied from the graphic descriptions given by the actors in them, the Editor, without drawing too much on his imagination, has, in

Page 3

the compilation of the journals, attempted in some cases to supplement what was wanted in the text, so as to give the narrative such color as would make it more readable than a mere journal, but in every case rendering the descriptions of the prominent incidents of the journey almost in the original words of the writers, merely adding as much as would save the text from abruptness. He has adhered to the diurnal form of narrative, for the sake of recording, for the benefit of future travellers, the numbers, marks, latitude, *etc.*, of each camp, and endeavoured to compass by this composite method the value of a work of record with the interest of a narrative.

It is also to be regretted that so long a time should have been allowed to elapse between the end of the journey and the publication of these pages. The causes of the delay are—first, the indisposition on the part of the Brothers to “go into print,” their modesty leading them to imagine they had done nothing worth “writing about,” nor was it until the writer pressed them to allow him to compile and edit their journals that they consented to make them public; next, the want of leisure on the part of the compiler, whose official duties have prevented application to his task, save in detached and interrupted periods; and last, by the difficulty of making arrangements for publication at a distance.

If his labor secures to the young explorers the credit and praise which is the just and due reward of a gallant achievement, and adds a page of interest to the records of Australian Exploration, his aim will have been attained, and he will be fully rewarded.

The Hermitage, ‘Rockhampton, December’, 1866.

INTRODUCTION.

In presenting the following pages to the Reader, it may not be out of place to take a retrospect of the progress of Australian Settlement generally, and particularly in the young northern colony of Queensland.

During the last six years the great question of the character of Central Australia, in the solution of which the lives of the unfortunate Leichhardt and his party have been sacrificed, has been set at rest by the memorable trip of Burke and Wills, and no less memorable, but more fortunate one of McDouall Stewart. The Search Expeditions of McKinlay, Howitt, Landsborough, and Walker, have made it still more familiar, their routes connecting the out-settlements of South Australia with those of the Gulf Shores and East Coast, and adding their quota of detail to the skeleton lines of Leichhardt, Gregory, and Burke and Wills; whilst private enterprise has, during that time, been busy in further filling in the spaces, and utilizing the knowledge gained by occupying the waste lands thus opened up.

Page 4

It is questionable whether the amount of available country thus made known has not been dearly purchased, by the very large sums that have been expended, and the valuable lives that have been lost in its exploration; the arid and waterless wastes of the interior, which have now been proved equally subject to terrific droughts and devastating floods, make it improbable that the Settlements of the North Coast and the Southern Colonies can be connected by a continuous line of occupation for many years to come; the rich pastoral tracts of Arnheim's Land, the Victoria River, the Gulf Coast, and Albert and Flinders Rivers, are thus the only localities likely to be made use of for the present; these, however, have been known since the first explorations of Leichhardt and Gregory; we are forced, therefore, to the conclusion that the results of the subsequent expeditions are not commensurate with their cost and sacrifices, and to consider whether further exploration may not be safely left to private enterprise.

Let us now glance at what has been done since 1860 in the way of occupation. South Australia has founded on the North Coast a Settlement at Adam Bay, on the Adelaide River, but its progress seems to have been marked from the onset by misfortune. The officer charged with its formation, in a short time managed to raise so strong a feeling of dissatisfaction and dislike amongst the settlers as to call for a Commission of Enquiry on his administration, which resulted in his removal. His successor seems, by latest accounts to have raised up no less dislike, the difference of his rule being likened by the papers to that of the fabled kings, Log and Stork. The site of the Settlement, Escape Cliffs, has been universally condemned; one charge against the first Resident being, that it was selected in opposition to the almost unanimous opinion of the colonists. The subject was referred for final report to John McKinley, the well-known Explorer, who, bearing out the general opinion, at once condemned it, and set out to explore the country in search for a better. In this he has not discovered any new locality, but has recommended Anson Bay, at the mouth of the Daly, a site previously visited, but rejected by the first Resident. Previous to his visit to Anson Bay, Mr. McKinlay started with a well-equipped party for an exploring trip, which was to last twelve months. At the end of five he returned, after one of the most miraculous escapes of himself and party from destruction on record, having only penetrated to the East Alligator River, about 80 miles from Adam Bay; here he became surrounded by floods, and only saved his own and the lives of his party (loosing all else) by the desperate expedient of making a boat of the hides of their horses, in which they floated down the swollen river, and eventually reached the Settlement. It is not improbable that in some such a flood poor Leichhardt and his little band lost their lives, and all trace of their fate has been destroyed. These experiences have caused some doubt and despondency as to the future of the new Settlement, and the question is now being agitated in the South Australian Parliament as to the desirability or not of abandoning it.

Page 5

Western Australia has formed the Settlements of Camden Harbor, and Nickol Bay. The latter (the country around which was explored by Mr. Francis Gregory, brother to the Surveyor-General of Queensland, in 1861), appears to have progressed favorably, the Grey, Gascoigne, Oakover and Lyons Rivers affording inducements to stockholders to occupy them, but the Settlement of Camden Harbor at the time of the visit of Mr. Stow in his boat-voyage from Adam Bay to Champion Bay, was being abandoned by the colonists, the country being unsuitable for stock, and it would appear from that gentleman's account that the whole of the north-west coast of the continent, from its general character, offers but little inducement for settlement.

[footnote] Since this was written the settlement has been abandoned. [NOTE—the footnote in the INTRODUCTION does not have a referent in the text—there is no asterisk in the text. It is not clear whether the 'settlement' it refers to as having been abandoned is at Adam Bay or in Western Australia.]

The explorations of Francis Gregory to the eastward from Nickol Bay, and of the Surveyor-General to the south from the Victoria River, were both arrested by wastes of drift-sand, whilst those from the western seaboard have not been extended further inland than to more than an average of 3 degrees of longitude. It may reasonably be doubted, therefore, whether settlement will be much extended in that direction.

Queensland, more fortunate in the character of the country, has, on her part, successfully established six new settlements, to wit, Mackay, at the Pioneer River; Bowen, Port Denison; Townsville, Cleveland Bay; Cardwell, Rockingham Bay; Somerset, Cape York; and Burke Town, at the Albert River; and there can be little doubt but that the country of the Gulf shores and the northern territory of South Australia must be 'stocked', if not settled, from the same source. Already have our hardy pioneers driven their stock out as far as the Flinders, Albert, Leichhardt, and Nicholson Rivers, the Flinders and Cloncurry having been stocked along their length for some time past. On the South and West, the heads of the Warrego, the Nive, Barcoo, and Thompson have also been occupied, some of the stations being between four and five hundred miles from the seaboard, whilst the surveyors of the Roads Department have extended their surveys as far as the two last-named rivers, for the purpose of determining the best and shortest lines of communication. The Government, with wise liberality, has facilitated the access from the seaboard to the interior, by the expenditure of large sums in constructing and improving passes through the Coast Range on four different points, and by the construction of works on the worst portions of the roads, have largely reduced the difficulties of transport for the out-settlers. Bowen, a town which had no existence six years ago, has been connected with Brisbane by the telegraph wire, and ere another twelve months have elapsed the electric flash will have placed Melbourne, in Victoria, and Burke Town, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, "on speaking terms," the country between the latter place and Cleveland Bay having been examined and determined on for a telegraph line by the experienced explorer Walker for that purpose.

Page 6

Of the six new settlements that have been called into existence, two, Bowen and Townsville, have been incorporated, and are now, together with Mackay, straining in the race to secure the trade of the western interior. Cardwell has experienced a check, in consequence of an undue haste in the adoption of a line of road over its Coast Range, which is too difficult to be generally adopted, and will probably be abandoned for a better since discovered; but its noble harbour is too good, and the extent of back country it commands too extensive in area, for it not ultimately to take its place as an important port. Burke Town is but starting into existence, but already supplies the settlers of the Flinders and other Gulf rivers with which it has opened communication. Mr. William Landsborough, the well-known explorer, has been charged with the administration of its affairs, and a survey staff has been despatched to lay out the lands. Vessels now trade direct from Brisbane with some regularity, which services will, no doubt, soon be re-placed by steamers.

But it is with Somerset, Cape York, that we have more especial concern. In the August of 1862, Sir George Bowen, Governor of Queensland, being on a voyage of inspection to the Northern Ports, in Her Majesty's Steamer "Pioneer," visited Port Albany, Cape York, and on his return, in a despatch to the Imperial Government, recommended it for the site of a Settlement, on account of its geographical importance, as harbor of refuge, coaling station, and entrepot for the trade of Torres Straits and the Islands of the North Pacific. The following year the formation of a Settlement was decided upon, the Home Government sending out a detachment of Marines to be stationed there, and assist in its establishment. The task of establishing the new Settlement was confided to Mr. Jardine, then Police Magistrate of Rockhampton, than whom, perhaps, no man could be found more fitted for its peculiar duties. An experienced official, a military man, keen sportsman, and old bushman, he possessed, in addition to an active and energetic temperament, every quality and experience necessary for meeting the varied and exceptional duties incident to such a position. It was whilst making the arrangements for the expedition by sea, which was to transport the staff, materiel, and stores of the Settlement, that Mr. Jardine, foreseeing the want of fresh provision, proposed to the Government to send his own sons, Frank and Alexander, overland with a herd of cattle to form a station from which it might be supplied. This was readily acceded to, the Government agreeing to supply the party with the services of a qualified surveyor, fully equipped, to act as Geographer, by noting and recording their course and the appearance of the country traversed, and also horses, arms, and accoutrements for four native blacks, or as they are commonly called in the colonies, Black-boys. Although the account of poor Kennedy's journey

Page 7

from Rockingham Bay to Cape York, in which his own and half his party's lives were sacrificed, was not very encouraging for the intended expedition, Mr. Jardine never for a moment doubted of its success, and looked forward to meeting his sons at Somerset as a matter of course. In the prime of youth and health (their ages were but 22 and 20), strong, active, and hardy, inured to the life and habits of the bush, with an instinct of locality, which has been alluded to as having "la Boussole dans la tete," they were eminently fitted for the task, and eagerly undertook it when proposed. How well they carried it out, although, unfortunately, with so little benefit to themselves, is here recorded. Had poor Wills been associated with such companions there would have been a different tale to tell to that which lends so melancholy an interest to his name, and we should now have him amongst us to honor, instead of a monument to his memory, a monument, which in honoring the dead, rebukes the living.

The loss of three-fourths of their horses, and a fifth of their cattle, together with a large equipment, has made the enterprise of the Messrs. Jardine, speaking financially, little short of a failure, but at their age the mind is resilient, and not easily damped by misfortune. On their return to Brisbane the Government, with kind consideration, proposed to place such a sum on the Estimates of Parliament as would indemnify them, and at the same time mark its sense of the high merit and importance of their journey, but this, through their father, they respectfully declined, Frank Jardine giving as his reason, that as the expedition was a private enterprise and not a public undertaking, he did not consider himself entitled to any indemnity from the public. Opinions may be divided on such a conclusion, but in it we cannot but recognise a delicacy and nobility of sentiment as rare, unfortunately, as it is admirable. Yet, if they have thus voluntarily cut themselves off from the substantial rewards which have hitherto recompensed other explorers, they are still entitled to the high praise and commendation of all who admire spirit and determination of purpose, and cannot be insensible to their applause. And it is in recognition that such is their due, that the writer has undertaken to bring this narrative before the public.

CHAPTER I.

Start from Rockhampton—Alexander Jardine explores the Einasleigh—
Newcastle Range—Pluto Creek—Canal Creek—Basaltic Plateau—
Warroul Creek—Parallel Creek—Galas Creek—Porphyry Islands—
Alligators' tracks—Bauhinia Plains—Discovers error as to River
Lynd—Return—The Nonda—Burdekin duck—Simon's Gap—
Arrival of the cattle—Preparation for final start.

Page 8

On the 14th of May, 1864, the overland party which was to take cattle to the new settlement at Cape York, was started by Mr. Frank Jardine, from Rockhampton, under the charge of his brother Alexander. It comprised ten persons, with thirty-one horses. The instructions were to travel by easy stages to Port Denison, and there wait the arrival of the Leader. In the following month, Mr. Jardine, senior, taking with him his third son John, sailed for Brisbane, and shortly after from thence to Somerset, Cape York, in the Eagle, barque, chartered by the Government, for transport of material, etc., arriving there at the end of June.

Mr. Frank Jardine, taking with him the surveyor attached to the expedition, Mr. A. J. Richardson, arrived at Bowen by sea, about the middle of July, when the party was again moved forward, he himself starting off to make the purchase of the cattle. Five more horses were purchased on account of the Government in Bowen, for Mr. Richardson, making a total of forty-two. The prevalence of pleuro-pneumonia made it a matter of some difficulty for Mr. F. Jardine to get suitable stock for his purpose, and caused considerable delay. Arrangements having at length been made with Mr. William Stenhouse, of the River Clarke, the party was divided at the Reedy Lake Station, on the Burdekin, Mr. A. Jardine moving forward with the pack horses and equipment, leaving the Leader with Messrs. Scrutton and Cowderoy, and three black boys to muster and fetch on the cattle. The advance party started on the 17th August, and arrived at Carpentaria Downs, the station of J. G. Macdonald, Esq., on the 30th. This was at that time the furthest station to the North West, and was intended to be made the final starting point of the expedition, by the permission of Mr. Macdonald, from whom the party received much kindness. On their way they were joined by Mr. Henry Bode, a gentleman who was in search of country to occupy with stock. After remaining in camp at Carpentaria Downs for a few days, Mr. A. Jardine decided on utilizing the interval, which must elapse before his brother could re-join him with the cattle, by exploring the country ahead, so as to facilitate the march of the stock on the final start. Accordingly, leaving the camp in charge of Mr. Richardson, with Mr. Binney, and two black boys, he started on the 3rd of September, taking with him the most trusty of his black boys, "old Eulah," and one pack-horse, and accompanied by Mr. Bode, who took advantage of the opportunity to have a look at the country. As Mr. Bode had his own black boy with him, the party comprised four, with two pack-horses, carrying provision for three weeks. About the same time Mr. Macdonald started with a party of three to find a road for his stock to the Gulf, where he was about to form a station; the account of which trip has been published by that gentleman.

Page 9

The stream on which Carpentaria Downs station is situated was supposed to be the "Lynd" of Leichhardt and was so called and known; but as this was found to be an error, and that it was a tributary of the Gilbert, it will be distinguished by the name it subsequently received, the Einasleih. Keeping the right bank of the river which was running strongly two hundred yards wide, the party travelled six miles to a small rocky bald hill, under which they passed on the north side; and thence to a gap in a low range, through which the river forces its way. Travelling down its bed for a quarter-of-a-mile, they crossed to its left bank, on to a large level basaltic plain; but here the extent of the rocky ground made the travelling so bad for the horses, although shod, that it was impossible to proceed, and the river was therefore re-crossed. Five miles more of rough travelling over broken stony ironbark ridges, brought them to a second gorge, formed by two spurs of a range, running down to the river banks on either side, where they camped, having made about 15 miles on a general course of N.W. by N. To the south of this gorge, and running parallel with the river, is a high range of hills, which received the name of the Newcastle Range. (Camp I.)

'September' 4.—Resuming their journey, the party passed through a gap in the northern spur, described yesterday, about a quarter-of-a-mile from the camp. From this gap a point of the range on the south side was sighted, running into the river, and for this they steered. At 4 miles a small lagoon was passed, 300 yards out from the river, and a quarter-of-a-mile further on, a broad, shallow, sandy creek(then dry), which was named "Pluto Creek." At 8 miles a small rugged hill was passed on the left hand, and the point of the range steered for reached at 9. At 12 a large well-watered creek was crossed, and the party camped at the end of 18 miles on a similar one. The general course N.N.W., and lay chiefly over very stony ridges, close to the river banks. The timber was chiefly box, iron-bark, and melaleuca, the latter growing in the shallow bed, in which also large granite boulders frequently occurred. Though shallow, it contained fine pools and reaches of water, in some of which very fine fish were observed. Eighteen miles (Camp II.)

'September' 5.—After crossing the creek, on which they had camped, at its junction, the party followed down a narrow river flat for four miles, to where a large sandy creek joins it from the north. The steepness of its banks and freedom from fallen timber, suggested the name of "Canal Creek"—it is about 80 yards wide. Two miles further down a small creek joins, and at 12 miles a high rocky hill was reached. From this hill a bar of granite rock extends across the river to a similar one on the south side. A fine view was obtained from its summit showing them the course of the river. Up to this point the course had been N.W. After passing through a gap, immediately

Page 10

under and on the north of the rocky hill they were forced by the river into a northerly course for two miles, at which they crossed a spur of the range running into it, so rugged that they were obliged to lead their horses. Beyond this they emerged on to a basaltic plain, timbered with box and bloodwood, and so stony as to render the walking very severe for the horses. The basalt continued for the rest of the day. At about 18 miles a large creek was crossed, running into an ana-branch. The banks of the river which border the basaltic plain are very high and steep on both sides. Running the ana-branch down for four miles, the camp was pitched, after a tedious and fatiguing day's march. (Camp III.)

'September' 6.—The ana-branch camped on last night being found to run parallel to the course of the river, received the name of Parallel Creek. Its average width is about 150 yards, well watered, and full of melaleucas and fallen timber. The country on its north bank down to its junction with the river 20 miles from the junction of Warroul Creek, is broken into ridges of quartz and sand-stone, stony, and poorly grassed. That contained between its south bank and the river, the greatest width of which is not more than three miles, is a basaltic plateau, terminating in precipitous banks on the river, averaging 50 feet in perpendicular height. To avoid the stones on either side, there being no choice between the two, the party travelled down the bed of Parallel Creek the whole day. At about 9 miles stringy bark appeared on the ridges of the north bank. Large flocks of cockatoo parrots ('*Nymphicus Nov. Holl.*') were seen during the day, and a "plant" of native spears was found. They were neatly made, jagged at the head with wallaby bones, and intended for throwing in the Wommerah or throwing stick. At the end of 20 miles the party reached the junction of Parallel Creek with the river and encamped. The general course was about N.W. (Camp IV.)

'September' 7.—The party was now happily clear of the basaltic country, but the travelling was still none of the best, the first nine miles of to-day's stage being over stony ridges of quartz and iron-stone, interspersed with small, sandy, river flats. At this distance a large creek of running water was crossed, and the camp pitched at about two miles from its junction with the Einasleih. The creek received the name of Galaa Creek, in allusion to the galaa or rose cockatoo ('*Cacatua Rosea*'), large flocks of which were frequently seen. The junction of Galaa Creek is remarkable for two porphyritic rock islands, situated in the bed of the river, which is here sandy, well watered, and about 300 yards wide. The grass was very scarce, having been recently burned. The timber chiefly iron-bark and box. Course N.W. 1/2 W., distance 10 miles (Camp V.)

Page 11

'September' 8.—To-day the river was followed down over low broken stony ranges, having their crests covered with "garrawan" scrub for 5 miles, when the party was gratified by an agreeable change in the features of the country. Instead of the alternative of broken country, stony ridges, or basaltic plains they had toiled over for nearly 80 miles, they now emerged on to fine open well-grassed river flats, lightly timbered, and separated by small spurs of ridges running into them. A chain of small lagoons was passed at 12 miles, teeming with black duck, teal, wood duck, and pigmy geese, whilst pigeons and other birds were frequent in the open timber, a sure indication of good country. At 13 miles a small creek was crossed, and another at 18, and after having made a good stage of 25 miles the party again camped on the Einasleih. At this point it had increased to a width of nearly a mile, the banks were low and sloping, and the bed shallow and dry. It was still nevertheless, well watered, the stream, as is not unusual in many of our northern rivers, continuing to run under the surface of the sand, and requiring very slight digging or even scratching, to be got at. The general course throughout the day was about N.W.1/2W. (Camp VI.)

'September' 9.—The course down the river was resumed over similar country to that of yesterday. Keeping at the back of some low table-topped hills, at 5 miles the party struck a fine clear deep lagoon, about two miles in from the river, of which it is the overflow. A chain of small waterholes occurs at 12 miles, which were covered with ducks and other water-fowl, whilst immense flocks of a slate-colored pigeon were seen at intervals. They are about the same size as the Bronzewing, and excessively wild.* The river, when again struck, had resumed running. It was still sandy and full of the graceful weeping melaleuca in the bed, where traces of alligators were observed. The country traversed throughout the day was good, but the small plains and flats were thought likely to be swampy in wet weather. Another good stage of 26 miles was made, and the party again camped on the river. The general course was due west. (Camp VII.)

[footnote] * 'The Phaps Histrionica, or Harlequin Bronzewing.'

'September' 10.—Taking his course from the map he carried, shewing the river running north-west, and depending on its correctness, Mr. Jardine bore to the north-west for 15 miles, travelling over sandy honey-combed rises, and low swampy plains, when he reached a watershed to the north, which he then supposed must be the head of Mitchell waters, finding himself misled by his map and that he had left the river altogether, he turned south by west and did not reach it before the end of 8 miles on that bearing, when the party camped on a small ana-branch. The true course of the river would thus be about W. by N. Total distance 23 miles. (Camp VIII.)

Page 12

'September' 11.—This day's journey was over fine country. The first course was N.W. for about 5 miles, to a large round shallow lagoon, covered with quantities of wild fowl, and thence, following the direction of the river into camp about 13 miles, over a succession of large black soil plains covered with good grasses, mixed herbs, and salt bush. The principal timber being bauhinia, suggested the name of "Bauhinia Plains." Their width back from the river extended to an average of six miles, when they were bounded by low well-grassed iron-bark ridges. The river was broad and sandy, running in two or three channels, and occasionally spreading into long reaches. Large ana-branches, plentifully watered, left the main channel running back from it from 1 to 3 miles. A great many fishing weirs were observed in the channels of the river, from which it would appear that the blacks live much, if not principally, on fish. They were well and neatly constructed. (Camp ix.)

'September' 12.—Alexander Jardine, having now travelled 180 miles from Carpentaria Downs, was convinced that the river he had traced this distance could not be the Lynd of Leichhardt. The reasons which forced this conclusion on him were three:—Firstly, the description of the country in no wise tallied. Secondly, the course of the river differed. And thirdly, although he had travelled further to the west than Leichhardt's junction of the Lynd and Mitchell, he had not even been on Mitchell waters, the northern watershed he had been on, on the 10th, being that of a small creek, doubling on itself, and running into this river. Having thus set the matter at rest in his own mind, he determined to re-trace his steps, and accordingly started back this morning and camped at night at the shallow lagoon, passed the day previous. On the way they shot several ducks and a bustard. These are very numerous on the plains, but wild and unapproachable, as they most frequently are in the north. At each camp on his journey Mr. Jardine regularly marked a tree A.J. and the number of the Camp.

'September' 13.—The party travelled back over Bauhinia Plains, and camped on the river, near camp 8 of the outward journey. At night they went fishing, and got a number of fine perch, and a small spotted fish. Distance 24 miles.

'September' 14.—To-day the party saw blacks for the first time since leaving Carpentaria Downs. They "rounded them up," and had a parley, without hostility on either side, each being on the defensive, and observing the other. They bore no distinctive character, or apparent difference to the Rockhampton tribes, and were armed with reed speers and wommerahs. For the first time also they met with the ripe fruit of the *Palinaria*, the "Nonda" of Leichhardt. The distance travelled was 27 miles, which brought them to the 7th camp on the outward journey.

'September' 15.—Following up the course of the river, the 6th camp was reached in 26 miles, where the feed was so good that Mr. Jardine determined to halt for a day and recruit the horses. On the way they again passed some natives who were fishing in a large lagoon, but shewed no hostility. They had an opportunity of seeing their mode of

spearing the fish, in which they used a long heavy four-pronged spear, barbed with kangaroo bones.

Page 13

'September' 16.—Was spent in fishing and hunting, whilst the horses luxuriated in the abundant feed. They caught some perch, and a fine cod, not unlike the Murray cod in shape, but darker and without scales. At night, there being a fine moonlight, they went out to try and shoot opossums as an addition to the larder, but were unsuccessful. They appeared to be very scarce.

'September' 17.—Resuming their journey, the party travelled 21 miles, to a spot about 4 miles below No. 5 camp, on Gaala Creek, and turned out. Here they met with wild lucerne in great abundance, and a great deal of mica and talc was observed in the river. During the day Mr. Jardine shot a bustard, and some fish being again caught in the evening, there was high feeding in camp at night. The bagging of a bustard, or plain turkey as it is more commonly called, always makes a red day for the kitchen. Its meat is tender and juicy, and either roasted whole, dressed into steaks, or stewed into soup, makes a grateful meal for a hungry traveller.

'September' 18.—Keeping out some distance from its banks to avoid the stones and deep gullies, the party followed up the river to the junction of Parallel Creek: this was traced, keeping along its bed for the same reason, by which course only they were enabled to avoid them. These, as before described, were very thickly strewn making the journey tedious and severe on the horses, so that only 14 miles were accomplished, when they camped on a large waterhole five miles above the junction. The beautiful Burdekin duck ('Tadorna Radjah') was met with, of which Mr. Jardine shot a couple.

'September' 19.—Still keeping along the bed of Parallel Creek, the party travelled up its course. This they were constrained to do, in consequence of the broken and stony banks and country on the east side, whilst an abrupt wall of basalt prevented them leaving the bed on the west. At 13 miles they camped for a couple of hours in the middle of the day, on a large creek which received the name of Warroul Creek, suggested by their finding two large "sugar bags" or bees' nests on it, "Warroul" being the name for bee in the Wirotheree or Wellington dialect. Warroul Creek runs into Parallel Creek from the south-east, joining it about half-a-mile below where it leaves the river, it being as before mentioned an ana-branch of the Einasleih. Leaving Parallel and travelling up Warroul Creek, in 8 miles they reached the gap in the range 12 miles below camp No. 2. This afterwards received the name of Simon's Gap, and the range it occurs in, Jorgensen's Range, after Simon Jorgensen, Esq., of Gracemere. Two miles, from the gap they struck a large round swamp which had not been observed on the down journey, the party having kept close to the river, from which it is distant two miles. This was named "Cawana Swamp" There being good grass there, they camped. Native companions ('Crus Australalasinus') and the more rare jabiru ('Myeteria Australis') were very numerous on it. Total distance 23 miles.

Page 14

'September' 20.—To-day the party made the lagoon mentioned on the 4th inst., a distance of 27 miles, traversing nearly the same ground already described and camped. They again saw a mob of blacks fishing in the river, who, on seeing them, immediately decamped into the ranges on the opposite side and disappeared. The next day, Mr. Macdonald's station, Carpentaria Downs was reached in 17 miles, the little party having travelled over nearly 360 miles of ground in 18 days. Mr. Jardine found all well at the main camp, but no sign of his brother with the cattle; fifteen days passed before his arrival, during which time Alexander Jardine plotted up the courses of his journey down the Einasleih, and submitted the plan to Mr. Richardson, without, however, shaking the gentleman's faith as to his position, or that they were on Leichhardt's Lynd, preferring to dispute the accuracy of the reckoning. It will be seen, however, that the explorer was right, and the surveyor wrong. It being expedient that the party should husband their rations for the journey until the final start, Mr. Macdonald kindly supplied them with what was necessary for their present wants, thus allowing them to keep their own stores intact.

On the 6th of October, Frank Jardine made his appearance with the cattle, a mob of about 250 head of bullocks and cows in good condition. The ensuing three days were spent by the brothers in shoeing the horses, a job of no little tedium and difficulty, they being the only farriers of the party. There were 42 head to shoe, many of which had never been shod before, and as the thermometer stood at 100 degrees in the shade most of the day, their office was no sinecure; they had at first some difficulty in getting a sufficient heat, but after a little experimenting found a wood of great value in that particular. This was the apple-gum, by using which, they could if necessary get a white heat in the iron. At the end of the third day the last horse was shod, and it only remained to get the stores and gear together, and dispose them on the different packs. This was done on the 10th, on the evening of which they were ready for the final start. The party was thus composed: Frank Lacelles Jardine, Leader; Alexander Jardine, Archibald J. Richardson, Government Surveyor; C. Scrutton, R. N. Binney, A. Cowderoy, Eulah, Peter, Sambo and Barney, black boys from the districts of Rockhampton and Wide Bay; 41 picked horses and 1 mule, all in good order and condition.

Their provision was calculated to last them 4 months, and was distributed together with the tools, amunition, and camp necessities on 18 packs, averaging at the start about 150 lbs. each. It consisted of 1200 lbs. flour, 3 cwt. sugar, 35 lbs. of tea, 40 lbs. currants and raisins, 20 lbs. peas, 20 lbs. jams, salt, etc. The black troopers were armed with the ordinary double-barrelled police carbine, the whites carrying Terry's breech-loaders, and Tranter's revolvers. They had very ample occasion to test the value and efficiency of both these arms, which, in the hands of cool men, are invaluable in conflict.

Page 15

The personalities of the party were reduced to a minimum, and what was supposed to be absolutely necessary, one pack (the mule's) being devoted to odds and ends, or what are termed in bush parlance, 'manavilins'. Three light tents only were carried, more for protecting the stores than for shelter for the party.

All were in excellent health, and good spirits, and eager to make a start.

CHAPTER II.

Start from Carpentaria Downs—Order of Travel—Canal Creek—Cawana Swamp—Simons' Gap—Cowderoy's Bluff—Barney's Nob—Casualties in Parallel Creek—Basaltic Wall—Singular Fish—Black Carbonado—Improvement in Country—Search for the Lynd—Doubts—First rain—Error of Starting point—Large ant-hills—Ship's iron found—Native nets—Second start in search of Lynd—Return—Byerley Creek—The whole party moves forward—Belle Creek—Maroon Creek—Cockburn Creek—Short Commons—Camp Burned—The Powder saved—Maramie Creek—The Staaten—First hostility of Natives—Poison—"Marion" abandoned—Conclusion as to River—Heavy rain—First attack of Natives—Horses lost—Barren Country—Detention—Leader attacked by Natives—Black-boy attacked—A "growl"—Mosquitoes and flies—Kites—Cattle missing—Horses found—Leader again attacked—Main party attacked—Return to the River—Character of Staaten—Lagoon Creek—Tea-tree levels—Junction of Maramie Creek—Reach head of tide—Confirmation of opinion.

'October' 11.—At sunrise the cattle was started with Cowderoy and two black-boys, Eulah and Barney, the former acting as pilot. Their instructions were to camp at the swamp at the junction of Pluto Creek, seventeen miles from McDonald's station, mentioned on 3rd. September. The pack-horses were not got away until half-past 12, two, "Rasper," and the mule (as often provokingly happens when most wanted) being astray, and having to be hunted for. There was also the usual amount of "bucking" incident to a start, the unpractised pack-horses rebelling against the unwonted load and amount of gear, and with a few vigorous plunges sending pack-bags, pots, hobbles, and chains in scattered confusion all round them. Few starts of a large party occur without similar mischances, but a day or two, suffices for the horses to settle to their work, after which all goes smoothly. The country travelled has been described in the preceding chapter. A hill at five miles on Pluto Creek, received the name of Mount Eulah. On reaching the swamp, the brothers found the cattle party had not arrived. This was the first of many similar annoyances during the journey. It being between 8 and 9 p.m., it was useless to think of looking for them at that time of night. They therefore encamped on the river, intending to return and run the tracks of the cattle in the morning. The distance travelled was about 20 miles.

Page 16

'October' 12.—Leaving Binney in charge of the horses, with orders to feed them about the Lagoon, where there was better grass than at the river, the brothers started at sunrise in quest of the cattle party. They met them at about five miles up Pluto Creek, which they were running down. It appeared that Master Eulah, the pilot, had got completely puzzled, and led the party into the ranges to the eastward, where, after travelling all day, they had been obliged to camp about half-way from the station, and without water. He was very chop-fallen about his mistake, which involved his character as a bushman. The Australian aborigines have not in all cases that unerring instinct of locality which has been attributed to them, and are, out of their own country, no better, and generally scarcely so good as an experienced white. The brothers soon found water for them in the creek under Mount Eulah; after which, returning to the camp, it was too late to continue the journey, particularly as it had been necessary to send one of "the boys" back for a bag of amunition that had been lost on the way. This is the work they are most useful in, as few, even of the best bushmen are equal to them in running a track. The day's stage of the cattle was about 11 miles.

'October' 13.—The cattle started at a quarter-to-six, in charge of Alexander Jardine and two black-boys, while Frank and the rest of the party remained behind to pack and start the horses. This at the commencement was the usual mode of travelling, the horses generally overtaking the cattle before mid-day, when all travelled together till they camped at night, or preceded them to find and form the camp. Two incidents occurred on the way: "Postman," a pack-horse on crossing a deep narrow creek, fell and turned heels uppermost, where he lay kicking helplessly, unable to rise, until the pack was cut clear of him; and "Cerberus," another horse, not liking the companionship of the mule, took occasion in crossing another creek to kick his long-eared mate from the top to the bottom of it, to the intense amusement of the black-boys, who screamed "dere go poor fellow donkit" with great delight. The whole course was about 11 miles. The camp on a small dry creek. They procured water in the main channel of the river, on the south side. During the journey at every camp where there was timber, Mr. Jardine cut (or caused to be cut) its number with a chisel into the wood of a tree, in Roman numerals, and his initials generally in a shield.

'October' 14.—The distance travelled to-day was only 11 miles, but described by Mr. Jardine, as equal to 20 of fair travelling ground. The course lay over very stony quartz and granite ridges, which could not be avoided, as they ran into the river, whilst the bed of the stream would have been as difficult, being constantly crossed by rocky bars, and filled by immense boulders. The grass was very scarce, the blacks having burnt it all along the river.

Page 17

There were patches where it never grows at all, presenting the appearance of an earthen floor. They encamped at the junction of Canal Creek, under the shade of some magnificent Leichhardt trees ('*Nauclea Leichhardtii*') that grow there, without other water than what they dug for in the sandy bed, and reached at a depth of two feet. On the opposite side and about a mile from the junction there is a swamp, splendidly grassed, which looked like a green barley field, but the water was too salt for the horses to drink, an unusual thing in granite country. The timber of the ridges was chiefly stunted hollow iron-bark, that of the river, bloodwood, and the apple-gum, described as so good for forging purposes; there was a total absence of those tall well-grown gums, by which the course of a stream may usually be traced from a distance. So little was the river defined by the timber that it could not be distinguished at a half-a-mile away.

'October' 15.—The party moved to-day as far as the swamp mentioned on the 19th September. It received the name of "Cawana Swamp," and is described as the best and prettiest camping place they had yet seen. It is surrounded by the high stoney range called Jorgensen's Range on two sides, north and east, whilst on the south and east it is hemmed in by a stretch of cellular basalt, which makes it almost unapproachable. The only easy approach is by the river from the westward. It is six miles round, and so shallow that the cattle fed nearly a mile towards the middle. The party travelled out of the direct course to avoid the stones, keeping the narrow flats occurring between the river and ridges, which averaged about 200 yards in width; when intercepted by the ridges running into the river, they followed down its bed which is more clearly defined by oak ('*Casuarinae*') and Leichhardt trees than up the stream. The improved travelling allowed them to make the stage of 9 miles in less than four hours, and turn out early. Several large flocks of galaas ('*Cacatua Rosea*,') were seen, and Alexander Jardine shot a wallaby. Before starting, Barney, one of the black-boys had to be corrected by the Leader for misconduct, which had the effect of restoring discipline. On reaching Cawana Swamp, the fires of the natives were found quite fresh, from which it would seem that they had decamped on the approach of the party, leaving plenty of birrum-burrongs, or bee-eaters ('*Merops Ornatus*, Gould') behind them. An observation taken at night gave the latitude 18 degrees 1 minute 59 seconds, which gave about 41 miles of Northing.

'October' 16.—The cattle were started away at a quarter-to-four o'clock, this morning, and found an excellent passage through Jorgensen's Range, by "Simon's Gap." The track from this point to the junction of Warroul and Parallel Creeks with the river (where the camp was pitched) was very winding, from having to avoid the basalt, which was laming some of the cattle, besides

Page 18

wrenching off the heads of the horse-shoe nails: it could not be altogether avoided, and made it past noon before the cattle reached the camp. A native companion, a rock wallaby, and a young red kangaroo were the result of the hunting in the afternoon, which saved the necessity of having to kill a beast: this would have been specially inconvenient, if not impossible here, for the natives had burnt all the grass, and there was not a bite of feed for either horses or cattle, had they halted. About 50 blacks, all men, followed the tracks of the party from Cawana Swamp: they were painted, and fully armed, which indicated a disposition for a "brush" with the white intruders; on being turned upon, however, they thought better of it, and ran away. The camp was formed under a red stony bluff, which received the name of "Cowderoy's Bluff," after one of the party; whilst a large round hill bearing E.N.E. from the camp was called "Barney's Nob." In the afternoon Mr. Binney and Eulah were sent to the river to fish, but as they ate all the caught, there was no gain to the party. For this their lines were taken from them by Mr. Jardine, and they got a "talking to," the necessity for which was little creditable to the white man. The thermometer at 5 a.m. stood at 80 degrees. The day's stage about 10 miles N.N.W. Some banksias, currijong, and stringy-bark were noticed to-day, the latter is not a common timber in the northern districts.

'October' 17.—All the horses were away this morning: as might have been expected, the poor hungry creatures had strayed back towards the good feed on Cawana Swamp, and were found 5 miles from the camp. The day's stage was the worst they had yet had. The country down Parallel Creek has already been described, and it took six of the party five hours to get the cattle over three-and-a-half miles of ground: the bed of the creek, by which alone they could travel was intersected every 300 or 400 yards by bars formed of granite boulders, some of which were from 25 to 30 feet high, and their interstices more like a quarry than anything else; over these the cattle had to be driven in two and sometimes three lots, and were only travelled 8 miles with great difficulty. There were several casualties; "Lucifer," one of the best of the horses cut his foot so badly, as to make it uncertain whether he could be fetched on; and two unfortunate cows fell off the rocks, and were smashed to pieces. The cows were beginning to calve very fast, and when the calves were unable to travel, they had to be destroyed, which made the mothers stray from the camp to where they had missed them; one went back in this manner the previous night, but it was out of the question to ride thirty miles after her over the stones they had traversed. The camp was made in the bed of Parallel Creek, at a spot where there was a little grass, the whole stage having been almost without any. Here the basaltic wall was over 80 feet in height, hemming them in from the west; on some parts during the day it closed in on both sides. An observation at night made the latitude 17 degrees 51 minutes. A curious fish was caught to-day—it had the appearance of a cod, whose head and tail had been drawn out, leaving the body round. (Camp VIII.)

Page 19

'October', 18.—Another severe stage, still down the bed of Parallel Creek, from which indeed there was no issue. Frank Jardine describes it as a "pass or gorge, through the range which abuts on each side through perpendicular cliffs, filling it up with great blocks of stone," and adding that "a few more days of similar country would bring their horses to a standstill." Their backs and the feet of the cattle were in a woeful plight from its effects: one horse was lost, and a bull and several head of cattle completely knocked up. Bad as yesterday's journey was, this day's beat it; they managed to travel ten miles over the most villanous country imaginable, with scarcely a vestage of grass, when the camp was again pitched in the bed of the creek. A large number of natives were seen to-day—one mob was disturbed at a waterhole, where they were cooking fish, which they left in their alarm, together with their arms. The spears were the first that had been observed made of reed, and a stone tomahawk was seen, as large as the largest-sized American axe. These blacks were puny wretched-looking creatures, and very thin. They had a great number of wild dogs with them—over thirty being counted by the party. 10 miles, N.W. by W. 1/2 W. (Camp ix.)

'October' 19.—The confluence of Parallel Creek with the Einasleih was reached in four miles, after which the country on the river slightly improved; the camp was pitched four miles further on, on a river flat, within sight of a large scrub, on the east side. Four of the cattle that had been knocked up yesterday were sent for before starting, and fetched—the cattle counted and found correct. The river at the camp was about 700 yards wide, with fine waterholes in it, containing plenty of fish. A strange discovery was made to-day. At a native fire the fresh remains of a negro were found 'roasted', the head and thigh bones were alone complete, all the rest of the body and limbs had been broken up, the skull was full of blood. Whether this was the body of an enemy cooked for food, or of a friend disposed of after the manner of their last rites, must remain a mystery, until the country and its denizens become better known. Some spears were found pointed with sharp pieces of flint, fastened on with kangaroo sinews, and the gum of the Xanthorea, or grass-tree. (Camp X.)

'October' 20.—The last of the stony ground was travelled over to-day, and the foot-sore cattle were able to luxuriate in the soft sandy ground of the river flats. At about 6 miles Galaa Creek was crossed at Alexander Jardine's marked tree (V in a square), and the Rocky Island at its junction, before mentioned, were seen. At this point the ranges come into the river on each side. The camp was pitched at about five miles further on, at a fine waterhole, where there was good grass—a welcome change for cattle and horses. It was not reached, however, till about 9 o'clock. The river afforded the party some fine fish—cod, perch, and peel, and a lobster weighing more than half-a-pound. Its channels were very numerous, making altogether nearly a mile in width. Scrub was in sight during the whole of the stage, the crests of the broken ridges being covered with garrawon. (Camp xi.)

Page 20

'October' 21.—Mr. Jardine describes to-day's stage as the best the cattle had experienced since taking delivery of them 230 miles back; the river banks along which they travelled were flat and soft, lightly timbered with box, poplar-gum and bloodwood. From a low table-topped range, which they occasionally sighted on the right, spurs of sandstone ran into the river at intervals, but were no obstruction. A cow had to be abandoned knocked up. A couple of blacks were surprised in the river spearing fish; they set up a howl, and took to the river. In the evening the whole of the party went fishing for the pot, there being no meat left. (Camp XII.) Distance 11 miles. The weather to-day was cloudy for the first time, shewing appearance of rain.

'October' 22.—The river was travelled down for 10 miles, through similar and better country than that of yesterday's stage, and the camp established on a deep narrow well-watered creek, three-quarters-of-a-mile from its junction with the river. Here the Leader determined to halt for a few days to recruit the strength of the horses and cattle, the feed being good; many of the cattle were lame, two of the hacks were knocked up, and several of the pack-horses had very sore backs, so that a "spell" was a necessity. They were now 120 miles from Macdonald's station, having averaged ten miles a-day since the start

'October' 23.—The camp was established at this point (Camp XIII.) pending a reconnaissance by the Leader and his brother to find the Lynd of Leichhardt, and determine the best line of road for the stock. A couple of calves were killed, cut up, and jerked, whilst some of the party employed themselves in the repairs to the saddlery, bags, etc., and Alexander Jardine took a look at the country back from the river. Mr. Richardson plotted up his course, when it was found that it differed from that of the brothers by only one mile in latitude, and two in longitude; he also furnished the Leader with his position on the chart, telling him that the Lynd must be about ten miles N.E. of them, their latitude being 17 degrees 34 minutes 32 seconds S.*

[footnote] *In Mr. Richardson's journal he mentions the distances as 18 to 20. He also explains that he had two maps, in which a difference of 30 miles in longitude existed in the position of their starting point. Not having a Chronometer to ascertain his longitude for himself, he adopted that assigned by the tracing furnished from the Surveyor-General's Office.*

'October' 24.—The brothers started this morning, taking with them Eulah, as the most reliable of the black-boys; they were provisioned for five days. The cattle were left in charge of Mr. Scrutton: the feed being good and water plentiful, the halt served the double purpose of recruiting their strength, and allowing the Leader to choose the best road for them. Steering N.E. by E. at a mile, they passed through a gap in the low range

Page 21

of table-topped hills of red and white sandstone which had been skirted on the way down: through this gap a small creek runs into the river, which they ran up, N.N.E., 3 miles further, on to a small shallow creek, with a little water in it. Travelling over lightly-timbered sandy ridges, barren and scrubby, but without stone, at 9 or 10 miles they crossed the head of a sandy creek, rising in a spring, about 60 yards wide, having about 5 or 6 inches of water in it. The creek runs through mimosa and garrawon scrub for 5 miles, and the spring occurs on the side of a scrubby ridge, running into the creek from the west. At 18 miles they struck an ana-branch having some fine lagoons in it, and half-a-mile further on a river 100 yards wide, waterless, and the channels filled up with melaleuca and grevillea; this, though not answering to Leichhardt's description, they supposed to be an ana-branch of the Lynd; its course was north-west. They followed its left bank down for three miles, then crossing it, they bore N.N.E. for four miles, through level and sometimes flooded country, when their course was arrested by a line of high ridges, dispelling the idea that they were on the Lynd waters. Turning west they now travelled back to the river, and crossing it, camped on one of the same chain of lagoons which they first struck in the morning, and in which they were able to catch some fish for supper. The distance travelled was 28 miles.

'October' 25.—It was impossible to believe that the stream they were now camped on was the Lynd. Leichhardt's description at the point where they had supposed that they should strike it, made it stony and timbered with iron-bark and box. Now, since leaving the Einasleih they had not seen a single box or iron-bark tree, or a stone. Frank Jardine therefore determined to push out to the north-east, and again seek this seemingly apocryphal stream. After travelling for eight miles through sandy ridges, scrubby and timbered with blood-wood, messmate, and melaleuca (upright-leaved) they struck a sandy creek, bearing north; this they followed for five miles, when it turned due west, as if a tributary of the stream they had left in the morning. Having seen no water since then, it was out of the question to attempt bringing the cattle across at this point. It was determined therefore that they should return and mark a line from the Einasleih to the lagoons they had camped on last night, along which cattle could travel slowly, whilst the brothers again went forward to look for a better road from that point, and ascertain definitely whether they were on the Lynd or not. Turning west they travelled 28 miles to the creek they had left in the morning, striking it more than 40 miles below their camp, when, to their surprise it was found running nearly due south and still dry. Here they camped and caught some fish and maramies (cray-fish) by puddling a hole in the creek, which, with three pigeons they shot,

Page 22

made a good supper. At night a heavy thunder-storm broke over them, which lasted from 9 till 12. Frank Jardine here states himself to have been exceedingly puzzled between Leichhardt and Mr. Richardson; one or the other of these he felt must be wrong. Leichhardt describes the stream in that latitude (page 283 Journal) as stony, and with conical hills of porphyry near the river banks, "Bergues" running into it on each side. They had not seen a rise even, in any direction for miles, whilst the creek presented only occasional rocks of flat water-worn sandstone, and the screw-palm '*Pandanus Spiralis*' occurred in all the water-courses, a tree that from its peculiarity would scarcely have been unnoticed or undescribed. As it was quite unlikely that he should have misrepresented the country, the natural presumption was, that Mr. Richardson must have been in error as to their true position; this was in reality the case, the error in his assumed longitude at starting causing his reckoning to overlap the Lynd altogether. This is easily seen and explained now, but was at that time a source of great uncertainty and anxiety to the explorers.

'October' 26.—Crossing over to the west bank of the river, the brothers followed it up the whole day along its windings, the general course being from South-east to East for above 36 miles. They saw none of the porphyry cliffs described by Leichhardt, or stone of any kind. The country traversed, consisted of scrubby flats, and low sandy ridges, timbered with bloodwood, messmate, mimosa, melaleuca, grevillea, and two or three species of the *sterculia* or *currijong*, then in full blossom. Thick patches of a kind of tree, much resembling brigalow in its appearance and grain, were seen on the river banks; but the box, apple-gum, and iron-bark, mentioned by Leichhardt as growing in this latitude were altogether wanting. Large ant-hills, as much as 15 feet in height, which were frequent, gave a remarkable appearance to the country. During their stage the party came on to a black's camp, where they found some matters of interest. The natives, who were puddling a waterhole for fish, had, as was most frequent, decamped at their appearance, leaving them leisure to examine some very neatly made reed spears, tipped variously with jagged hardwood, flint, fish-bones, and iron; pieces of ship's iron were also found, and a piece of saddle girth, which caused some speculation as to how or where it had been obtained, and proving that they must at some time have been on the tracks of white men. Their nets excited some admiration, being differently worked to any yet seen, and very handsome; a sort of chain without knots. The camp was made on an ana-branch of the river, where the travellers caught a couple of cod-fish. Their expertness as fishermen was a great stand-by, for they had started without any ration of meat. They experienced some heavy wind and a thunderstorm at night.

Page 23

'October' 27.—Still travelling up the river, the party in about 9 miles reached the lagoons where they were first struck, and turned out for a couple of hours. There was good feed round them, in which the horses solaced themselves, whilst their riders caught some fish and shot some pigeons for dinner, after which they commenced blazing the line for the cattle. They reached the main camp at 9 o'clock at night, having in eight hours marked a line through the best of the sandy tea-tree ridges, between 18 and 20 miles in length; no despicable work for three tomahawks. Mr. Jardine communicated the result of his trip to Mr. Richardson, but that gentleman could or would not acquiesce in the opinion arrived at by the brothers, despite the very conclusive arguments with which it was supported. This opposition occasioned a feeling of want of confidence, which caused them to cease consulting Mr. Richardson on their course, leaving him merely to carry out the duty of his appointment.

'October' 28.—The following day was spent in camp, preparatory to a fresh start ahead of the cattle, which, it was decided should leave this camp on the 31st. Some of them could scarcely move, but their number were found correct on counting.

'October' 29.—Again taking old Eulah with them, the brothers started on another quest for the Lynd, which, like the mirage of the desert, seemed to recede from them as they approached; setting out late in the day, they camped at night once more on the lagoon, at the end of their marked-tree line, a distance of about 18 miles. They took with them four days' rations of flour, tea, and sugar, trusting to their guns and fishing lines for their supply of meat.

'October' 30.—Starting at half-past 6 in the morning the little party steered N. by W. about 36 miles. At about three-quarters of-a-mile from the river they passed a fine lagoon, and at four miles further on a rocky creek running west with some water in it. Their way lay over soft, barren, sandy ridges, timbered with tea-tree. Eight miles more brought them to a creek where water could be obtained by digging, and at 24 miles further they camped on a large well-watered creek, running N.W.; the whole of the distance was over the same soft, barren, monotonous country. On their way they killed an iguana ('Monitor Gouldii'), which made them a good supper, and breakfast next morning. The cattle party at No. 13 Camp were left with instructions to follow slowly along the marked-tree line, to camp at the lagoon, and there await the return of the advance party.

'October' 31.—An early start was made this morning at a quarter after 6, and 20 or 22 miles were accomplished on the same bearing as that of yesterday, N. by W., over the same heavy barren stringy-bark country. Three small creeks were crossed, but not a hill or rise was to be seen, or any indication of a river to the northward. At this point the heavy travelling beginning to tell

Page 24

on their jaded horses, the Leader determined on abandoning the idea of bringing the cattle by the line they had traversed, and turning south and by west made for the river they had left in the morning, intending to ascertain if it would be the better route for the cattle, and if not, to let them travel down the supposed Lynd (which now received the name of Byerley Creek), on which they were to rendezvous. After travelling 16 miles further on the new bearing, they camped without water, being unable to reach the large creek they had camped on the previous night. The country along the last course was of the same description, low, sandy, string-bark, and tea-tree ridges, without a vestige of water; total distance 38 miles.

'November' 1.—Making another early start, and steering S.W. by S., the party reached the creek in four miles, and getting a copious drink for themselves and their thirsty horses, breakfasted off some "opossums and rubbish" they got out of a black's camp. The stream was 100 yards wide, and well-watered, a great relief after their arid journey of yesterday: large rocks of sandstone occurred in its bed in different places. Crossing it, they followed down its left bank for 8 miles, its trend being N.W., then turning their back on it, they steered due south to strike Byerley Creek. Sixteen miles of weary travelling over wretched barren country brought them to a small sandy creek, on which they camped, procuring water for their horses by digging in its bed. Here they made a supper of the lightest, their rations being exhausted, and "turned in" somewhat disgusted with the gloomy prospect for the progress of the cattle. They again met with the *nonda* of Leichhardt, and ate of its ripe fruit, which is best when found dry under the trees. Its taste is described as like that of a boiled mealy potatoe.

'November' 2.—Continuing on the same course, due south for 18 miles, over the same useless country, the party reached Byerley Creek, striking it at a point 32 miles below the Rendezvous Camp, then turning up its course they followed it for 16 miles, to their hunting camp of the 26th October. Here they camped and made what they deemed a splendid supper off an opossum, an iguana, and four cod-fish, the result of their day's sport. Total distance travelled 28 miles.

'November' 3.—Following up the creek for 16 miles, the party reached the main camp on the lagoons early in the day. Here they found all right, with the exception that most of the party were suffering from different stages of sandy-blight, or ophthalmia. A calf was killed, and the hungry vanguard were solaced with a good feed of veal. Byerley Creek having been found utterly destitute of grass, badly watered, and moreover trending ultimately to the S. of W., the Leader determined to take the cattle on to the next, which was well watered, having some feed on it, and being on the right course. There were, however, two long stages without water;

Page 25

but it was, on the whole, the best and almost only course open to him. The cattle had made this camp in two stages from the Einasleih. It was, consequently, No. LI. The latitude was found to be 17 degrees 23 minutes 24 seconds: a tree was marked with these numbers, in addition to the usual initial and numbers. The Thermometer at daylight marked 90 degrees, and at noon 103 degrees, in the 'shade!'

'November' 4.—A late start was made to-day, a number of the horses having strayed, and not having been got in. The Brothers went ahead, and marked a line for five miles out to the creek mentioned on the 30th October: it contained sufficient water for the horses and cattle, and was the best watercourse they would get until they reached the next river, a distance of 30 miles. It received the name of "Belle Creek," in remembrance of "Belle," one of their best horses, who died at this camp, apparently from a snake bite, the symptoms being the same as in the case of "Dora," but the time shorter. Belle Creek is rocky and tolerably well watered, and remarkable for the number of nonda trees on it. Whilst waiting for the cattle the Brothers caught some fish and a fine lot of maramies.

'November' 5.—This day appears to have been one of disasters. It opened with the intelligence that sixteen of the horses were missing. Leaving one party to seek and bring on the stray horses, the Brothers started the cattle forward: they left instructions at the camp for the horses to start, if recovered before 3 o'clock; if not, to be watched all night, and brought on the next day. They then started, and preceding the cattle, marked a line for 15 miles to "Maroon Creek." Here they camped without water, waiting with some anxiety for the arrival of the pack-horses. Hour after hour passed but none appeared, and as night closed in, the Brothers were forced to the conclusion that something must have gone wrong at the camp. They could not however turn back, as they had to mark the next day's stage for the cattle to water, there being none for them to-night, and only a little for the party, obtained by digging, however, they were relieved by the appearance of a blackboy with rations, who reported that some of the horses had not been found when he left the camp. The night was spent in watching the thirsty cattle.

'November' 6.—The cattle were started at dawn and driven on to the watered creek, where they got feed and water at some fine waterholes, it received the name of "Cockburn Creek;" the Brothers as usual preceded them and marked a line further ahead. Arrived there, they spent the rest of the day in fishing whilst uneasily waiting the arrival of the pack-horses. They luckily caught some fish for supper, for night fell without the appearance of the remainder of the party, and they had nothing to eat since the preceding night. The country has already been described.

Page 26

'November' 7.—To-day was spent in camp by the party whilst anxiously awaiting the arrival of the pack-horses, but night fell without their making their appearance. They had nothing to eat, and as there was no game to be got, they decided on killing a calf, but in this they were disappointed, as the little animal eluded them, and bolted into the scrub. They therefore had to go "opossuming," and succeeding in catching three, which, with a few small fish, formed their supper.

'November' 8.—At daylight this morning, Alexander Jardine succeeded in "potting" the calf that had eluded them yesterday, which gave the party a satisfactory meal. Another anxious day was passed without the arrival of the pack-horses, and the Leader had the annoyance of finding on counting the cattle, that between twenty or thirty were missing. Being now seriously anxious about the pack-horses, he determined if they did not arrive that night, to despatch his brother to look after them.

'November' 9.—The horses not having arrived, Alexander Jardine started to see what had happened: he met the party with them half way, and learned some heavy news. In the afternoon of the 5th (the day on which the Brothers started with the cattle), the grass around the camp had, by some culpable carelessness, been allowed to catch fire, by which half their food and nearly all their equipment were burnt. The negligence was the more inexcusable, as before starting, Alexander Jardine had pulled up the long grass around the tents at the camp, which should have put them on their guard against such a contingency, one for which even less experienced bushmen are supposed to be watchful during the dry season. The consequences were most disastrous: resulting in the destruction of 6 bags of flour, or 70 lbs. each, or 420 lbs., all the tea save 10 lbs., the mule's pack, carrying about 100 lbs. of rice and jam, apples, and currants, 5 lbs. gun-powder, 12 lbs. of shot, the ammunition box, containing cartridges and caps, two tents, one packsaddle, twenty-two pack-bags, 14 surcingles, 12 leather girths, 6 breechings, about 30 ring pack-straps, 2 bridles, 2 pairs blankets, 2 pairs of boots, nearly all the black boys' clothes, many of the brothers', and 2 bags containing nicknacks, awls, needles, twine, *etc.*, for repairs. It was providential the whole was not burnt, and but for the exertions of Mr. Scrutton, all the powder would have gone. He is described as having snatched some of the canisters from the fire with the solder melting on the outside. They had succeeded in rescuing the little that was saved by carrying it to a large ant-hill to, windward. Their exertions were no doubt great and praise-worthy, but a little common prudence would have saved their necessity, and a heavy and irreparable loss to the whole party, one which might have jeopardized the safety of the expedition. Besides this, they had a less important but still serious loss; "Maroon," a valuable grey sire horse, that Mr. Jardine hoped to take to the new settlement, died from the effects of poison, or of a snake bite, but more probably the former. The pack-horses joined the cattle in the evening. Stock was taken of the articles destroyed, and the best disposition made of what remained. The latitude of this camp (XVIII.) was 16 degrees 55 minutes 6 seconds.

Page 27

'November' 10.—Leaving instructions with the cattle party to follow down Cockburn Creek, and halt at the spots marked for them, the Brothers, accompanied by Eulah, started ahead, to mark the camps and examine the country. By this means no time was lost. The first three camps were marked at about seven-mile intervals; and at about 25 miles, opposite two small lagoons on the west bank, the Leader marked trees *stop* (in heart), on either side the creek, leaving directions for the party to halt till he returned, and a mile further down camped for the night. The banks of the creek were scrubby and poorly grassed, the country sandy, and thickly timbered with tea-tree, stringy-bark, and bloodwood, and a few patches of silver-leaved iron-bark, the nondas being very plentiful along its course. Large flocks of cockatoo parrots ('*Nymphicus Nov. Holl.*') and galaas were seen during the day.

'November' 11.—Still continuing down the creek the party made a short stage of 13 miles, one of their horses having become too sick to travel. The early halt gave them an opportunity to go hunting, the more necessary as they were again out of meat. The result was an iguana, a bandicoot, three opossums, and some "sugar bags" or wild honey nests.

'November' 12.—Crossing Cockburn Creek the Brothers bore away N.N.W. for 9 or 10 miles, over sandy bloodwood ridges, intersected with broad tea-tree gullies, to two sandy water courses half-a-mile apart, the first 100 and the second 50 yards in width, running west. These they supposed to be heads of the Mitchell. Crossing them and continuing N. by W., they traversed over barren tea-tree levels (showing flood marks from three to four feet high), without a blade of grass, for about 16 miles, when they reached the extreme head of a small rocky creek, where they camped at a waterhole, and caught a great number of maramies, which suggested the name of "Maramie Creek." It was quite evident that the cattle could not follow by this route, as there was nothing for them to eat for nearly the whole distance. The stage travelled was 26 1/2 miles.

'November' 13.—Maramie Creek was followed down for 25 miles: its general course is west. At three miles from the start a small creek runs in from the north-east. The Brothers had hoped that the character of the country would improve as they went down, but were disappointed. Nothing but the same waste of tea-tree and spinifex could be seen on either side, the bank of the main creek alone producing bloodwood, stringy-bark, acacia, and nonda. Though shallow it was well watered, and increased rapidly in size as they proceeded. The natives had poisoned all the fish in the different waterholes with the bark of a small green acacia that grew along the banks, but the party succeeded in getting a few muscles and maramies.

Page 28

'November' 14.—Being satisfied that the cattle could not be brought on by the course they had traversed, Frank Jardine determined to leave Maramie Creek, and make for the large stream crossed on the 12th, so as to strike it below the junction of Cockburn Creek. Turning due south the party passed a swamp at eight miles, and at seventeen miles a lagoon, on which were blue lilies ('*Nymphoea gigantea*.') A mile farther on they reached what they supposed to be the Mitchell, which was afterwards ascertained to be the Staaten, of the Dutch navigators, or one of its heads. At the point where they struck it (about 18 miles below the junction of Cockburn Creek, it is nearly a quarter-of-a-mile in width, sandy, with long waterholes. A dense black tea-tree scrub occupies its south bank. It was here that the party experienced the first decided show of hostility from the natives. They had seen and passed a number at the lily lagoon unmolested, but when arrived at the river whilst the leader was dismounted in its bed, fixing the girths of his saddle, he was surprised to find himself within 30 yards of a party carrying large bundles of reed spears, who had come upon him unperceived. They talked and gesticulated a great deal but made no overt hostility, contenting themselves with following the party for about three miles through scrub, as they proceeded along the river. Getting tired of this noisy pursuit, which might at any moment end in a shower of spears, the Brothers turned on reaching a patch of open ground, determined that some of their pursuers should not pass it. This movement caused them to pause and seeming to think better of their original intention they ceased to annoy or follow the little party, which pursued its way for five miles further, when they camped in the bed of the stream. Its character for the 8 miles they had followed it up was scrubby and sandy: its course nearly west—long gullies joined it from each side walled with sandstone. They caught two turtles for supper. Total distance travelled 26 miles.

'November 15.—Making an early start, the party followed up the Staaten for eight miles, the general course being about N.E. Here it was joined by Cockburn creek, which they ran up until they reached the cattle party encamped at the lagoons, where the Leader had marked trees *stop*. They had reached this place on the 13th inst., without further accident or disaster, and seeing the trees, camped as instructed. It was nearly 30 miles from the junction of the Staaten, the country scrubby, thickly timbered, and very broken. Total distance 38 miles.

'November' 16.—The whole party was moved down Cockburn Creek, that being the only practicable route. It was the alternative of poor grass or no grass. The trend of the creek was about N.W. by W. At twelve miles they encamped on its bed. A red steer and a cow were left behind poisoned; and another horse, "Marion" was suffering severely from the same cause.

Page 29

They were unable to detect the plant which was doing so much mischief, which must be somewhat plentiful in this part of the country. Leichhardt mentions (page 293) the loss of Murphy's pony on the Lynd, which was found on the sands, "with its body blown up, and bleeding from the nostrils." Similar symptoms showed themselves in the case of the horses of this expedition, proving pretty clearly that the deaths were caused by some noxious plant. (Camp XXIII.)

'November' 17.—The course was continued down Cockburn Creek. At six miles a large stream runs in from the S.E. which was supposed to be Byerley Creek. This however is only an assumption, and not very probable, as it will be remembered that when the brothers struck it on the 1st November, 40 miles below camp 15, they were surprised to find it trending toward the south. It is not improbable that it may run into the sea between the Staaten and Gilbert. This problem can only be solved when the country gets more occupied, or some explorer traces the Staaten in its whole length. Below this junction Cockburn Creek is from 200 to 300 yards wide, running in many channels, but under the surface. The country is flat and poorly grassed, a low sandy ridge occasionally running into the creek. The timber is bloodwood, string-bark, tea-tree, nonda, and acacia. The party camped 5 miles further down; poor "Marion" being now past all hope of recovery had to be abandoned. Three cows that calved at camp 22 were sent for and brought up. They were kept safely all night, but during the morning watch, were allowed to escape by Barney. At this camp (XXIV.) Scrutton was bitten in two or three places by a scorpion, without however any very severe effects.

'November' 18.—Cockburn Creek, now an important stream was followed down for four miles, when it formed a junction with the Staaten. The width of the main stream is about 400 yards, in many channels sandy and dry. It now runs generally west and very winding. The country and timber were much as before described, with the exception that a mile back from the river, (a chain of lagoons) generally occurs, some of them being large and deep and covered with lilies. Beyond, a waste of sandy tea-tree levels, thickly covered with triodia or spinifex, and other desert grasses. The green tree ant was very numerous, particularly in the nonda trees, where they form their nests. The birds were also very numerous, large flocks of black cockatoos, cockatoo parrots, galaas, budgerygars or grass parrots ('*Melopsittacus Undulatus*, Gould'), and some grey quail were frequently seen, and on one of the lagoons a solitary snipe was found. Another cow was abandoned to-day. The total day's stage was 8 miles. The party camped in the sandy bed of the river. A little rain was experienced at night. (Camp XXV.) Latitude 16 degrees 32 minutes 14 seconds.

Page 30

'November' 19.—The party followed down parallel with the Staaten, so as to avoid the scrub and broken sandstone gullies on the banks. They travelled for 11 miles, and camped on one of the lagoons above mentioned. Their course was somewhat to the south of west, so that they were no nearer to their destination—an annoying reflection. In the afternoon some of the party went over to the river to fish. At this spot it had narrowed to a width of 100 yards, was clear of fallen trees and snags, the water occupying the whole width, but only 5 feet deep. Up to this time, Frank Jardine had supposed the stream they were on to be the Mitchell, but finding its course so little agreeing with Leichhardt's description of it, below the junction of the Lynd, which is there said to run N.W., he was inclined to the conclusion that they had not yet reached that river. Mr. Richardson, on the contrary, remained firm in his opinion that Byerley Creek was the river Lynd, and consequently, that this stream was the Mitchell, nor was it till they reached the head of the tide that he was fully convinced of his error. (See his journal November 18, and December 2.)

'November' 20.—To-day the Leader went forward and chose a good camp, 12 miles on, at some fine lagoons. The cattle followed, keeping, as usual, back from the river, the interval to which was all scrubby flooded ground, thickly covered with brush and underwood. They were however unable to reach the camp that night, for when within three miles of it a heavy deluge of rain compelled them to halt, and pitch the tents to protect the rations, all the oilskin coverings that had been provided for the packs having been destroyed in the bonfire, on Guy-Faux Day, at camp No. 16. They could hardly have been caught in a worse place, being on the side of a scrubby ridge, close to one of the ana-branches of the river. It would seem that the natives calculated on taking them at a disadvantage, for they chose this spot for an attack, being the first instance in which they attempted open hostility. Whilst the Brothers were busily engaged in cutting out a "sugar bag," a little before sundown, they heard an alarm in the camp, and a cry of "here come the niggers." Leaving their 'sweet' occupation, they re-joined the party, in front of which about 20 blacks were corroboreeing, probably to screw up their courage. They had craft enough to keep the sun, which was now low, at their backs, and taking advantage of this position sent in a shower of spears, without any of the party—not even the black-boys —being aware of it, until they saw them sticking in the ground about them. No one was hit, but several had very narrow shaves. The compliment was returned, and as Alexander Jardine describes "'exeunt' warriors," who did not again molest them, although they were heard all around the camp throughout the night. (Camp XXVII.) Course W. Distance 9 miles. A heavy thunderstorm in the evening.

Page 31

'November' 21.—The cattle were started as usual, but as ill-luck would have it, 13 of the horses were not to be found. After waiting for them till four o'clock, all the packs and riding-saddles were packed on the remaining horses, and the party drove them on foot before them to the camp, at the lagoons, three miles on. It was dark before they got there, and well into the second watch before the tents were pitched, and everything put straight. The country continued the same as before described, a barren waste of tea-tree levels to the north, obliging them to keep along the river, although at right angles to their proper course. (Camp XXVIII.) Distance 3 miles W.

'November 22.—The troubles and adventures of the party seemed to thicken at this point, where the cattle were detained, whilst the missing horses were being sought for. Old Eulah had come in late the preceding night empty-handed, he had seen their tracks, but night coming on he was unable to follow them. He was started away this morning in company with Peter to pick up and run the trail. At two o'clock he returned with two, and reported that Peter was on the trail of the others. They had evidently been disturbed by their friends the natives, for their tracks were split up, and those brought on had their hobbles broken. At dusk Peter brought home three more, without being able to say where the others had got to. During this time, Frank Jardine had a little adventure to himself; wishing to find a better run for the cattle, he started about noon, and rode down the river for about six miles. There was no choice, the country was all of the same description, so he turned back in disgust, when, in crossing the head of a sandstone gully, he heard a yell, and looked round just in time to see a half a dozen spears come at him, and about a dozen natives around and painted, jumping about in great excitement. Going forward a little, he got time to clear the lock of his rifle, from the oil rag which usually protected it. He turned on his assailants, and sent a bullet amongst them; it hit a tree instead of a blackfellow, but as they still menaced him, his next shot was more successful, when seeing one of their number fall, the rest decamped. It was now their turn to run, but before they could cross the bed of the river, which was dry, clear, and about 300 yards wide, he was able to get two good shots at short range. They did not trouble him again that afternoon. They dropped all their spears in the "stampede," some of which, reed and jagged, were taken home as trophies. They used no "wommerahs." Peter came in to camp at dark, with 3 horses, having no idea where the others had got to; there were 8 still away.

Page 32

'November' 23.—Sambo, the best tracker among the black-boys, was despatched at sunrise, with Peter, to look for the missing horses. He returned at sundown with the mule, which he had found on the opposite side of the river, but he had seen no traces of the rest. Peter came in after dark, without any, he had seen the tracks of the natives on the horse tracks, and related in his own jargon, that "blackfella bin run'em horses all about" and "that bin brok'em hobble." He had also seen two or three of the blacks themselves, at the lagoon where the brothers met them on the 14th, and had some parley with them—he described them a "cawbawn saucy" "that tell'im come on, me trong fella, you little fella," and after chaffing him in their own way, sent as many spears at him as he would stand for. The detention caused by the loss of the horses, was a serious matter, whilst the hostility of the natives was very annoying, keeping the party constantly on the alert. The interval was occupied in patching up the ration tent, with portions of the other two, so that they had now one water-proof to protect their stores. Some good snipe and duck shooting might have been got round these lagoons, but as nearly all their caps had been destroyed by the fire, it was not to be thought of. The scarcity of these and of horse-flesh alone prevented the Brothers from turning out and giving their troublesome enemies a good drilling, which, indeed, they richly deserved, for they had in every case been the aggressors, and hung about the party, treacherously waiting for an opportunity to take them by surprise. The detention also was due to them, which was a matter of some anxiety to the Leader, when it is considered that the party was in a level flooded country, without a rise that they knew of within fifty miles, and that the rains of the last ten days portended the breaking up the dry season.

'November' 24.—This morning Frank Jardine went out with Eulah, and succeeded in finding 5 more of the horses, scattered all over the country, their hobbles broken, and as wild as hawks. He sent Eulah along the tracks of the last two, who were evidently not far ahead, and brought the others in himself. These two "Cerebus" and "Creamy," were the best and fattest of the pack-horses. Their loss would have made a serious addition to the loads of the remainder, who had already to share 400lbs. Extra in consequence of the poisoning of the three already lost. Whilst waiting for and expecting their arrival every hour, the different members of the party amused themselves as best they might by fishing, opossum, sugar-bag hunting, and nonda gathering. The monotony of the camp was also broken by a little grumbling, consequent on an order from the Leader against the opening of the next week's ration bag. The party had, during the halt consumed a week's rations a day and a-half too soon, hence the order, which was a wise precaution. The rations were calculated with care to last through the journey, but, unless a restriction had been placed on the consumption, this could not be hoped for. But it is difficult to reason with hungry men.

Page 33

'November' 25.—Another day passed without finding the two missing horses. Sambo and Eulah were sent out in quest of them, but returned unsuccessful, giving it, as their opinion that "blackfella bin 'perim 'longa 'crub." Peter and Barney were then despatched with orders to camp out that night and look for them all next day. A steer having been killed last night, the day was passed in jerking him. The day was very unpropitious as there had been a shower of rain in the morning, and there was no sun, so it had to be smoked with manure in one of the tents. What with the mosquitoes and sand-flies, men, horses, and cattle were kept in a continual fever. The horses would not leave the smoke of the fires, the cattle would not remain on the camp, and the men could get no rest at night for the mosquitoes, whilst during the day the flies were in myriads, and a small species of gad-fly, particularly savage and troublesome. Another source of annoyance was from the flocks of crows and kites, the latter ('*Milvus Affinis*') are described by Leichhardt as being extraordinarily audacious, during his journey through this part of the country, and they certainly manifested their reputation now. Not content with the offal about the camp, they would actually, unless sharply watched, take the meat that was cooking on the fire. The black-boys killed a great many with "paddimelon" sticks, and reed spears, (the spoils of war) but with little effect. "When one was killed, twenty came to the funeral." Old Eulah was a great proficient in this exercise, and when in action with his countrymen, was always anxious to throw their own spears back at them.

'November' 26.—One of the party went to sleep during his watch last night, by which fifteen head of cattle were allowed to stray away from the camp. It was not the first time that this very grave fault had occurred, the mischief caused by which, can sometimes, hardly be estimated. In this case, however, it verified the proverb, it is an ill wind, *etc.*, for whilst looking for the stragglers Frank Jardine luckily "happened" on the missing horses "Cerebus" and "Creamy" about 7 miles down the river. They had evidently been frightened by the blacks. Seven of the cattle only were found, leaving eight missing which was very provoking as it was necessary to shift the camp (on which they had now been detained six days) for all the stock were looking miserable. Neither horses nor cattle would eat the grass, which had ceased to have a trace of green in it, but rambled about looking for burnt stubble. The day was close and sultry with loud thunder and bright lightning, which very much frightened the horses. The natives were heard cooeing all round the camp during the night, but made no attack, remembering probably the result of the Sunday and Tuesday previous.

Page 34

'November' 27—Everything was ready to pack on the horses before daylight this morning, but most provokingly "Cerebus" was again missing. Leaving orders for the party to start if he was not recovered before noon, the Leader pushed on to mark a camp for them. At about three miles he came on to a chain of fine lagoons, running parallel to and about four miles from the river. The intervening country was one tea-tree level all flooded, but a narrow strip of soft sandy flat occurred on the banks of each, timbered with blood-wood, stringy-bark, and box. Following these down he marked a camp at about nine miles, then crossed over to the river to look for the cattle. He had not followed it far when he saw a mob of blacks. They did not molest him, so he passed them quietly, as he thought, but about two miles further on, in some scrubby sandstone gullies, as he was riding along looking for tracks, a spear whistled past, within six inches of his face. Pulling up, he saw seven natives, all standing quietly looking on at the effect of the missile: the fellow who threw it never threw another. Pursuing his way, pondering on the fatality that had brought about collisions on two Sundays running, he met the cattle, and found the party in some excitement; they too had had a shindy. The natives had attacked them in force, but no one was hurt, whilst some of their assailants were left on the ground, and others carried away wounded. It was found that they would not stand after the first charge—and a few were hit. (Camp XXIX.) Distance 9 miles. Course W. by N.

'November' 28.—All hopes of finding the eight missing head of cattle, lost from camp 28, had to be abandoned, for the reason that the horse-flesh could not hold out in looking for them. The cattle were moved down along the lagoons, which in about two miles narrowed into a defined creek, sandy, with occasional lagoons. This was explored ten miles by the Leader, and the question as to whether he should choose that route, or follow the river was decided for him. The banks were either utterly barren or clothed with spinifex, and the country on either side the same worthless tea-tree levels. He was therefore determined to take the cattle back on to the river, which was not much better, and led them away from their course. The prospects of the Brothers were rather dispiriting. To attempt striking north was out of the question, whilst every mile down the river took them further away from their destination, and their horses were falling away daily, so much so, that if the feed did not soon improve, there would not be one capable of carrying an empty saddle. The rainy season too was at hand, and the level and flooded nature of the country they were in, would, were they caught there by the floods, endanger the safety of the party. It was therefore with no little anxiety that they watched the weather, and searched for a practicable line which would allow of their steering north. (Camp XXX.) Latitude 16 degrees 26 minutes 53 seconds. Distance 10 miles, W. by N.

Page 35

'November' 29.—Keeping a south-west course, so as to strike it lower down, the cattle were again taken on to the river, which they reached in about nine miles; then travelling about another mile down its banks, encamped. These were now decidedly more open, and the country generally improved. The same strip of soft sandy flat about half-a-mile wide continued, but better grassed, although the spear grass was far too common. Bloodwood, stringy-bark, applegum and acacia timbered the north bank; whilst on the south, tea-tree flats, covered with spinifex, ran close down to the bed, the bank itself being of red clay. Two channels, together making a width of about 300 yards, formed the bed, which was sandy, and held very little water on the surface. No large trees occurred, save now and then a vagrant nonda. Another cow was lost to-day, and "Lottie," a favorite terrier, was missing. The latitude of Camp 31 was supposed to be 16 degrees 31 minutes 53 seconds, but doubtful.

'November' 30.—The river was followed down to-day for 11 miles. It was very winding and irregular in its width. At the camp it was only 60 yards wide and running in one channel, whilst a mile above, it measured nearly 400. Its general course was nearly west. The creek which is formed by the lagoons, on which the party were so long detained was crossed at about nine-and-a-half miles. The country at its junction is flooded for a long distance back, and the river bed sandy and thickly timbered. Although the country generally had decidedly improved, inasmuch as that it was more open, devoid of scrub, and the box flats on the river extending further back on each side, it was by no means good. The flats were very scantily grassed, chiefly with sour water grasses and spinifex, and shewed by the flood marks that they must be quite impassable during floods or wet weather. The dreary tea-tree levels might be seen in glimpses through the white box of the flats extending far beyond. Several small swamps were passed during the day, on which ducks and other water-fowl were very numerous, the stately native companion stalking near the margins. The large funnel ant-hills occurred from 2 to 15 feet high. The Fitzroy wallaby was plentiful, and the Leader shot an emeu. Some large flights of white ibis, and slate-colored pigeons passed high overhead, flying north, which might be a good indication. Peter was sent back to seek for Lottie, but returned in the evening unsuccessful.

'December' 1.—Maramie Creek was crossed this morning at its junction with the river, into which it flows in two channels, about 60 or 70 miles from the point where the brothers first struck it on the 12th of November, while searching for a road to the northward. Its total width is about 120 yards. The general course of the river was slightly to the north of west, but very winding, some of its reaches extended for nearly four miles. Numerous ana-branches occurred, the flats

Page 36

separating them, being three miles in breadth, timbered with flooded box and tea-tree, their banks well grassed. It would be a dangerous country to be caught in by the floods. Two parties of blacks were passed fishing on the river, but they took no notice of the party, and were of course not interfered with. They used reed spears pointed with four jagged prongs, and also hooks and lines. Their hooks are made with wood barbed with bone, and the lines of twisted currejong bark. Distance travelled to-day 10 miles. The Camp XXXIII. in latitude 16 degrees 27 minutes 30 seconds.

'December' 2.—The river was travelled down through similar country for eleven miles, when the party reached the head of the tide, and camped on a rocky water hole in an ana-branch, the river water not being drinkable. The course was to the southward of west. It was now beyond a doubt, even to Mr. Richardson, that this river was not the Mitchell, for neither its latitude, direction, or description corresponded with Leichhardt's account. It was also perceived that the longitude of the starting point must have been incorrect, and very considerably to the westward, as their reckoning, carefully checked, brought them much too near the coast. The Brothers therefore became satisfied of what they had long believed, that they had never been on the Lynd at all, or even on its watershed, and that what they were on was an independent stream. They therefore named it the "Ferguson," in honor of Sir George Ferguson Bowen, Governor of Queensland, but there is little doubt that it is the Staaten of the Dutch navigators, or at least its southern branch. Should a northern branch eventually be discovered, which the delta and numerous ana-branches make a probable hypothesis, the stream explored by the brothers might with propriety retain the name they gave it. At eight miles from the start the character of the country changed from the prevailing flats, to a kind of barren sandstone and spenifex ridges. On pitching the camp the fishing-lines were put into requisition, but without success. It is remarkable, that on reaching the salt water, not far from this spot, Leichhardt was similarly disappointed, after having counted on catching and curing a good quantity of fish, the whole day's work of Brown and Murphy being "a small siluus, one mullet, and some guard-fish," 'qu.' gar-fish.

'December' 3.—To-day's stage was a short one, and was hoped to have been the last on this miserable river, which was now looked upon as undoubtedly the Staaten. It had in some measure improved. The timber was much larger and finer, and the lagoons extensive and deep. But a heavy storm which came down, and compelled them to camp early, soon proved what the country would be in the wet season. With this one heavy fall of rain it became so boggy that the horses sank in up to their girths. Hitherto the grass had been so scanty that the party could not halt for a day to kill. They had consequently been four days

Page 37

without meat. It was determined, therefore, to stop and kill a beast, preparatory to a start north, the feed having slightly improved in common with the timber. In addition to the steer that was slaughtered, a shovel-nosed shark was caught and jerked in like manner with the beef. In the afternoon Alexander Jardine explored down the river for seven miles, seeking for a good spot for turning off. The country still improved: the river was completely salt, and in one continuous sheet of running water, in two channels 300 or 400 yards in width, and together about half-a-mile at the spot where he turned back. Here it was flat and shallow, and fordable at low water. Mangroves and salt-water creeks commenced as described by Leichhardt,* and alligator tracks were seen. (Camp XXXV.) Latitude 16 degrees 26 minutes 39 seconds.

[footnote] See *Journal*, page 320. *It was at this point that he threw away his horse-shoes and other heavy articles.*

'December' 4.—The beef, shark, and a few cat-fish were jerked, and all the stores and loading spread out and re-distributed on the packs, and as this put the camp into some confusion, the Leader thought it well to shift it for a few miles, to let the packs shake into place before the final start. They therefore moved down three miles to the commencement of the mangroves, into a patch of the best feed they had seen since they left the Einasleih. At this point the banks were very soft and sandy, growing spinifex; the stream in numerous channels, altogether half-a-mile across, and the tide rose and fell about twenty-two inches. Here they camped, intending to make an early start on the following morning. Time was now an object of the utmost importance to the progress, if not to the safety of the party: Frank Jardine was aware that the Mitchell, which he had hoped long ere this to have left behind him, was still ahead, at least 40 miles away, without certainty of water until it was reached, whilst if caught by the floods he would probably be stopped by this important stream. It was with some anxiety therefore that he hastened preparations for the start. How his hopes were deferred and how fortune seemed to laugh at his endeavours to push forward on his course will now be narrated, and it will be seen how good bushmen with high hearts can overcome obstacles, and meet difficulties that would appal and baffle ordinary travellers.

CHAPTER III.

Leave the Staaten—Half the horses away—Fresh troubles—Mule Lost—Sambo knocked up—Search for mule—Perplexity—"Lucifer" goes mad—Final attempt to recover him—Marine Plains—Search for Deceiver—Found dead—Salt Lagoon—Arbor Creek—Country improves—Good Camp—Eulah Creek—The Brothers attacked—Reach the Mitchell—Cow poisoned—Battle of the Mitchell—An ambush—Extent of flooded Country—Reach head of tide—Heavy rain—A "Blank run"—Leave the Mitchell—Good Coast Country—Balourgah Creek—Blue grass—Banksia—The Eugenia—



Green Ant —Hearsey Creek—Holroyd—Creek Dunsmuir Creek—Thalia Creek —Black boy chased by natives—Another encounter—Cattle scattered by thunder-storm—Rainy Season—Macleod Creek— Kendall Creek.

Page 38

'December' 5.—Turning their backs on the Ferguson or Staaten the party steered north, and at starting crossed the head of the sand-flats, described by Leichhardt. The rest of the day's stage was over sandy ridges covered with tea-tree and pandanus, tolerably grassed, no creek or water-course of any description occurred along the line, and the party had to camp without water at about 13 miles: but as the Leader had not expected to find any at all for at least 40, this was not thought much of. The camp though waterless was well grassed, and by dint of searching a small pool of slimy green water was found before dark, about two-and-a-half miles to the N.N.W. in a small watercourse, and by starting off the black boys, enough was procured in the "billies" for the use of the party for supper. This is marked a red day in Frank Jardine's diary, who closes his notes with this entry. "Distance 13 miles. Course North at last." (Camp XXXVII.)

'December' 6.—The satisfaction of the party in getting away from the Staaten and travelling on the right course was destined to receive a check, and the Brothers to find they had not yet quite done with that river. This morning about half the horses were away, and a worse place for finding them, saving scrub, could hardly be imagined. It was fortunate that the pool of water mentioned yesterday had been found, as the cattle would have had to turn back to the river, but this they were saved from. They were started away for the water at day-break, in charge of two of the black boys, with instructions to stay and feed them there until the horses came up or they were relieved by Binney. No horses coming in, Binney was sent after them. The Brothers searching for the horses, followed an hour-and-a-half after, but on arriving at the pool found the cattle and boys but no Binney. Returning to the camp they instructed the party to shift the packs to the pool on the twelve horses that had been found. Binney here came into the camp along the yesterday's tracks. He had missed the cattle and did not know where he had been to. He was started again on the cattle track by the Brothers, who then went in search of more water, sending two more black boys to look for the horses. At about four miles away they themselves came on to their tracks, which they ran for about eight miles towards the coast, when they found six. Continuing to follow the trail they were led to their 35th camp on the Staaten, when they found three more. Here, as the sun went down they were obliged to camp, and after short hobbling the horses laid down by their fire, supperless, and without blankets. They saw no water through the whole of the day, which was the cause of the restlessness of the horses the previous night, and of their straying, in spite of short hobbles. The myriads of mosquitoes too, which now annoyed them may possibly have contributed to that end.

Page 39

'December' 7.—Leaving the nine horses hobbled to feed near the water the Brothers separated, one taking up and the other down the river to look for the others, in hopes that they might also have turned back, but met again in the afternoon, each without success. Starting back (with the nine recovered yesterday) at about two o'clock, they returned to the camp, where fresh troubles awaited them. Only two of the others had been found, and the party with the pack-horses had succeeded in losing the mule, together with his pack. Whilst preparing to start they had allowed him to poke away unperceived in the scrubby timber, and did not miss him till ready to start. Sambo had been at once despatched on his tracks but had not yet returned. Binney had lost himself a second time and only rejoined the camp at dark last night, after having ridden the whole day, probably in a circle, without finding either horses or water. The two black boys had been equally unsuccessful. Eulah and Barney were now despatched with orders to camp out until they found the missing horses, five of which, besides the mule, still were away. In the evening Sambo returned quite exhausted for want of water, not having seen or tasted any, or any food during the too days of his absence. For an hour after coming into camp he was quite delirious. When sufficiently recovered and collected to speak he stated that he had followed the tracks of the mule (who had evidently been galloping) through the tea-tree levels, at the back of camp 35, when he was obliged to turn back for want of water. This accident, the result of gross carelessness, together with frequent cases of less importance, induced in the Leader a want of confidence which caused him great anxiety when away from the party, to which indeed he never returned without a feeling of disquietude, which was not allayed until he learned that all was well—a harassing feeling, which few but those who have experienced the responsibility of the conduct and success of a similar expedition can fully appreciate. The water at this camp was very bad, but still under the circumstances, a great God-send. There were two holes equi-distant half-a-mile from the one they were on, up and down the creek. The upper one was the deepest, having many ducks, terns, and cranes on it. All three were surrounded with a fringe of green rushes. By digging wells and allowing the water to drain in, it was drinkable, although very brackish. (Camp XXXVIII.) Latitude 16 degrees 13 minutes 45 seconds.

'December' 8.—At 4 o'clock this morning Alexander Jardine started with Sambo after the mule. The Leader remained with the party employing the day in exploring ahead for about 18 miles, in the hope of finding water for a stage. This was a paramount necessity, for the weather was so hot and the country so dry that twenty-four hours without drinking drove the cattle nearly mad, their drivers suffering almost equally. Finding no

Page 40

water during this search Mr. Jardine was again in perplexity. Supposing the Mitchell to be 40 or 45 miles ahead, the cattle could not reach it without water. On the other hand if the coast were followed, it was probable that on reaching the Mitchell they would have to trace it up 40 or 50 miles before it could be crossed. The latter however seemed to be the best course, if not the only one. The intention of Alexander Jardine was to have got on to the mule's tracks, and run them over again until he "pulled" him, but the ground being baked hard, stony, and grassless Sambo was unable again to pick them up. However, whilst looking for the mule's tracks they found three more of the horses, on a small creek, fourteen miles from the camp, which ran into the river below the last camp on it. He now determined to look for the other two, and abandon the search after the mule for the present. One of them "Lucifer" was found at camp 35. He was out of hobbles, and immediately on being seen, started off at a gallop up the river. His tracks were followed up to the next camp, six miles, where night closing in Mr. Jardine was constrained to halt. The wretched animal had apparently gone mad, probably with drinking salt water.

'December' 9.—On resuming the search this morning Mr. A. Jardine met Eulah and Barney. They also, had seen "Lucifer" on the coast, but could do nothing with him. Detaching Sambo and Barney to continue the search after the mule, and giving them all the provision, he took Eulah with him to try once again to recover "Lucifer." Picking up his trail at last night's camp, where they left the three recovered horses, they ran it four miles up the river and came upon him in a patch of scrub; they headed him after a hard gallop and endeavoured to drive him down to the other horses, but all to no purpose, they knocked up their horses and were obliged to abandon the pursuit. He had evidently gone mad. Returning to the camp they got fresh horses, and returned with the three to the party of the main camp.

'December' 10.—The two lost horses ("Lucifer" and "Deceiver") being Mr. Jardine's best hacks and favourites, he determined to make one more effort to recover them. Starting with Eulah this morning, he travelled down the creek on which the cattle were camped for six miles west, when he reached some large marine plains and downs, so large, that though they ascended a high tree they could see nothing between them and the horizon; they were grassed only with spinifex "and other rubbish." They came on to Lucifer's tracks about 25 miles from the camp, and found the place where he had been drinking the salt water and lying down. From thence they followed his tracks for 15 miles through the tea-tree levels, and camped without water, after having travelled, walking and riding, over between 40 or 50 miles of the most miserable and desolate country imaginable, without finding any fit to drink. Meanwhile Alexander Jardine took another cast to find water and have a look at the coast. He also saw the Marine Plains, and found them utterly waterless. This decided the question of the coast-line route.

Page 41

'December' 11.—At daylight Mr. Jardine and Eulah again got on to Lucifer's tracks, but the ground was so hard that they had to run them on foot and lead their horses. At sundown they hit camp 33 on the river, having made only about 20 miles in a straight line. Here they had a good drink. The water was rather brackish, but after two days travelling over a parched and arid country, almost anything would have been acceptable. They turned out and whilst trying to catch something for their suppers, they saw Lucifer standing within thirty yards of where their horses were feeding, but the moment he caught sight of them he again galloped away. Mr. Jardine immediately jumped on his horse and brought him back to Eulah's, but to no purpose, for he galloped past without taking the least notice of him, and as it was now dark they had to let him go. Alexander Jardine spent the day in searching for water, and was fortunate enough to hit on a permanent water hole, in a small creek, eight miles N.N.W. from the camp. This discovery was like a ray of sunshine promising to help them on their way. At night Sambo and Barney returned, but without the mule.

'December' 12.—Lucifer was again followed till mid-day. From the time that he had left their camp last night he had galloped for 13 miles without stopping, and when found he was quite white with sweat. It was quite evident that he was perfectly mad from the effects of the salt water, so that Mr. Jardine decided to abandon him without wasting more horse-flesh. He turned therefore to look for the other horse "Deceiver," expecting to find him in the same state. His tracks being found shortly afterwards, they followed them for some distance, when they came on to his dead carcass. The poor brute had evidently died from want of water; the Leader therefore turned homewards, hoping, but little expecting to find that the mule had been found. These losses were a heavy blow, and sadly crippled the party. Lucifer and Deceiver were the two best riding horses, and the mule the best pack animal. His own loss was aggravated by his carrying his pack with him. This carried most of the odd articles that were hitherto deemed indispensable, but which henceforth they had per force to dispense with. One pack contained all that remained of the tea, currants, and raisins, which were saved from the fire, and two pairs of boots, the only ones the Brothers had; and the other was filled with oddments, such as files, gimlets, ragstone, steel, weighing machine, awls, tomahawks, American axes, shoeing tools, and a number of things "that they could not do without," but perhaps the most important loss was that of the spade, to which they had many times been indebted for water. Up to this time, that is to the 37th camp, the number of the camp had always been cut in the wood of a tree at each, with a mallet and chissel, these having gone with the mule's pack the numbers were from this point cut with a tomahawk, but as Mr. Jardine was

Page 42

expert and careful in its use it is probable that his marks are but little less legible. The recovery of the mule being now past all hope the Brothers determined to push on, thankful that they were certain of water for one stage. It was the more necessary, as two of the party, Scrutton and Cowderoy, were getting ill from the effects of the bad water. At this camp Mr. Richardson fixed the variation at 40 east. He had hitherto used a variation of 6 degrees in his plotting.

'December' 13.—The Leader intended to have camped to-day on the creek, found by his brother on the 11th, but whilst ahead looking for a good camp for the morrow, he came at five miles further on, to what he took to be the "Rocky Creek" of Leichhardt. He turned back therefore and fetched the cattle on to it, making 13 instead of 8 miles. But on turning out it was found that the water was not drinkable, although the lagoon was covered with nymphaeas, generally supposed to grow only in fresh water. These were white instead of blue, which might be from the effect of the salt. However at a mile up the creek, a fine reach of good water was found, two miles long and sixty yards wide. The bed of the creek contained sandstone rock, was well grassed, and where crossed, ran about east and north. A fine barramundi was caught in it, and Alexander Jardine shot six whistling ducks in the first creek. The country traversed to-day alternated between extensive marine plains, covered with "pigs face," ('*Misembrianthemum Iriangularis*'), and crusted with salt, and low undulating tea-tree, and banksia ridges. Birds were very plentiful, large flocks of native companions ('*Gurus Antigen*,') stalked over the marine plains, and when seen at the distance had the appearance of a flock of sheep, gigantic cranes, pelicans, and ibis were numerous, whilst in the lagoons of the creek, nearly every kind of water-fowl common to Queensland, was found, except the coot and pigmy goose, plover and snipe were abundant, also the elegant Burdekin duck, and a small crane was noticed having a dark blue head and body, with white throat and neck. (Camp XXXIX.) Lat. 16 degrees 3 minutes 38 seconds. A tree was marked F. J. in heart on one side, and 39 in square on the other.

'December' 14.—To-day the party started north-east, the Leader wishing, if possible, to hit the Mitchell at the head of the tide. Water was carried in case these should not find any, but the precaution was fortunately unnecessary. At five miles they crossed a small creek from the eastward, having one small hole of water in it. The country to that point was similar to that of yesterday, thence outward for about 9 miles they traversed box flats, intersected with low sandy rises, well grassed, and timbered with stringy-bark and acacia. Another watered creek was crossed at about 9 miles from the start, and the camp pitched at a round waterhole, in a well-watered creek at 14 miles. Many gullies were crossed filled with the screw-palm ('*Pandanus Spirilas*.') The soil of the box flats was a stiff yellow clay. Hot winds had been prevalent for the last week from the south-east, which parched and baked everything and made the mosquitoes very numerous and annoying. (Camp XL.) Latitude 15 degrees 56 minutes 31 seconds.

Page 43

'December' 15.—The grass was so coarse and dry at this camp, that the precaution was taken of watching the horses all last night, and the party started this morning by moonlight. For 5 miles they travelled over box and tea-tree flats, full of funnel ant-hills, melon and rat-holes, when they reached a narrow deep sandy creek, the course of which was defined by a line of dark green timber, presenting a strong and pleasing contrast with any previously crossed along the "Levels," where they could never be distinguished from a distance, being fringed with the same kind of timber. It came from the eastward, was tolerably watered, and presented some bad broken sandstone country on its north bank. Its shady appearance suggested the appropriate name of "Arbor Creek." For three miles the route lay over gullies, spurs, and walls of broken sandstone. The country beyond opened agreeably into flats, which might almost be called plains, but for the lightly-dotted timber. The grasses though dry, were finer and better than any seen, since leaving the Einnasleih. The timber generally was white box, applegum, bloodwood, and grevillea, and at 11 miles (from camp) the bauhinia, and Bidwill's acacia commenced, and continued to the 42nd Camp. The flats towards the end of the stage sloped to the north-east. At 19 miles the party having accomplished a long stage, Mr. Jardine camped without water, sending old Eulah to try and find some. He soon returned with the welcome news that there was a well-watered creek on a-head, so saddling up again, they drove on and reached it in about three miles. It was well worth the extra fatigue to the stock. They were rewarded by an excellent camp, plenty of green grass, open country and water, which, after a drive of 23 long and dusty miles, was alike acceptable to men and beasts. The creek received the name of Eulah Creek, in honor of the discoverer. (Camp XLI.)

'December' 16.—Between two and three miles of travelling over flooded box country, having large melon holes in it, brought the party to a well-watered creek, with vine scrub banks running N. W. At three more, another and similar one was reached, where the scrubs on the banks were so thick that the Brothers who were a-head had to camp, to cut a road through them. This creek appeared to be an ana-branch. Whilst they were engaged in marking a line for a crossing place for the cattle, they saw some blacks, and tried to avoid them, these however ran in the direction of the cattle, and brandishing their spears laughingly, defied the horsemen, beckoning them to come on. With this they complied, and turned them back over the creek, and then sat down awaiting the arrival of the cattle. They were not allowed to remain long in peace, for the natives, having left their gins on the other side, swam over the creek and tried to surround them. Being thus forced into a "row," the Brothers determined to let them have it, only regretting that some of the party

Page 44

were not with them, so as to make the lesson a more severe one. The assailants spread out in a circle to try and surround them, but seeing eight or nine of their companions drop, made them think better of it, and they were finally hunted back again across the river, leaving their friends behind them. The firing was heard by the cattle party, but before they could come up, the fray was over. In this case, as in all others, the collision was forced on the explorers, who, as a rule, always avoided making use of their superior arms. Leaving the cattle in camp, the Brothers spend the afternoon in exploring the country a-head for 7 miles. After crossing the river, the course lay through flooded country (the marks on the trees being in some cases five feet high, covered with box, and vine scrub, and the water, grasses, and rushes being matted together with mud and rubbish,) to a large stream with broad sandy bed, divided into three channels, altogether about 600 yards wide, but with little water in them. The banks and islands were covered with vine scrub, and lined with plum ('Owenia,') chestnut ('Castanopermum,') nonda, bauhinia, acacia, white cedar, the corypha or (fan-leaved palm,) flooded gum, melaleuca (drooping tea-tree,) and many creepers and shrubs. On the box flats travelled through, some gunyahs, dams, and weirs were noticed, all constructed of matted vines and palm leaves, which last grow almost everywhere. One of the largest of the palms measured 13 1/2 feet at the butt, which is the smallest end, as they here assume the shape of the bottle tree. This stream was correctly surmised to be the long desired Mitchell, the two last creeks being only its ana-branches. Although 10 miles higher up in latitude 15 degrees 51 minutes 56 seconds it is described by Leichhardt as being 1 1/2 miles wide. It here measured as before described only about 600 yards. A number of fish were caught at the camp. (Camp XLII.) Distance 6 miles.

'December' 17.—After some little trouble the cattle were crossed over this branch, a road having to be cut for them through the scrub. At 5 miles they crossed another main branch about 450 yards wide, and camped two miles on the other side of it, on a waterhole in a Leichhardt-tree flat ('Nauclea Leichhardtii.') The country was the same as described yesterday. One of the fattest of the cows died from the effects of some poisonous herb, not detected. Some turkey's eggs were found, and a wallaby, with which the vine scrubs were swarming, was shot. The Torres Straits pigeon ('Carpophaga Luctuosa,') was here met with for the first time on the trip, and attracted the interest and admiration of the travellers. It is a handsome bird, about the size of a wonga, the head and body pure white, the primaries of the wings and edge of the tail feathers black, and the vent feathers and under tail coverts tinged with a delicate salmon color. Distance 7 or 8 miles. Course N.N.E. (Camp XLIII.)

Page 45

'December' 18.—The river was followed down to-day for 9 miles through a complete net-work of ana-branches, gullies, and vine scrubs to another branch, which may be called the true stream. It was 30 yards wide, deep, and running strongly. Here the party had to camp for about 3 hours, whilst the Brothers searched for a good crossing. The cattle and pack-horses were crossed in safety, but some of the pack-bags got wetted in the passage. They were travelled another mile over to a sandstone bar, crossing another deep sheet of water, that had been previously found. This stream had been explored in search of a ford for four miles further up but without success. It continued of the same width and appeared to do so much further. This day, Sunday, was marked by the severest conflict the travellers had yet had with the natives, one which may well be dignified by the name of the "battle of the Mitchell." On arriving at the running stream before mentioned, whilst the cattle halted, the Brothers and Eulah, taking axes with them, to clear the scrub, went down to find a safe crossing. At about a mile-and-a-half they came on to a number of blacks fishing, these immediately crossed to the other side, but on their return, swam across again in numbers, armed with large bundles of spears and some nullahs and met them. The horsemen seeing they were in for another row, now cantered forward towards the camp, determined this time to give their assailants a severe lesson. This was interpreted into a flight by the savages, who set up a yell, and re-doubled their pursuit, sending in their spears thick and fast. These now coming much too close to be pleasant (for some of them were thrown a hundred yards), the three turned suddenly on their pursuers, and galloping up to them, poured in a volley, the report of which brought down their companions from the camp, when the skirmish became general. The natives at first stood up courageously, but either by accident or through fear, despair or stupidity, they got huddled in a heap, in, and at the margin of the water, when ten carbines poured volley after volley into them from all directions, killing and wounding with every shot with very little return, nearly all of their spears having been expended in the pursuit of the horsemen. About thirty being killed, the Leader thought it prudent to hold his hand, and let the rest escape. Many more must have been wounded and probably drowned, for fifty nine rounds were counted as discharged. On the return of the party to the cattle an incident occurred which nearly cost one of them his life. One of the routed natives, probably burning with revengeful and impotent hate, got into the water under the river bank, and waited for the returning party, and as they passed threw a spear at Scrutton, before any one was aware of his proximity. The audacious savage had much better have left it alone, for he paid for his temerity with his life. Although the travellers

Page 46

came off providentially without hurt, there were many narrow escapes, for which some of them might thank their good fortune. At the commencement of the fight as Alexander Jardine was levelling his carbine, a spear struck the ground between his feet, causing him to drop his muzzle, and lodge the bullet in the ground a few yards in front of him. His next shot told more successfully. There were other equally close shaves, but providentially not a scratch. This is one of the few instances in which the savages of Queensland have been known to stand up in fight with white men, and on this occasion they shewed no sign of surprise or fear at the report and effect of fire-arms. But it is probable that they will long remember the "Battle of the Mitchell." (Camp LXIV.) Course N.N.W. Distance 7 miles.

'December' 19.—The horses had to be watched last night, for the grass was so dry and course that the stock would not look at it, but kept rambling about. The river was followed down about 13 miles. The whole country travelled to-day and yesterday shewed flood marks from 5 to 15 feet high. The rushes, nardoo, thatch, and water-grass, dried and parched by the hot winds, were matted together with mud and rubbish. At the camp the stream was 150 yards wide, the running water being 30 yards across. The banks were of clay and sandstone, from 20 to 30 feet high, the water was discolored to a kind of yellowish white. During the floods the stream must be eight or ten miles wide, for, two miles back from it, a fish weir was seen in a small gully.

Altogether it would have been a frightful place for the party to have been detained at. (Camp XLV.) Latitude 15 degrees 26 minutes 5 seconds.

'December' 20.—The river was still followed down to-day, the party keeping about four miles from it, to avoid its scrubs and ana-branches. At between 7 or 8 miles, a stream about 100 yards wide, coming from the eastward, caused them to halt until a road was cut through the thick vine scrub that fringed its banks. Four miles further on they camped at a small lagoon close to the bank of the river, at which point it is about 100 yards wide, deep, and too salt for drinking, being affected by the tide. The country travelled over was box, and tea-tree, melon-hole flats, shewing very high flood marks. The ground had become very boggy from a heavy rain that fell during the day. The night was very stormy, rain and wind falling and blowing pretty equally. Two more head of cattle were dropped. The total distance was 11 miles. Course W.N.W. (Camp XLVI.)

'December' 21.—The rain of last night continuing through the morning, the party had to start in the down-pour. They crossed another large shallow sandy creek at four miles, coming from the eastward running south-east. The camp was formed on a lagoon about a mile from the river bank. The country traversed was sandy, growing only coarse wirey grasses and spinifex, sandstone rock

Page 47

cropping out occasionally above the surface. The river was here a quarter-of-a-mile wide, salt, and running strongly. Before the pack-horses came up, a mob of blacks approached the camp, and getting up in the trees, took a good survey of the white intruders, but on one of the party going towards them they scampered off over the open ground towards the river. The recollection of the affair at the crossing place probably quickening their movements. Just at sun-down, however, the sharp eyes of the black-boys detected some of them actually trying to stalk the whites, using green boughs for screens. So the Brothers taking with them Scrutton and the four black-boys, started in chase. They were in camp costume, that is to say, shirt and belt, and all in excellent condition and wind, and now a hunt commenced, which perhaps stands alone in the annals of nature warfare. On being detected the natives again decamped, but this time closely pursued. The party could at any time overtake or outstep the fugitives, but they contented themselves with pressing steadily on them, in open order, without firing a shot, occasionally making a spurt, which had the effect of causing the blacks to drop nearly all their spears. They fairly hunted them for two miles into the scrub, when, as darkness was coming on, they left their dingy assailants to recover their wind, and returned to camp laughing heartily at their "blank run," and taking with them as many of the abandoned spears as they could carry. (Camp XLVII.) Distance 9 1/2 miles. Course W.N.W.

'December' 22.—The Mitchell was left finally to-day, Mr. Jardine determining on beginning the "straight running" for Cape York. The first 8 miles was to a broad rocky creek, over tea-tree and box flats, and small plains, fairly grassed, the best coast country that had been seen. The creek appeared to be permanent, although there was no water where it was crossed. From thence to camp, 7 miles, was over saline plains, intersected by belts of bloodwood, tea-tree, mangrove, nuptle, grevillea, dogwood, applegum, silky oak, and pandanus. A second creek was crossed at 11 miles, similar to the first. The camp was pitched at a puddle, without a blade of grass, although its appearance was beautifully green, caused by a small sort of tea-tree growing in great abundance, about 10 inches high, with seven or eight large leaves on it. A steer was killed in the evening, giving the party a very acceptable meal of meat, the first they had tasted for three days, the weather being too hot to kill, and there being no game to shoot. Course N. by W. Distance 15 miles. (Camp XLVIII.) Latitude 15 degrees 2 minutes 10 seconds.

Page 48

'December' 23.—All hands were up almost the whole of last night, some engaged in watching the cattle and horses, and others in cutting up and jerking the beast. The rain came down heavily, and a cold bitter wind was blowing; all the tents, save the ration tent, being like sieves, the outside was rather preferable to their shelter; so each passed the night as best they could. The cattle were started away in the morning, leaving Scrutton and Binney to finish jerking the meat, there being some sunshine, which was beginning to be a rarity, for the wet season had now fairly set in. Twelve miles of wretched country were traversed, white sandy undulating ground, clothed with shrubs and underwood, in the place of grass, and the camp pitched on a low stringy-bark ridge, without water, for in this flat sandy country the ground absorbs the rain as soon as it falls. The horses had to be watched again to-night, for there was not a blade of grass to be got. A small quantity of water was found in a creek about a mile-and-a-half ahead. Late in the evening the horses and water-bags were taken to it, and sufficient water brought back for the use of the camp. Two small unimportant creeks were crossed to-day, sandy and dry, trending west. Distance 12 miles N.W. by N. (Camp XLIX.)

'December' 24.—The cattle were watched at a small lagoon beyond the creek before mentioned, which was deep and rocky. The country continued of the same miserable character as yesterday, till at 7 miles, the party came to a belt of bloodwood and stringy-bark, where, by good luck, there was a little coarse grass, but as the stock had had none for two days, they were not particular. (Camp L.) Distance 7 miles. Course N.N.W.

'December' 25.—The rain came down all last night, and continuing throughout the day (for the first time continually), did not suggest a merry Christmas. However the Leader wished his companions the compliments of the season, and pushed on. The country decidedly improved if the weather did not. The tail end of some scrubs were passed in the first five miles, chiefly tea-tree and oak, and half-a-mile further on, a fine creek of sandstone rock, permanently watered; at 7 miles another similar, but larger, was named Christmas Creek. Here whilst Mr. Jardine was halting in wait for the cattle, he marked a tree *Xmas*, 1864, in square. In it the swamp mahogany was seen for the first time since leaving Bowen. Its native name is Belourgah. The creek was therefore christened by that name. At 15 miles the party reached and camped on a fine, well-watered, rocky creek, where the blue grass was plentiful, the first that had been seen for many weeks. The country travelled over was very soft, and though driven loose, three of the horses could scarcely travel over it. The packs also were getting into a very dirty state, consequent on the amount of mud and water they had been dragged through. The timber noticed to-day was very varied, comprising all

Page 49

the kinds that have already been mentioned, with the addition of the banksia, which was observed for the first time, and a kind of pomegranate, which was quite new to the Brothers. The trees grow large with soft white bark, and large round leaves. The fruit as large as an hen's egg, in shape like the common pomegranate. Unripe it is of a transparent white, but when mature, has a dark pink color and slightly acid taste. It is probably the euginia mentioned by Leichhardt. They were much annoyed by the green-tree ant, all the trees and shrubs being covered with them, in riding along they got about their persons, and down their backs, where they stuck like ticks. They are of a transparent green, nearly half-an-inch long, soft, and sticky. On coming to the green feed and good water at the camp, it was felt that this Christmas Day, if not the most cheerful, might have been much worse. (Camp LI.) Distance 13 miles N.N.W.

'December' 26,—The party travelled to-day on a course N.N.W. for about 14 miles over very similar country to that of yesterday, save that they crossed no creek, and saw no water during the whole of the stage. Some of the ground was very scrubby and boggy, and better, though not well grassed, too much spear grass occurring. The camp was pitched on a splendid sheet of water, in a rocky creek, 80 yards wide, and very long, in which some of the party caught some fine fish. Waterfowl of all kinds were also numerous. It received the name of Hearsey Creek, after a particular friend, Mr. W. Hearsey Salmon. The blacks were hanging about, but did not make their appearance. (Camp LII.)

'December' 27.—The course to-day lay over similar country, a little to the west of north, for 16 miles to a small creek, which contained in a puddle, just sufficient water for the use of the party and the horses. The cattle had to go without. (Camp LIII.)

'December' 18.—At five miles from starting this morning, the thirsty cattle were able to get abundance of water in a long sandy creek, running in several channels, and having a rocky sandstone bed. It was named Holroyd Creek. Two miles further on another stream was crossed of similar size and character, which received the name of Dunsmuir Creek. Here the country suddenly changed into lightly timbered box flats, poorly grassed, and flooded. Four miles more brought them to a salt-water creek, which had to be run up a-mile-and-a-half before drinkable water was found. The camp was pitched on a lotus lagoon, the water of which was slightly brackish. It received the name of Thalia Creek. About two hours after camping, whilst the party were engaged in digging trenches round them, and otherwise preparing for an impending thunder-storm, the black-boy that was tailing the cattle, came running into the camp in great excitement, with the news that the natives that had been seen in the morning, had hunted him and were now running the horses, so half the party

Page 50

immediately turned out in pursuit. To protect the carbines from the coming storm, Alexander Jardine and Scrutton arrayed themselves the one in a black and the other a white mackintosh, which reached to their heels, whilst the Leader having a short coat on, a revolver in each pocket, jumped on to the bare-back of one of the horses. This time it was not a "blank run." The horses were scuttling about in all directions, and the natives waited for the whites, close to a mangrove scrub, till they got within sixty yards of them, when they began throwing spears. They were answered with Terry's breech-loaders, but whether fascinated by the strange attire of the three whites, or frightened by the report of the fire-arms, or charge of the horse, they stood for some time unable to fight or run. At last they slowly retired in the scrub, having paid for their gratuitous attack by the loss of some of their companions. Some of them were of very large stature. The storm broke with great violence accompanied with thunder and lightning and scattered the cattle off the camp in spite of the efforts of the party to keep them. The thunder caused them to rush about, whilst darkness caused the watchers to run against them, and add to their fright. So they were let go. (Camp LIV.) Distance 11 or 12 miles north.

'December' 29.—The cattle were all gathered this morning, save 10, for which Frank Jardine left two of the black-boys to seek and then follow the party. To his great annoyance they came on at night without them. The course to-day was N.N.E. over boggy tea-tree flats, and low stringy-bark ridges. At three miles a large running creek, one hundred yards wide, was struck, and had to be followed up for four miles before a crossing was found. Four miles further brought them to a small creek, well supplied with water from the recent rains, and what was even more acceptable, plenty of green feed, of which the cattle and horses stood in great need. The Leader determined to halt here one day, to try and recover the lost cattle, but felt anything but easy in doing so, for the flood-marks were six feet high on the camp, which was high ground compared to the level waste around them, and the rains seemed fairly to have set in. Another heavy storm poured down on them at night. (Camp LV.)

'December' 30.—The cattle remained here to-day, whilst Scrutton and Eulah were sent back for the lost cattle. The Brothers went forward a day's stage to try and find some high ground. In this they did not succeed. The country was all alike, and they were satisfied beyond doubt that it must be one sea during the rains; not a very comforting discovery. They found a creek four miles on, which received the name of Macleod Creek. It was large and deep, with a strong current running, and chose a place at which they would have to cross, between two high banks of red sandstone. They then returned to camp, and spent the rest of the day

Page 51

in “sugar bag” hunting, in which they were very successful, bringing in as much as made a feed for the whole camp, which was no small quantity. Scrutton and Eulah returned at dark, without having seen any traces of the missing cattle, so it was determined to go on without them, as it would have been madness to have remained longer in such dangerous country. At night they experienced a heavy storm, which is thus described in Frank Jardine’s journal:—“We had one of most severe wind and thunder storms this evening that I ever saw. The largest trees bent like whip-sticks, and the din caused by the wind, rain, thunder, and trees falling, beyond description. People looking at it from under a snug roof would have called it ‘grand,’ but we rhymed it with a very different word.” This may be called a “joke under difficulties.”

‘December’ 31.—Macleod Creek was reached by half-past eight o’clock this morning, and cattle, horses, and packs were all safely crossed by 9.15. The journey was then continued over, or rather, through very boggy tea-tree flats, and undulating stringy-bark, nonda, and bloodwood country, to a large flooded creek, coming from the eastward, which received the name of “Kendall Creek,” after a friend of Mr. Richardson’s. There was a little rising ground on its banks, on which the party camped. Frank Jardine went up it for a few miles, and found a spot at which to cross the next day, in the same manner as at the last. At this camp some capital barramundi and perch were caught, one of the former weighing no less than 14 pounds. They were a great treat, as the party had been without meat for some days, the heavy rains allowing them no chance of killing. The distance travelled to-day was 12 miles, and course generally N.N.W., but the track was winding in consequence of having to lead the horses, and thread the way through the soundest looking places. (Camp LVI.)

CHAPTER IV

New Year’s Day—Sinclair Creek—New Year’s Creek—Kinloch Creek — Micketeeboomulgeiai—The River Archer—The Coen—Slough of Despond - River Batavia—Two Horses Drowned—Five Horses Poisoned — Symptoms—Abandon Baggage—Cache—Party commence Walking — Difficult Travelling—Two more Horses Die—Last Encounter with Natives—Pandanus Thorns—Another Horse Sickens—Urgency of Getting Forward—Dalhenty Creek—Another Horse Dies—“Creamy” and “Rocket” Die—Skardon’s Creek—Pitcher Plant—Two Saddles Abandoned—Nell Gwynne’s Foal Killed—Richardson’s Range.

‘January’ 1.—Kendall Creek was crossed early on the morning of this, New Year’s Day, and subsequently at distances of 10 and 14 miles, two small creeks of running water, coming from the eastward, named respectively Sinclair and New Year’s Creeks, in which lilies were abundant (‘Blue Nymphaeas’), and on the last of which the party

camped. The progress was rendered very tedious and difficult, by the large trunks and branches of

Page 52

trees, which had been blown down by the storm of the 30th December, over and amongst which the weak horses kept constantly falling. The country changed into red sandy ridges, shewing an outcrop of sandstone, timbered with tall straight saplings of stringy-bark and bloodwood, the larger timber having in all cases been blown down. Some grass-tree country was also passed, covered with quartz pebbles, white, or colored with oxide of iron. The distance accomplished was 14 miles on a course of N.E. by N. (Camp LVII. Nonda.) A heavy thunder-storm broke at night, followed by steady rain.

'January' 2.—The heavy rain, boggy soil, and recent long stages made it necessary to turn out the cattle during the last night, as the poor animals had so little chance of feeding during the day. They were, however, gathered by the time the horses were ready in the morning, having, probably, but little temptation to stray on the boggy ground. The country traversed was similar to that of yesterday, and very much encumbered with fallen timber. The grasses, though thin, are of the best quality. Altogether the interval between Kendall Creek and to-night's camp, a distance of 30 miles, would make a fine cattle run, being watered at every six or seven miles by running creeks, besides a large swamp. It was found to be an extensive plateau, sloping away to the eastward, terminating abruptly in a perpendicular wall, overlooking the valley, on the head of which the party camped. The camp was one of the best of the whole journey, being pitched on a grassy rise, sloping gently to the eastward, and was a grateful relief after the barren and waterless camps of the journey. The latitude was 13 degrees 47 seconds. Distance 16 miles. (Camp LVIII.)

'January' 3.—This morning the creek was followed down to near its junction with a large sandy stream, coming from the north-east, which was named Kinloch Creek, in honor of John Kinloch, Esq., Mathematical Master of Sydney College. It was plentifully watered, and remarkable for presenting the only iron-bark trees that were seen since leaving the Einasleih. At 8 and 12 miles, two small very boggy creeks were crossed, the first of which had to be bridged. Their banks were very unsound and swampy, covered with tea-tree, pandanus, ferns, and all kinds of valueless underwood. They were full of lilies, and appeared to be constantly running, from which it was conjectured that they must take their rise from springs. On passing the last, the party emerged on to poorly grassed, desolate-looking sandstone ridges, covered with grass-tree and zamia. A pine-tree ridge was then passed, and a camp formed on a small water-course beyond, the total distance being 16½ miles on a bearing of N.N.E. 1/2 N. The latitude was ascertained to be 13 degrees 35 minutes 54 seconds S. During the day red kangaroos were seen, also the Torres Straits pigeon, and two black cockatoos, with very large stiff crest, crimson cheeks, and large black bill, the rest of the body black. This was the ('*Microglossus Aterrimus*'), a species peculiar to Northern Australia. It is nearly one-third larger in size than the common black cockatoo, from which it is mainly distinguished by the color of the bill, which is black. (Camp LIX. Bloodwood.)

Page 53

'January' 4.—A heavy storm of rain and thunder having been experienced last night, the party made a short day's stage, and camped early to enable them to dry their meat, saddlery, bags, *etc.*, which had been thoroughly soaked. The horses backs too, were getting sore from the use of wet saddles, and themselves tired. The course was north, over stringy-bark and bloodwood ridges for 5 miles, to a large running creek named Micketeeboomulgeiai,* from the north-east, on which a crossing had to be cut; a mile-and-a-half further on, an ana-branch was crossed, and the party camped. (Camp LX. Bloodwood.)

[footnote]*In the Wellington Dialect "place where the lightning struck."

'January' 5.—Still raining and wet to-day. A table-land of open sandy ridges was traversed to a high point, the edge of which was reached in five miles on a course N. by E. On reaching this point a range was seen in front, extending east and west about 10 miles off, between which and the party, a fine valley extended, traversed by a large sandy river, which was named the Archer, in honor of Messrs. Archer, of Gracemere. The river Archer flows from the north-east, through a valley of great richness and beauty, and considered by the explorers to be the best country for cattle seen north of Broadsound. The banks of the river are fringed by a thick belt of vine-scrub, containing very many Leichhardt and other handsome trees and shrubs of great luxuriance and growth. The valley is also described as being the first locality where any varieties of flowers were seen, some were of great beauty, particularly a bulb which bears a large flower, shaped like a larkspur, of every tinge of red, from a delicate pink to a rich purple. After crossing the Archer two ana-branches were passed, the route laying over loamy black and chocolate flats, and fine long sloping ridges, very thickly grassed, quite free from stones, well-watered, and despite the heavy rains that had fallen, perfectly sound. The range seen from the table-land was low, and of much the same description. Distance travelled 15 miles N. by E. (Camp LXI. Applegum.)

'January' 6.—The march to-day was very trying to the poor horses, being chiefly over rotten melon-hole country, of a yellow clayey soil, timbered with stunted bloodwood and pandanus, the rain pouring down all day. At two miles from camp a large creek was crossed containing a little rain water, and subsequently nine or ten small deep waterless creeks, their beds too sandy to be retentive. On one of these the wearied party camped at the end of 16 or 17 miles. A range 8 or 9 miles to the East, was sighted during the day. Notwithstanding the rain, barely sufficient water was found at the camp. Distance 17 miles. Course North. (Camp LXII. Poplar gum.)

Page 54

'January' 7.—At rather more than a mile from camp, two branches of a large deep creek, were crossed just above its junction. It runs from W. by N., had a little water in it, and the usual fringe of dark green vine scrub, interspersed with Leichhardt trees. A hill on the north bank covered with large sandstone boulders, marks the crossing-place of the party. Numerous small water-courses similar to those of yesterday, were crossed to-day. The country slightly improved but was of the same character, waterless but for the showers of rain. I was strange to see the horses bogging leg deep during a thunder-storm, and in five minutes after unable to get a drink of water. Large red funnel-shaped ant-hills were seen, in some instances as high as 18 to 20 feet. The timber in addition to the usual varieties comprised zamias, iron bark, acacia, pandanus, mimosa, sterculia [(Currijong)], grevillia, coral, ('Erythrina'), and Nonda ('Walrothia') trees. Scrub turkeys ('Talegalla Lathamii'), wonga wongas, and Torres Straits pigeon were seen. The party camped at the end of 15 miles in a shallow tea-tree gulley, with a little water from last night's rain in its sandy bed, supplying themselves with drinking water from the rain, caught by the tents. Course North. (Camp LXIII. Acacia.)

'January' 8.—The first 15 miles travelled over to-day were good undulating forest country, timbered chiefly with box and applegum, and a few iron-barks, and intersected with numerous canal-like creeks, running north-west, but without water; the last three miles was wretchedly bad, being similar to the tea-tree country of the Staaten. The whole country between the Archer and Staaten is without water, save immediately after rain, sufficiently heavy to set the creeks running. The party camped on a small tea-tree "Gilgai," or shallow water pan, and experienced another night of heavy rain with high wind. Two more horses, Rasper and N'gress were found knocked up. Distance 18 miles. Course N. The latitude of the camp was ascertained to be 12 degrees 38 minutes 2 seconds. (Camp LXIV. Bloodwood.)

'January' 9.—The fact of high land being observed to the west of the course, and that the creeks all flowed eastward, induced the party to think that they were near on the eastern slope of the peninsula. This idea, however, was dispelled on their reaching at the end of ten miles, a large river which was supposed to be the Coen. It was running strongly W.N.W., and seemed distinctly to divide the good and bad country, that on the south side being richly grassed, open and lightly timbered, lucerne and other fine herbs occurring frequently, whilst on the north side it relapsed into the old barren tea-tree country of which so much had been traversed. Considerable time was lost by the party in cutting a road for the cattle through the thick scrub that fringes its banks, a kind of work which was now becoming familiar. The Coen is about sixty yards wide, sandy, and contains crocodiles. The country on it is described as being of excellent quality for a cattle run. The party camped on a tea-tree swamp with a few inches of water in it, 6 miles beyond the crossing place. During the day wongas and Torres Strait pigeons were observed, and scrub turkeys frequented the river scrubs. Distance 16 miles. Course North. (Camp LXV. Bloodwood.)

Page 55

'January' 10.—The journey to-day was one of unusual fatigue and hardship. The country for the first two miles was comparatively sound, but at this point the course was intercepted by a narrow boggy creek, running strongly through a tea-tree flat. Although care and time were taken in the selection of a proper spot, when the herd began to cross, the leading cattle, breaking through the crust, sank to their hips in the boggy spew below, and in a short time between 30 and 40 were stuck fast, the remainder ploughing through with great difficulty. Four beasts refused to face it altogether, and it was found necessary, after wasting considerable time and a deal of horse-flesh, to let them go. The greater part of the day was consumed in dragging out the bogged cattle with ropes. Even with this method and with all the exertions that could be used by the party, five had to be abandoned, nothing appearing above the ground but their backs and heads. The horses were more easily crossed, but their saddles, packs, and loads had to be carried over by the party. They then camped on the creek, and spent the remainder of the day in drying their arms, saddles, *etc.*, and in jerking the beef of one of the beasts which they had been unable to pull out of the slough. Heavy rain again fell at night, which caused an apprehension that their progress would be altogether stopped if it continued. Distance 2 1/2 miles. Course North. (Camp LXVI. Pomegranite.)

'January' 11.—It is at this point that the heaviest troubles and hardships of the party appear to have commenced, troubles that might well appal hearts less stout than those of the Leader and his brother, and hardships bearing heavily on each member of the party, but doubly so on them who had to explore, mark, and clear the way for the cattle, in addition to the ordinary labor of the journey. After having travelled with the greatest difficulty for two miles over execrable country, so boggy as to be barely possible to traverse, their progress was stopped by a creek 25 yards wide, flooded "bank and bank," and running like a mill sluice. This was the river Batavia. The usual formidable fringe of vine scrub covered the margin and approaches and had to be cut through before the cattle could cross. This was done by the Brothers by the time they came up, and in addition a large melaleuca which leant over the stream, was felled across it, by means of which (by tying a rope above it, as a leading line), they were enabled to carry over the packs, saddles, stores, *etc.*, on their heads. The cattle accustomed to swimming, took the water in splendid style, one however getting entangled and drowned. With the horses they were not so fortunate, for though a head stall was put on each with a rope attached to the bit, to haul them across, the rapidity of the current swept away two of them into a tangle of vines in the middle of the stream, under which they were carried and drowned, despite the exertions of four

Page 56

or five of the party to pull them across by the rope. Their efforts to save them nearly cost their own lives, and A. Jardine chronicles receiving a “nasty crack” in the head from a log in attempting to disentangle his own horse “Jack” from the vines, one which might have closed his career, had it been a degree harder, the other, “Blokus,” was a Government horse, belonging to Mr Richardson; both were useful horses, and a great loss to the party, but only the forerunner of much greater ones. The creek at last crossed, the party attempted to push forward on the other side, but after travelling a mile leading the horses, slushing through bog and swamp under a heavy rain, they were obliged to turn back and encamp on some high ground on the banks of the creek, about half-a-mile above the crossing, where there was a little good grass. Several of their horses were left behind bogged, one mare in particular, “Nell Gwynne,” being too weak to travel. Distance 3 miles. Course N. (Camp LXVII.)

‘January’ 12.—It was determined to camp here to-day, both to spell the weak horses and dry many things that had got wet. The horses left bogged the previous night were got out, when on returning to the camp, it was found that a number of the others were poisoned, and one missing. The black-boys were immediately sent out in search of him, but were unsuccessful. Meanwhile the party being unable to shift camp that day, a yard was immediately formed, all herbs carefully pulled up in and about it, and the horses penned there. The precaution came too late, for before evening five of them besides the missing one (“Rasper”) were dead. It was supposed that “Rasper” must have got into the river and been drowned, as one of the effects of the poison is complete blindness. The symptoms are thus described. Profuse sweating, with a heaving of the flanks, the ears droop, the eyes glaze, set, and the animal finally turns stone blind. He then lies down, struggles fitfully for several hours, and never rises again. This was a heavy blow. Ten of their horses were now gone, eight of which were picked, and the best of the whole number, besides being the best conditioned, one peculiarity of the poison being that it appears to attack the fattest animals. A careful search was made to detect the plant that caused this fearful loss, but unsuccessfully. The number of horses being now reduced to twenty-one, and those the poorest and worst, it became necessary to take only what was actually wanted of their baggage, and to abandon the remainder. A cache was accordingly dug, and 25 sets of horse-shoes, a lot of nails and other miscellaneous articles were buried at the foot of an iron acacia on the top of the ridge and facing the creek, on which was marked in a shield F J over LXVII. over *dig* in heart. The horses were kept in the yard all night, and the rest of the day and evening spent in disposing of the reduced loading, and making preparations for leaving this fatal camp. The rain continued to fall heavily throughout the day, which could not under the circumstances, have increased the cheerfulness of the party. The Leader, however, closes the entry in his Diary with “Nil Desperandum” merely marking the day of the week in parenthesis as (“Black Thursday.”)

Page 57

'January' 13.—The poor condition of the horses, and the wretchedly soft nature of the ground, making it impossible for them to be ridden, or do more than carry the diminished loads of baggage and stores, the party had no choice but to walk and in some cases even to carry the packs of the horses. Mr. A. Jardine describes their appearance this morning as "rather neat" at the starting from the camp, the two Brothers, Mr. Binney, Scrutton, and the four black-boys having doffed everything but their shirts and belts. It was well for the whites that their previous habits on the journey had hardened their feet and enabled them to travel without shoes, with but little less hardship than their black companions. This they had acquired by the custom on coming into camp, of going out with the boys opossum and "sugar bag" hunting. With stout hearts and naked legs, therefore they faced forward driving the horses and cattle before them, and by the end of the day placed ten miles between them and "Poison Creek," as it was then named. This however was not accomplished without great toil, the country traversed being red soil ridges, with black soil tea-tree flats between them, which were so many bogs. In these the cattle floundered and bogged at every hundred yards, and even the spare unladen horses had to be pulled out. The latter were at length so completely knocked up that it was necessary to leave some of them at one side of a swamp, the party carrying their packs and loads about a quarter-of-a-mile on to a dry ridge on the other. Here they camped and tired as they were, were obliged to keep a vigilant watch, as, to add to their many annoyances the natives had been following them all day. Distance 10 miles N.E. by N. Box marked F.J. 68 cross.

'January' 14.—At daylight this morning the horses were got over the swamp, with less difficulty than was expected, being recruited by their night's rest. The journey was resumed at 6.30. There had been no rain on the previous day and night, and the ground with only this twenty-four hours of dry weather had hardened sufficiently on the crust to allow the horses to walk without bogging. This crust, however, once broken through, they bogged hopelessly, until dragged out with ropes. In this the water and sludge oozing out from the tracks were great auxiliaries, as they formed a kind of batter, in which, by pulling the horses on their sides, they slid along like sledges. This process had continually to be repeated throughout the day, causing so much delay, that seven or eight miles were with difficulty accomplished. At each running stream the packs had to be taken off and carried over. The country traversed was similar to that of yesterday, undulating blood-wood red soil ridges, sufficiently well-grassed, with the everlasting black soil, tea-tree flats, and gullies running between them, some being very wide. Two more horses died during the day from the effects of the poison, and the Leader owns that he was beginning

Page 58

to be at his wits end as to how they were to get along. Every superfluity and been abandoned, and, with the exception of a few light things, such as clothes and blankets, of too trifling weight to make it worth while to leave, and only what was absolutely necessary, retained; yet there were barely sufficient horses left to carry that. He had therefore good cause for anxiety. The day kept tolerably fair until the party came into camp, when the rain came down in torrents. Whilst in the hurry and confusion of putting up the tents to protect the stores from the deluge that was pouring, the alarm of "blacks" was again given. They were fortunately unarmed, and the party easily chased them away. This was fortunate, and was caused by the native custom of making the gins carry their spears and shields on the march, themselves only carrying a nulla or two. They were soon back again however, with large bundles of spears, but not before the party had had time to prepare for them. The rifles were dry and loaded. Frank Jardine here owns to a feeling of savage delight at the prospect of having a "shine" with these wretched savages, who, without provocation, hung on their footsteps dogging them like hawks all through the thickest of their troubles, watching with cowardly patience, for a favourable moment to attack them at a disadvantage. Even then, however, he would not be the aggressor, but allowed them to come within sixty yards, and ship their spears in the woomerahs, before they were fired upon. The two foremost men fell to the only two shots that were discharged, and their companions at once broke and fled; nor was the advantage followed up, as the travellers were careful to husband their ammunition, and their caps were running short. This, however, was the last occasion on which the party was molested, their sable adversaries having, probably, at length learned that "they were worth letting alone," and never again shewing themselves. The distance travelled was 8 miles. N.E. by N.

'January' 15.—This being Sunday and horses, cattle, and men, being in want of rest after the work of the last two days, it was determined to make a rest day. The party employed part of the time in spreading out the contents of the pack bags to dry, everything having become mouldy with the constant wetting. The day was marked too, by a grant feast of "stodge," doughboys, and jam, stodge being a delicacy extemporised for the occasion, consisting of "flour boiled with water to the consistency of paste, with some small pieces of raw meat thrown into it"!! The Brothers spent part of the afternoon in the mutual good offices of picking the pandanus thorns out of each others feet and legs, the blackboys following their example. These thorns were a constant source of small torture to the party. The necessity of trying the ground in advance of the cattle prevented them wearing boots, and thus feet and legs were left without any protection, and exposed them day after day to the same annoyance.

Page 59

Another horse, "Creamy," sickened from the effects of the poison. It was thought that he had not taken enough to kill him, and that the day's rest would set him to rights. A cow was also left bogged in the swamp. The ground on which the party encamped was supposed at first to be dry, being on a bloodwood ridge, with six or eight inches of gravel on the surface, but the heavy rain of the previous night caused the water to run through the tents to a depth of three inches. It was only necessary to scratch a handful of gravel off the crust to get clear running water for drinking. A heavy rain again fell during the night, dispelling all hopes of sound travelling for the morrow. (Camp LXIX. Bloodwood.)

'January' 16.—The absolute necessity of getting at or near their destination before the setting in of the periodical rains, stimulated the Leader to urge the party to long stages, which was not at all relished by some of the number, two of whom at starting made repeated requests to camp for another day, alleging that they could not walk any further. To this Mr. Jardine could not listen, and being further importuned, disposed of the request summarily by packing their rifles on the horses, and telling them that they might remain or come on as they might elect. He heard no more grumbling, and a good stage was accomplished. The country for the first two miles was similar to that of the last two stages. It then suddenly changed into red sandy stringy-bark ridges, with a dense under-growth of vines, zamias, and pandanus, which made the walking difficult and painful. Several creeks were crossed, the largest of which was at ten miles from the camp, and running W. by N., and the party halted at another six miles further on, which received the name of Dalhanty Creek. Its course was west, and it was remarkable for the palms ('*Seaforthia Elegans*') growing in its bed. All these creeks were supposed to be tributaries of the Batavia River. The party had only to unpack the horses twice during the day, and made a capital stage, but not without paying for it, for even the Black-boys shewed signs of fatigue. Their legs and feet, as well as those of most of the party were in a frightful state, cut in peices by the thorny vines which covered the line of march. They were now completely out of meat, but it would have been unwise to halt to kill a beast for three reasons: first, the weather; next, the fact that they could not pack the meat without leaving behind something to make place for it, another of their horses, Combo, having died to-day from the effects of the poison; and lastly, the urgency of getting forward whilst the weather would admit of it. The morning had been rainy, but in the afternoon it cleared up and gave promised of a few fair days, of which it was expedient to take advantage. In addition to the horse that died (Combo), two more of their best horses (Rocket and Creamy) were fast sinking. It was a fearful thing to see them dwindling away day by day, without power to help or time to halt for them; but to press forward was a paramount necessity. Distance 16 miles North. (Camp LXX. Applegum.)

Page 60

'January' 17.—The country traversed to-day was similar to that of yesterday, save that the ridges were higher and more stony. Creeks were crossed at two and ten miles, running strongly westward, which appeared to be permanent. Five miles further on, the party camped on a smaller one of the same character, having vine scrub and seaforthia palms on its banks, which was named Skardon's Creek. The horse Creamy died during the day, and Rocket through the night. These losses reduced their horses from forty-two, with which they started, to fifteen of the culls. They were in latitude 11 degrees 51 minutes 50 seconds, and by their dead reckoning, just about the track of Kennedy, supposing it to have been correctly charted, and therefore on the western slope of the dividing range. The Torres Strait pigeon ('Carpophaga Luctuosa') was again seen, and the bitcher plant ('Nepenthes Kennedy') first noticed. Two of the police saddles had to be left at this camp in consequence of the loss of the horses. Distance 15 1/2 miles. North. (Camp LXXI.)

'January' 18.—The march to-day is described as being through the most abominable country that can well be imagined, being a continuation of loose white sandy ranges, thickly covered with low bush from three to eight feet in height, broom, fern, grass-tree ('Xanthoraea'), pandanus, and "five-corner" bushes, being thickly matted together with prickly vine. Not a tree relieved the monotony of this waste, and what was worse, not a blade of grass was seen for miles. Several deep creeks were crossed, all running strongly with clear pellucid water to W. and N.W. The timber when it occurred was bloodwood, stringy and iron-bark on the ridges, banksia, grevillia, and several kinds of tea-trees in the gullies, which were honey-combed and boggy. Two new kinds of palm were seen. The bush which seems to be what Kennedy alluded to as "heath," could only be got through by leading a horse ahead, the others following slowly behind him, the cattle then following in their track. A straight course was impossible, as all the boggy creeks and gullies had to be run up to their heads before they could be crossed. A general course, however, was kept of N. by E. The packs were continually being knocked off the horses, occasioning great delay, so that only 12 miles were accomplished. Some black perch were caught in one of the creeks, and scrub turkeys were seen. Poor "Nell Gwynne's" foal knocked up to-day, after having kept up bravely since the mare's death. Nothing remained therefore but to kill him. The party being without meat, and it being impossible to stop in such a country to kill a beast, part of his flesh was dressed and carried on, which was a grateful addition to the food, and although two or three at first refused to eat of it, the craving of hunger soon made them forget their repugnance to horse-flesh. At night the horses had to be short hobbled and a watch kept over them. The weather kept fine, raising the hopes of the Leader of getting in before the rains.

Page 61

'January' 19.—Despite the watch kept over the horses, they got away during the night, and a late start was the consequence. Several hours were also lost at the first mile on the journey, in consequence of some of the horses getting "upside down" in one of the deep narrow creeks, which were constantly recurring, and having to be extricated. These creeks run N.W., and take their rise from springs. They are so boggy that in some cases, though perhaps only eighteen inches wide, they had to be headed before the cattle could pass. The summit of the range was reached in seven miles of similar country to that of yesterday, resembling (identical in fact) in appearance and botanical character, to the worst country of Botany Bay, the Surry Hills, and coast about Sydney. A thick vine scrub was then passed, when the party emerged on to some open ridges of red sandy soil, timbered with bloodwood, stringy-bark, and nonda. They were now satisfied that they were on eastern waters, as, whilst out sugar-bag hunting in the evening, the Brothers saw the blue waters of the ocean about twelve or fifteen miles to the eastward, a small arm of which was supposed to be a bay to the northward of Cape Grenville. Their latitude was 11 degrees 46 minutes 36 seconds. The camp was pitched at the head of a small creek running eastward.

'January' 20.—After 4 miles of brushwood and scrubby range had been accomplished this morning, further progress was stopped by a dense pine and vine scrub stretching across the course. The cattle were halted outside, whilst the Brothers made search for an opening for them to get through, in doing which they came on to a narrow track cut by the blacks. This they followed for more than two miles, but were obliged to return at last, the vine ropes, tangle, and dense scrub, making it hopeless to attempt taking the cattle along it. A further search proved equally unsuccessful. The whole party had therefore to turn back along their tracks for a couple of miles, then turning east they travelled on that bearing. At about half-a-mile they reached the eastern slope, from which the sea was distinctly visible. A spur of the range was followed for about four miles into rather better country, where the party camped, being well-grassed and slightly timbered, though stoney. Although about 9 miles were travelled over, the distance in latitude from the last camp could not have been more than one-and-a-half miles. From a bluff on the range a fine view of the low country and sea was obtained, and a bearing taken to Cape Grenville of 117 deg. Blacks' tracks were very numerous to-day, and it was evident by the neat cutting of the marks on the trees that they were provided with good iron tomahawks. Many turkeys' nests were found, but the eggs only benefitted the stronger stomachs of the party, having young ones in them in most cases. In crossing one of the boggy creeks, one of the horses jumped on to a pack-saddle, and a hook entering his skin lacerated it dreadfully.

Page 62

'January' 21.—The course to-day was N.E. by N., along the eastern slope of the Richardson Range, through a fearfully difficult country. Seven deep scrubby creeks had to be crossed running strongly to the westward, whose banks were invariably fringed with a thick scrub, which had in each case to be cut through before the cattle could pass: one in particular was so dense that it alone occupied three hours in cutting. The cattle occasionally got their horns entangled in the vines, and had to be cut loose. One cow got fearfully furious at being thus arrested, and when extricated, galloped straight away, and was no more seen. Over seven hours were occupied in making a distance of about 8 miles, only 3 of which were spent in actual travelling. A great variety of palms were seen in the scrubs, which were covered with fruit and berries, but only the "Seaforthia," the most graceful of the family, the 'Caryota Urens', remarkable for its star-shaped fronds and the more common 'Corypha', of which the colonial straw-hats are made, were known to the travellers. Latitude 11 degrees 37 minutes 46 seconds.

'January' 22.—The country traversed to-day was of the same description as that of yesterday, utterly without grass, and the same tedium and toil were experienced in cutting through the vine scrubs which bordered the running creeks. These were very numerous, and quite uniform in their difficulty, a lane for the cattle having to be cut through each. Some very large pines were noticed to-day (most probably 'Araucaria Cunninghamii'), which, forming large and dense scrubs, twice forced the party out of their course. The camp to-night was a very miserable one, surrounded by scrub and brushwood, without a blade of grass for the stock, or even a tree that could be marked, and to add to their wretchedness, a heavy rain came down which lasted till near midnight. Course N.W., 10 miles. (Camp LXXVI.)

'January' 23.—A steady rain poured down all to-day, and as yesterday, the route alternated over and through desert wastes of brush and tangled scrubs, the former telling with great severity on the lacerated feet of the travellers. Their legs had the appearance of having been curried by a machine. At the end of 9 miles they luckily came on to a creek comparatively well-grassed on the banks. This being the first that had been seen for three days, they joyfully encamped on an open ridge. The timber comprised nonda, grevillea, banksia, tea-tree, mahogany, and many other tropical trees not known. The total distance travelled was 10 miles. N. by W. (Camp LXXVII.)

'January' 24.—For the first three miles to-day, the country remained similar to the generality, that is, scrub and heath, after this it slightly improved, opening into coarse sandstone ridges, in some parts strewn with quartz pebbles, either white or tinted with oxide of iron. At two miles from the start a stream was struck, running north, having a clear sandy bed thirty yards wide,

Page 63

which was immediately concluded to be a head of the Escape River, and a continuation of that crossed on the 22nd. Into this, numerous short steep scrubby creeks discharge themselves from the range or ridge to the eastward. These had, as usual, all to have passages cut through them for the stock. At the end of about six miles, a heavy thunder-storm coming on whilst the party were engaged in clearing, the creek they were upon was sent up bank and bank by the storm water, and barred their further progress. They were therefore compelled to camp. At sundown it was again nearly dry, but the rain continued at intervals till midnight. During the day a large low table-topped mountain was passed about 4 miles to the eastward. It was either bare of timber or heath clad, and received the name of Mount Bourcicault. (LXXVIII.) Distance 6 miles. N. by W.

'January' 25.—A ten-mile journey was accomplished to-day, the country for the first seven having slightly improved into red soil ridges coarsely grassed, having patches of scrub along their summits. The remaining three were of the usual character, heath and brushwood, in the midst of which, in a miserable hole as it is described, they were obliged to camp. A delay of a couple of hours occurred in consequence of a thunder-storm flooding a narrow gutter that might be hopped over. It was not until this subsided that the horses and cattle could be made to face it, the poor brutes having been so frightened with bogs and water, that the horses had to be led over the smallest of them. The rain still continued to pour heavily at intervals during the day. (Camp LXXIX.) No trees to mark. The course was N. by W.

'January' 26.—After two miles of travelling, the party again struck the supposed Escape River. The stream was flooded, and at this point fifty yards wide, and the bed clear of fallen timber. A bloodwood tree was marked on both sides, on the S. bank. The country on either side is of a red and white sandy soil, timbered with bloodwood, mahogany, melaleuca and black and white tea-tree, coarsely grassed, with heath and scrub running down to the banks in many places. The river was followed down for 7 or 8 miles, its general course being N.W., the party having to cut roads for the cattle through the thick scrubs which lined the tributary creeks and gullies, in four instances. At this distance a large branch nearly equal in size, joins it from the south-east, to which the name of the "McHenry"* was given. It being flooded and deep, the party traced it upwards for about a mile from its junction and encamped. The tents being pitched and everything made secure for the night, the Brothers explored up the stream in search of a good crossing place for the morrow. After several trials were made, a spot was finally decided upon, about three-quarters-of-a-mile from the camp, and they returned with the pleasing prospect of having to swim the cattle and horses over

Page 64

next day, and carry the packs on their heads. Black and white cockatoos, some parrots, scrub turkeys ('Talegalla Lathamii'), and white pigeons (Torres Straits), were seen on the march, throughout which the rain still continued to fall, as it did also during the night. At this camp (80) the last of the sugar was finished, but this was not thought much of, as from the latitude being ascertained to be 11 degrees 10 minutes, it was supposed that Somerset could not be more than 20 or 30 miles distant. How they were undeceived in their conjecture, and had their hopes disappointed, will be seen.

[footnote] *After Captain J. McHenry, of Arthur Downs, Isaac River.*

'January' 27.—Early this morning the party addressed themselves to the task of crossing the McHenry. This was accomplished in safety, cattle and horses taking the water like dogs, the greater difficulty being in getting over the packs, saddles, and stores, which had to be carried on the heads of the swimmers of the party, and this necessary part of a bushman's education was not common to all, or at least sufficiently to be of use. The course was then continued on the other side to the junction of the two streams. The rain continued to fall steadily during most of the day, filling up every little creek and gutter. Some of the former had to be swum over, whilst the latter occurred at every mile. Just below the junction there is a large dense vine-scrub, which had to be skirted, after which, the party continued their course down the supposed Escape, which had now increased its width to a hundred yards. Its width when first struck, was only twenty, increasing to forty or fifty at its junction with the McHenry, when the united streams form an imposing river. Its course is extremely winding, whilst the numberless creeks and gulleys which join it, all with scrubby banks, make travelling along its banks, a work of great labor and difficulty. The country on this day's march slightly improved, being more open and better grassed, the best being on the river banks, but coarse and sparse at best. The timber chiefly bloodwood and black tea-tree. Several trees were marked with a cross at the crossing place of the McHenry, and one similarly at the point of the scrub below the junction. In consequence of the many delays to-day the total distance travelled was only 5 miles. Course N. by W. (Camp LXXXI.)

'January' 28.—The course of the river was followed down to-day for about two-and-a-half miles, but the endlessly recurring water courses, each with its eternal fringe of thick vine scrub, at last compelled the party to turn to the west in order to avoid them, there being no time to cut roads for the cattle. They were constantly getting entangled by the horns in the hanging vines of the 'Calamus Australis' and 'Flagetlaria', so often referred to. The effect of this on some was to work them into such a perfect fury, that when released by the party cutting them clear, they would

Page 65

in some instances rush blindly away from the herd and be lost, as described before. The intention on starting was to run the river down to the head of the tide, and then establish a camp, where the cattle could stay, whilst the Brothers went on to find Somerset, now supposed to be not far distant. On leaving the river the course was shaped west, to head the scrubs on the tributaries, but this, far from improving the travelling, made it worse as they got into a maze of scrub, heath, and swamps, through which they had to thread their course. They, had therefore, to make their way back to the river, which was again struck in about 7 miles. It was here running north, the bed free from fallen timber, and about 150 yards wide, and so full and flooded as to make it impossible to discover whether it was within the tidal influence or not. Following the river for 4 miles, making a total journey of 12, the rain pouring the whole day, the party camped on the bank, where alone grass was to be found, and that even very poor and thin. Two of the horses "Tabinga," and "Pussey," had to be left about three miles back from the camp with their saddles, utterly knocked up. A lame heifer was killed and cut up for jerking, on the morrow. Course N.W. by N. Distance 12 miles. (Camp LXXXII.)

'January' 29.—This day was devoted to rest, with the exception of the necessary duties of jerking the beef of the heifer, and preparing for the start of the Brothers to find Somerset. The horses left behind were sent for and brought into camp, and dispositions made for a halt, until the return of the Leader. The packs, saddles, and stores were "overhauled," and found for the most part to be completely rotted, from the constant rain and severe duckings they had undergone, making the party congratulate themselves that they were near their destination. At the request of Frank Jardine, Mr. Richardson plotted up the route, as far as this camp, and gave him his position on the chart, with a note "that camp 82 was on the Escape River, eight miles in a direct line from where it joins the sea, and sixteen miles from Somerset." In this, as in the case of the position of the Lynd, he was mistaken, the reason for which, he states to be that his sextant was out of order. This was much to be regretted, as failing the correctness of the surveyor's observations, Mr. Jardine might just as well trust to his own dead reckoning. It might be supposed that Mr. Richardson having had an opportunity of checking his position by the bearing to Cape Grenville, when he sighted the sea on the 20th inst, at camp 74, should have been able more accurately to have determined his present position, but he excuses himself on the score of the difficulty of estimating the daily distance whilst walking.* This is a very admissable explanation, considering the tedium and slowness of their progress in winding through scrubs, and being delayed by crossings, the tortuousness of their route making it difficult to keep the course. It was the more unfortunate, therefore, that the sextant, which was naturally depended upon for keeping them informed of their progress, should have been allowed to become so deranged, as to be less reliable than the result of mere dead reckoning.

Page 66

[footnote] *See his Journal.*

CHAPTER V.

First Start in Search of Settlement—Character of the Jardine—
The Eliot—Return to Main Camp—Flooded State of River—
Impromptu Raft—Crossing Horses—Uncertainty—Second Start in
Search of Settlement—View of the Ocean—Reach South Shore of
Newcastle Bay—Reach Mouth of True Escape—Unable to Cross—A
Dainty Meal—Character of the Escape—Return to Main Camp—
Horses Knocked-up—Another Horse Dead—Flour Exhausted—
Wretched Condition of Horses—More Baggage Abandoned—Prospects
—The Whole Party Again Move Forward—Another Horse Abandoned—
Reach Head of Tide View of the Gulf—Barne Island—Return up the
Jardine—Third Start in Search of Settlement—Wild Grape—
Crossing Saddles—a Disappointment—Head the Escape River—Meet
Friendly Natives—Natives Act as Pilots—Native Bread—Canoes
—Corroboree—Native Drums—Arrival at Somerset—Mr. Jardine's
Marked-tree Line—Meeting with their Father—A Heroine.

'January' 30.—This morning, Mr. F. Jardine with his Brother and the Blackboy, Eulah, started to find the Settlement, leaving the rest of the party encamped with the cattle, in charge of Mr. Scrutton. They took with them a week's ration of 25 lbs. of flour, and 12 lbs. meat (tea and sugar had long been things of the past), intending to follow the supposed river down to the head of the tide. It was accordingly followed for about 21 miles, but to their astonishment, instead of trending N.N.E., its general course was found to be North-west 1/2 West. This led them to the conclusion that it was a western water, and not as they had hitherto supposed, the Escape River. Of this they were now convinced, but to make certain, agreed to continue travelling down it for two days more, and with this intent camped on a creek coming in from the southward. The margin of the river is generally open and coarsely grassed, timbered with mahogany, bloodwood, and melaleuca, the points of scrubs and brushwood occasionally closing down to the stream. Its width varies from one to two-hundred yards, with a sandy bed, entirely free from fallen timber. Its banks are steep in many places, of white clay and coarse sandstone, and fringed with tall melaleuca, whose long drooping branches and leaves swept the rapid and deep stream. A straight course was impracticable, for as soon as attempted, and the river was out of sight, the party got entangled in thick brushes and tea-tree swamps, without a blade of grass. They were obliged, therefore, to follow the course of the river in all its windings. The only birds seen were scrub turkeys, and Torres Strait pigeons. The weather at starting was fine, but about 11 o'clock the rain commenced, and continued steadily the whole of the day. At night, on camping, a "bandicoot gunyah" was erected, and covered with the broad pliable paper bark of the

melaleuca, which made a snug shelter for the night from the still pouring rain. Course generally N.W by W. Distance following the river, 21 miles.

Page 67

'January' 31.—Crossing the creek immediately after leaving the camp, the party still continued to follow the windings of the river through similar country to that of yesterday, save that the ground was more boggy, the swamps, ana-branches, and small lagoons more numerous. On the latter some Coromandel geese were seen, of a species different from those found near Rockhampton. The heavy rain which had continued all last night had caused the river to rise several inches. At about ten miles the progress of the party was stopped by a large stream coming in from the South-east, about the same size as the McHenry. A tree was marked AJ at the junction which was very scrubby, and the new stream received the name of the Eliot. It was running strongly, and had to be traced up for two miles, before the party could cross in safety. This they fortunately accomplished without accident, although the water was up to their necks, as they waded across with their saddles and packs on their heads, giving them all they could do to stem the rapid current. They then proceeded on their way for 7 miles further, the last two of which were through thick brush, and camped on the bank of the main stream, now much augmented in size after receiving the waters of the Eliot. There was but little grass for the poor horses, but no choice, the country back from the river being all scrubs and swamps, covered with tea-tree, but barren of grass. The total distance travelled was 17 miles. The course generally West by South, clearly proving that they could not be on the Escape.

'February' 1.—The river was again followed for about seven miles further, but as the course still continued to trend West, and even south of West, the Brothers in disgust determined on re-tracing their steps, satisfied, if satisfaction can be predicated of such a disappointment, that they were on western waters, and that they had not yet reached the looked-for Escape River. At this point, therefore, they turned, intending to swim the river at the main camp, and make another exploration to find the Settlement from the North side, or right bank. By night-fall they reached their first night's camp, where they found the "gunyah" very acceptable. They had now followed the supposed Escape 45 miles; deducting a third for its sinuosities, a distance of at least 30 miles in a straight line Westward had been travelled, and they were filled with surprise that so large and important a stream should have remained undiscovered. Its width at their turning-point was over two-hundred yards, the banks commencing to be very swampy, and it is described by Mr. A. Jardine, as the most compact river, with the exception of the Fitzroy, he had seen in the North. The rain continued as yesterday during the whole of the day, accompanied with cold winds. This, together with their disappointment, was sufficient to depress the spirits of most men. There is not, however, in the journals of either of the Brothers the slightest indication of despondency or complaint.

Page 68

'February' 2.—The main camp was reached this morning early, and everything found safe and right, save in one particular, that deserves recording. In looking over the ration account, Mr. Jardine found a deficiency of 30 lbs. of flour, accruing in the interval of the four days of his absence. All denied any knowledge of it, and all were equally certain that the allowance had not been exceeded; "so" writes Frank Jardine, "where it is gone to, I am never likely to know," and there the matter dropped. It is humiliating to think, that amongst white men banded together in exploring parties, where the success and safety of the enterprise are much dependent on the good conduct of each individual member, there should be found individuals so ignoble, as to appropriate an undue share of the common stock of food on which the health, and perhaps the life of each equally depends; and yet, sad to say, such instances are not singular. The well-proved charge against Gray of cooking flour for himself privately, for which he was chastised by poor Burke, is one instance. Gray's excuse was that he was so ill, and his apologists point to the fact that he subsequently died. Either Burke or Wills would have died on the spot, rather than have taken an ounce more than their meanest companion, and yet it has been asked why this man has had no monument. Again, in the unfortunate expedition of poor Kennedy (not far from their present camp), the storekeeper of the party of the name of Niblett, was discovered to have largely pilfered from the stores for a considerable time previously. Who knows that, but for the deficiency his greed caused, more of that ill-fated party might have held out until the succour arrived, guided by the heroic black, Jacky, who risked his own life to save that of his master, and whose name is as worthy of being held up for honour as that of the white man's for contempt.

'February' 3.—This day was spent by the Brothers with their black-boys in hunting for a good crossing place, or as they described it, "doing a little water dogging." The river being two hundred yards wide, and running rapidly, made it a difficult matter, and after trying a number of places, it was found that as they were all alike, deep and wide, they might as well cross opposite the camp. This would not be without risk and danger, but the exigency of the party made it necessary. Their flour was nearly exhausted, and they had nothing else but the jerked meat of the beef they killed, and what they could catch in the bush, to depend on. In this last, however, as old hunters and bushmen, they were generally pretty successful, supplementing and eking out their ordinary rations very largely. The day previous their larder had been recruited by three iguanas' eggs, a brush turkey ('Megapodius Tumulus'), and nine turkeys' eggs. The rain came down as usual at intervals during the day, which, added to the almost incessant rain of the four previous days, brought the river down during the night, increasing its volume and current so much as to make it dangerous to attempt crossing.

Page 69

'February' 4.—The river being too high to cross, the start for the Settlement was postponed, the fagged horses getting the benefit of the delay. A beast was killed in the evening. The weather clearing, Mr. Richardson was enabled to get correct observations for the latitude, having succeeded in putting his sextant into tolerable adjustment. The readings gave the latitude of camp 82 to be 11 degrees 11 minutes 39 seconds, or about 33 miles south from Cape York. Part of the day was employed in constructing a raft to float over the saddles, rations, *etc.* This was done by stretching a hide over a frame of wood, but not without some trouble, as it was found that the only wood light enough for the purpose, was dead nonda, and this being scarce, had to be searched for. Before evening, however, a raft was finished sufficiently light for the purpose.

'February' 5.—The river having sunk considerably during the night, the crossing was commenced this morning, despite the downpour of rain, which lasted all day without a break. The stream was one hundred and thirty yards wide, the banks fringed with scrub and vines, and the current still running rapidly. It required therefore strong and expert swimmers to get the horses across, the method being as follows:—One of the party went in first with a line made fast to the bit of the horse's bridle, and another followed, holding on to his tail by way of rudder. Now as a horse can swim faster than a man, and is of course heavier in the water, the leader has no easy task even if the horse swim honestly for the opposite bank, but should he turn back or boggle at all, man and line are alike powerless; the use of the rudder therefore will be seen. When the leader reaches the opposite bank, he has to scramble up nimbly, or he may have the horse on him, and arrived there, be in readiness with the line to assist him should he get entangled in the saplings and vines which fringe the banks. It will be remembered that in crossing the Batavia on the 11th January, two horses were drowned, in spite of every care and precaution. Here, however, they were fortunate enough to cross their four horses without accident, Mr. Scrutton, old Eulah, and the black-boys doing good service, being all excellent swimmers. The saddles and rations were then floated over in the raft, also without accident, and the advanced party (the Brothers and Eulah) camped on the north side, leaving the remainder of the party and cattle in charge of Mr. Scrutton. Even now, Frank Jardine was uncertain as to what stream they were on, and still leaned to the belief that it was the Escape, his faith in the result of the observations, having been shaken by the accident to the sextant. They failed to assist him in his opinion, which was sorely puzzled by the river running westward. He considered it, therefore, absolutely necessary to find the Settlement before moving the cattle forward, his horses being so weak, as to make it useless to travel on in uncertainty. The necessity for reaching their journey's end was becoming urgent, for their tea and sugar were exhausted, their flour nearly so, and some of the party were complaining of being unwell, and getting very weak.

Page 70

'February' 6.—The second start was made this morning, the Brothers intending to find either the Settlement or the mouth of the Escape. Their course for the first 15 miles was N.N.East, over barren white sandy country, covered with brushwood and scrub. At 7 miles a large deep running creek was crossed, running westward. Its south bank was so densely covered with vine scrub, that they had to walk and cut their way through it with their tomahawks. After crossing it, the country suddenly changed to thickly timbered sandy ridges, some being rocky, of course sandstone, the more elevated ones having belts of impenetrable scrub running along their crest. At 12 miles a fine sheet of water was passed, surrounded by sandy coarsely-grassed ridges. At 15 miles, from a line of high ridges forming a saddle-range, they had a view of the ocean, and could distinguish a few small islands out to sea. It might have been seen sooner but for the drizzling rain which fell with little intermission. The range was of red soil, timbered with bloodwood, and stringy-bark. Two miles further on the country improved still more, continuing from thence into their camp, 6 miles. The course was altered from the range to N. by E., and at 20 miles a white hill was reached, from which they looked down on the sea about half-a-mile distant beneath them. This was Newcastle Bay. Turning westward and skirting the coast, they travelled 3 miles further on, and camped on a palm creek, with very steep banks. Large flocks of the Torres Strait pigeons flew over in the evening. Distance travelled 23 miles.

'February' 7.—The good country traversed yesterday ceased at a creek half-a-mile from the camp, on crossing which the party had to cut their way as usual, after which the course skirting the coast lay over a villainous country, boggy swamps, brushwood and scrub. After travelling 7 or 8 miles their progress was arrested by a large stream three-quarters-of-a-mile in width, running rapidly from the W.N.W. Its banks were low and muddy, covered with a wide belt of dense mangroves, its muddy and swollen waters carrying down quantities of rubbish. This they correctly surmised to be the mouth of the veritable "Escape" but Frank Jardine was again in error in supposing it to be the same stream that they had left the cattle on. Seeing so large a stream he naturally reverted to the idea that it had turned on itself, and that their first exploration had stopped before reaching the turning point. His case was dispiriting in the extreme. The main camp was not more than 15 miles in latitude south of his present position. The Settlement, the long-wished end of their journey, could not be more than 20 to the North, yet his progress was arrested by a broad and rapid river, to head the supposed bend of which he had ineffectually travelled nearly 50 miles. His plan was now to follow the Escape up in hopes of being able to cross at the head of the tide, and so reach Somerset, but this, as will

Page 71

be seen, was more easily planned than executed. Following up the course of the river the way lay over a country which Alexander Jardine mentions in his notes as "too bad to describe," pandanus swamps, vine scrubs, and small creeks swollen by the rains to a swimmable depth, succeeding one another along the whole stage. At the latter the horses had always to be unpacked and their saddles taken over on the heads of the party. Three hours were consumed in cutting their way through the last of the vine scrubs, when they camped on the outside, three of the horses being completely knocked up. The Brothers then walked to the river in hopes of finding a crossing place. This however, proved hopeless. A thick matted fringe of mangroves nearly three miles wide intervened between them and its bank, through which it was next to impossible to make any headway. Their supper to-night was augmented by a lucky "find" during the day of thirteen scrub turkeys' eggs, which, though they would scarcely have been appreciated at an ordinary breakfast table, were very acceptable to tired and hungry travellers existing principally on jerked beef. Eating what yolk or white they contained, they plucked and roasted the chicks as a "bonne-bouche." Fires had to be kept going day and night to drive away, and protect the poor miserable horses from the march and sand-flies by day, and mosquitoes by night. These were, in fact, the principal cause of the poverty and debility of the poor brutes, who could never get a moment's rest to feed or sleep. Twenty-two miles were accomplished to-day, despite their difficulties.

'February' 8.—The journey was continued to-day up the Escape, the course of which was very crooked, but generally N.W. by N. The horses knocked up a few miles after starting. The party were therefore obliged to walk and drive them before them. The country traversed was similar to that of yesterday, so that they could not get more than a-mile-and-a-half an hour out of the poor jaded beasts. Three times they tried to make into the river bank, but without success, from the great width and the density of the belt of mangroves, and the soft mud. An old black's camp was passed in which they found heaps of shells, turtle, and shark bones. In the evening they caught a quantity of whelks and cockles, which, with an iguana, and three turkeys' eggs, made a good supper.

'February' 9.—The course of the river to-day was even more crooked than yesterday, the nature of the country continuing the same, save that the swampy ground was occasionally broken by ridges of bloodwood, and stringy-bark. From a tree on one of these they had a fine view of Newcastle Bay, and what was supposed to be Mount Adolphus Island, the latter about 25 miles away, and could trace the course of the river to where it debouched, by the stretch of mangroves. Here, therefore, they were within 20 miles of their destination, which they were tantalised by seeing, without being able to reach. With

Page 72

difficulty they drove their horses before them for 7 miles, when they turned out and camped, as well to hunt, as again to try and reach the river. In the first they were pretty successful, getting some turkeys' eggs and shell-fish, but the last they were unable to do, mud and mangroves barring their way, whilst the salt water proved to them that they were still within the influence of the tide, and the stream was still between three and four hundred yards wide. Despairing of being able to find a crossing to which they could fetch the cattle, their horses being unable to cross the river, to continue the search for Somerset in advance, and their scanty provision of flour being nearly exhausted, Frank Jardine, reluctantly abandoning the idea of getting into the Settlement, determined to return to the cattle, and with them, head the supposed bend of the Escape. Disheartening as this was, there was nothing else to be done in the present state of the country. Distance travelled, 7 miles westerly.

'February' 10.—Turning their backs on the mangroves and swamps of the Escape River, the little party faced for the camp, steering S.S.E. The first four miles was through boggy, swampy country, through which they walked, driving their horses before them. The remainder was over the usual iron-bark and bloodwood ridges, fairly grassed with coarse grasses, intersected with swamps and belts of scrub, through one of which they were three hours in forcing their way two miles. After 11 miles of this kind of travelling they camped, the horses completely knocked up, the men in not much better condition, having had to drag the horses out of bogs several times, besides cutting through the hanging vines of the scrubs. Distance 12 miles.

'February' 11.—The main camp was reached to-day, after another fatiguing journey of 11 or 12 miles, the first 6 miles similar to that of yesterday, the remainder through heath and brushwood. It was sundown before they reached the river, which they found much swollen. A heavy thunder-shower of two hours' duration, put up all the creeks bank high, one of which, at about two miles from the river, they had to swim across. Having struck it immediately opposite the camp, they left their jaded horses with their saddles on the north side, and swam across themselves to the party. During their absence another of the horses, "Pussey," had died from exhaustion.

'February' 12.—The meat at the camp being all consumed, it became necessary to halt for a couple of days, in order to kill and jerk a beast. The flour too was now exhausted, save 10 lbs., which was judiciously put by and reserved for an emergency. The day was spent in crossing back the four horses, with saddles and swags. The cattle were counted and some found missing; the Black-boys were therefore sent in search of them. A beast was killed, cut up, and jerked, a tedious task, from the absence of the sun. Although there were only a few light showers towards evening, the air was damp; the meat, therefore, had to be smoked under a covering.

Page 73

'February' 13.—The lost cattle were found to-day, the jerking of the meat finished, and preparations for a final start on the morrow completed. The unfortunate horses were in such wretched condition, that it was found necessary to lighten the loads to the Settlement. Four pack-saddles, two police saddles, and the two belonging to the Brothers were therefore abandoned, with the remainder of the odds and ends. The prospect before them was not very bright. With no provision save jerked meat, and with knocked-up horses, they were starting on a journey of at least 100 miles, when their destination was not more than 30 miles away from them. they hoped to head the bend of the river they were on (having reverted to the opinion that it was the Escape), without knowing how far beyond the lowest point of their first exploration this turning-point might be, or what obstructions might be a-head of them. On the other hand, the whole of the party were without sickness, and they had plenty of cattle to eat.

'February' 14.—A final start was made this morning from camp 82, of dreary memory, after a good deal of trouble in packing, choosing and rejecting what was too heavy or useless, and the other delays attendant on the breaking up of an established camp. The river was followed for 11 miles with the usual amount of bogging and difficulty, in crossing the small trench-like creeks already mentioned. In one of these they were compelled to abandon another horse (Tabinga). The poor brute fell in trying to cross, and when pulled out and set on his legs was too weak to stand. He had to be left, therefore, saddle and all. Another (Pussy) having died at the last camp, their number was now reduced to thirteen. Their loads were reduced to the slightest possible, and consisted merely of the jerked meat, the ammunition, and swags of the party. Distance 11 miles. (Camp LXXXIII.)

'February' 15.—A gloomy morning with light showers, 10 miles were accomplished to-day. Three hours were consumed in crossing one of the boggy gullies. Every horse had to be unpacked, and half of them had to be pulled across with ropes. The pack of another horse (Lady Scott) had to be abandoned. She was too weak to carry even the empty saddle. The camp was pitched in the angle formed by the large creek running into the river just below the gunyah camp of their first trip, mentioned January 30th. (Camp LXXXIV.)

'February' 16.—The Eliot was reached to-day 8 miles from the camp. It had fallen considerably, but was still too high to allow of crossing without taking off the packs. It was about thirty yards wide, and running clear, about five feet deep, where the party crossed. The camp was pitched on the main stream two miles further, making a total of 10 miles for the day's journey. (Camp LXXXV. Nonda.)

Page 74

'February' 17.—The lowest camp of the Brothers on their first trip was passed to-day at about 6 miles. The total distance they estimated they had travelled down the river on that occasion was 40 to 45 miles, as it will be remembered that they went 6 or 7 miles beyond this camp on the 1st of February. The true distance to the turning point by Mr. Richardson's reckoning, was estimated at 35 miles, which is probably correct. Mr. Richardson in his journal of to-day's date says, "they told me they had travelled 20 miles North and 30 miles West." A glance at sheet No. 14 will shew this to have been an error; and in a foot-note at February 2nd, he states, "I afterwards found that these distances were incorrect. The true distances West and North respectively from the 82nd camp to the point in our track where the Leader turned back, are about 24 miles W. and 7 N." Now, considering the tortuous course of the river, the nature of the country, the weather, and obstacles of the creeks, 6 miles is not a great error in westing. Mr. Richardson's own reckoning, generally, despite his advantage over the Brothers, in having nothing to do but follow the cattle, was not more to be depended upon, whilst the results of his observations by the sextant were not so much so, as he naively informs us he did not think he error in Latitude was more than 15 miles! It appears evident therefore that the dead reckoning of the explorers was of equal, if not greater value, as far as the journey was concerned, than the surveyor's, the chief result and use of whose presence in the party is, that we have been furnished with a very excellent and interesting map of the route; but it by no means assisted the Leader in the piloting of the Expedition, or resolved his doubts when at fault, either at this point or on leaving the Einasleih in search of the Lynd. The party camped at the end of about two miles on the right bank of a broad deep creek running in from S.W., when after turning out, some of them went fishing, but only one small cat-fish was caught.

'February' 18.—A slight rain fell during last night, but cleared off before morning. The creek was crossed at about a mile from the camp, cattle, horses, and men having to swim. The former took it like water-dogs, and the latter had as usual to carry their saddles, packs, and "traps" over on their heads. After ten miles of travelling over poorly-grassed stringy-bark ridges, the country resumed its old character of swamp, brushwood, and low scrubby banks, flooded for four or five feet, the overflow filling swamps running parallel, and about two or three hundred yards distant from the river. This was followed during the day's march, and they were elated with the hope that they had at length reached the much wished for bend, the course being slightly to the eastward of north. It was Mr. Jardine's intention to have again halted the party when they reached this point, and once more pushed forward in search of Somerset, but

Page 75

they were out of meat, and the party had started without breakfast, there being nothing to eat. He therefore camped at the end of 10 miles to kill a beast. there were a good many delays during the march, chiefly to pull the exhausted horses out of the constantly recurring bogs. Poor "Lady Scott" especially was with great difficulty got into camp. Distance 10 miles, N. 1/2 E. (Camp LXXXVII. Bloodwood)

'February' 19.—To-day was chiefly devoted to rest, and the cutting up, jerking, and smoking of the beef by the whites, the black-boys, after the manner of their race, dividing it pretty equally between sleeping and stuffing. The meat curing was as usual a slow process, there being no salt, and a gunyah having to be made to smoke it in. The river was here first observed to have a rise and fall in it of about six inches. Its width was about a quarter of a mile.

The latitude of this camp (87) is 11 degrees 11 minutes 13 seconds The latitude of camp (82) is 10 degrees 58 minutes 2 seconds The Northing therefore equals 13 minutes 11 seconds

'February' 20.—It commenced to rain at two o'clock this morning, and continued heavily as the party started. The river again turned to the Westward, to their great disappointment. The course was continued along it for 9 miles, when they were brought to a stand-still by a deep creek with boggy banks, twenty yards wide, flowing from the South. It was evidently affected by the tide, as the water was slightly brackish and the edge fringed by a species of mangrove. A crossing-place was looked for without success, and the camp was finally pitched, as the rain was pouring heavily. (Camp LXXXVIII.)

'February' 21.—This morning the Brothers, taking old Eulah with them, swam across the creek, alligators notwithstanding, and walked to the top of a high stringy-bark ridge on the south side. Selecting the highest tree he could find (a bloodwood) Alexander Jardine ascended it with Eulah, and from its top branches got a view that finally dispelled the doubts as to their position, and the identity of the stream they had traced down. Before him, at about 3 miles distant lay the mouth of the river, about 2 miles wide. Its course could without difficulty be traced from where they were till it debouched into the Gulf waters opposite a small island, which was easily recognized as Barn Island, whilst to the North, Endeavour Straits, and Prince of Wales Island could be distinctly seen. It was now perfectly plain that the river they had followed was not the Escape. They had therefore, been deceived a second time. It received the very appropriate name of Deception, but has since, by the direction of his Excellency Sir George Bowen, been charted, and is now known by the name of the Jardine. Descending from his perch, after half-an-hour spent in taking bearings by the compass to the different points of interest, Mr. Jardine joined his brother, who at once determined to return to camp 87, it being impossible to cross where they were. Re-crossing the

creek, they rejoined the party, reaching the camp at sun-set, under a heavy downpour of rain.

Page 76

'February' 22.—Although it was raining heavily with every appearance of a continuance, the party started to return up the river in excellent spirits. The Brothers were now certain that they should have no difficulty in finding the Settlement on their next trip. They were, however, very much puzzled as to where such a large stream as the Escape was found to be, should rise. They now re-traced their steps, and camped close to their last camp LXXXVII. Six miles.

'February' 23.—To-day was spent in killing and jerking a beast, and preparing for the Leader's third start in search of the Settlement. The rain poured down heavily, causing the river to rise very fast. Another raft similar to that made at camp 83, had to be constructed, a work of some time, for the only wood fit for making the frame was dry nonda, which was scarce. The rain too, very much impeded the drying of the beef, for which, as usual, a bark gunyah had to be erected. Everything, however, was got well forward for the important business of crossing the next morning.

'February' 24.—The horses, saddles, and rations were all crossed in safety to-day, though not without difficulty. In swimming the horses particular care had to be taken, for there was only one small spot on the other side at which they could be landed. As explained on the 5th, on the occasion of the second start, it requires a strong swift swimmer to lead a horse across a stream, and in this the white men, or at least, three of them, were much superior to the black-boys, who, although all good swimmers, were much more efficient in the service of the raft. This only illustrates the rule that most white men can beat the aboriginal in swimming fast, whilst the latter has superior endurance; but there is no doubt, that under the same conditions of education and practice, the civilized white man is superior to the savage in any physical function or exercise. The rain poured down consistently during the whole of the day, and a cold cutting wind drove the swimming party at intervals to the fires, where, whilst toasting the outward, they solaced the inner man with a decoction of Scrutton's, by courtesy called, soup, being an 'olla podrida', or more properly "bouillon," of the bones, gristle, head, and oddments of the lately-killed beast. This was always a stock repast after each kill-day, and there is but little doubt but that its "osmazome" contributed not a little, to the good health and heart of the party. Almost every exploring party on short commons, records some favourite cookery, some dish that their souls loved. In McKinlay's journey, the dish most in vogue was a kind of "amorphous" black-pudding, made of the carefully-saved blood of the bullock, horse, or sheep, as the case might be, boiled with some fat, and seasoned with a little condiment, which being of light carriage, can always be saved for such high occasions. In the present instance, the fat was always devoted to the greasing of the saddles,

Page 77

pack-straps, *etc.*, during the latter part of the journey, when clothing was at a premium; of the explorers themselves, “more aboriginum,” who found that the protection it afforded them against cold, wet, and mosquitoes, far outweighed any slight redolence, which, after all, could only be offensive to anyone not equally anointed. At night the Brothers camped on the north side of the Deception, or Jardine, leaving the party again to await their report and return, the cattle being in charge of Scrutton.

‘February’ 25.—There was an early start this morning, but the little party did not make much headway that day, for after two miles of boggy brushwood country their progress was suddenly arrested by a sea of water, the overflow of a large creek, the outline of which could be traced by a fringe of dark green foliated trees. Some fruitless attempts were made to cross it at different points. At the narrowest part they could find, on running it down at a spot where the channel was hemmed in by ridges on either side, it was still half-a-mile wide, and running very strongly in the actual channel. They therefore had to resign themselves to wait patiently till the flood went down, apparently not a near prospect, for the rain still continued to drizzle unceasingly. After hunting about for some time they were fortunate enough to find a good dry camp when turning out, they disposed themselves to await the subsidence of the water, with what patience they might. The next two days were spent in hunting for the pot, and exploring for a good crossing place. In the former they met with no success, all they were able to find being a kind of wild grape, about the size of a small marble. They are black and sweet, and as Alexander Jardine describes, “very good to eat, but they take all the skin off the tongue and lips!” On the evening of the second day they had the pleasure of seeing that the creek was slowly going down, giving promise that they might be able to cross it on the morrow.

‘February’ 28.—This morning they had the satisfaction of seeing that the creek had fallen sufficiently to enable them to cross, but not without swimming. At the spot they chose for going over the stream was about fifteen yards wide, but the current very rapid. The horses were crossed in the usual manner, swimming with their saddles on their backs, but the rations, *etc.*, were passed over by a different method, one which did credit to the projector. A kind of flying suspension bridge was improvised, by which they were slung to the other side, in a manner proving that necessity is the mother of invention. By attaching one end of their light tent-line to the branches of an overhanging tree on the hither side, and the other end to a butt on the opposite bank, the “swag” slid down by its own gravity, and was safely crossed. Their ‘impedimenta’ were thus safely transported to the opposite bank, the whole process occupying about an hour. They were well re-paid

Page 78

for their long patience, for immediately on attaining the other side, the country changed into good sound well-grassed stringy-bark ridges, which continued throughout the whole stage, with the exception of a few broad tea-tree gullies. They encamped at about 10 miles. Poor old Eulah experienced to-day, what he felt was a cruel disappointment. Just before getting into camp he espied what he supposed to be a fresh turkey's nest (the 'Talegalla Lathamii'); jumping off his horse, he eagerly commenced rooting it up, expecting to be rewarded by a fine haul of eggs. These, as is the habit of that bird, were deposited in a large mound formed of sticks, earth, and leaves. His disappointment and disgust were equal, and his language forcible and deep, on finding that he had been anticipated—the big mound was the abode of emptiness. The mystery was cleared up on going on a little way, when they found a black's camp about two days old, where the egg-chips shewed that the occupants had enjoyed Eulah's anticipated feed, the piccaninnies probably amusing themselves afterwards by filling up the nest to its original appearance. In the evening, whilst Alexander Jardine, was preparing the frugal supper (they generally ate their jerked meet raw, but on this occasion he was cooking it for a change), the Leader and Eulah walked to the top of a small sandy conical hill, about half-a-mile distant, when climbing the highest tree, they could find, they were rewarded by a fine view of Newcastle Bay, on the south-east of the bight, on which they were now camped. They had also the great satisfaction of finding that they had at last headed the Escape River.

'March' 1.—“A nasty wet morning.” The trio started early, thinking it quite possible that they might “pull up” something or other belonging to the Settlement before night, but they kept their thoughts to themselves. They had had so many disappointments that they felt that to hazard a guess even, was a mistake. After travelling over a great deal of low scrub and brushwood, which, however, was better than boggy ground (“to be without one or the other,” says Alexander Jardine “would have been too much to expect”) during a heavy shower of rain, about three o'clock, whilst riding over some low sandy ridges they suddenly came on to a number of blacks, camped on the outside of a thick scrub, at a point where it abutted on a small creek. The travellers immediately unslung their carbines, very dubious however as to whether they would go off (for they were all damp,) and prepared for the customary “set-to.” As hitherto, in all these encounters, they had always without any show of hostility on their part, been at once attacked, they were surprised to find the blacks, who were very numerous, bolt into the scrub, with the exception of three who stood their ground, and holding up their empty hands shewed that they were unarmed, dancing and shouting vociferously. Eulah was the first to detect what they said, and reining up called out

Page 79

"hold on, you hearim, that one bin yabber English." the brothers halted and listened. Sure enough they distinctly heard the savages shouting excitedly "Alico, Franco, Dzoco, Johnnie, Toby, tobacco, and other English words. It was now evident that they had met with friendly natives, who were acquainted with the Settlement, so they went forward and spoke to them. The blacks still continued to shout their shibboleth, pointing to Somerset, which they called "Kaieeby." After taking a rough inventory of the camp, without, however, finding anything that could have come from the Settlement, they started two of the most intelligent in front of them, making them understand by signs, that they wanted to be guided by the shortest route to Cape York. This they had no difficulty in doing, for they were by far the most intelligent blacks they had met with. The whole party now started forward, the sable guides piloting them over the best ground. In about 7 miles they arrived at a shallow salt-water creek, that empties itself into a northern inlet of Newcastle Bay. Here they met with a large body of unarmed blacks, who after making a great many signs, came up and presented them with some spears and wommerahs, which they had concealed in the mangroves, possibly as an earnest of peace. They also brought them a villainous compound, in some dilly-bags, a mixture of mangrove-roots and berries, pounded up into a pulp, of a yellowish color. Although it was very disagreeable to the taste, the travellers eat of it in token of confidence in their hosts, or rather to make them believe that they trusted them, for they were too well acquainted with the aboriginal nature to trust them in reality, and kept a wary though unobserved watch. The tide being in, and it being very late when the salt-water creek was reached, the Brothers determined to camp with their newly-made friends at their main camp, and accordingly followed them for about two miles, when they again hit the salt creek. Here three large canoes were moored to the mangroves, the largest was about 28 feet long, and 30 inches wide, cut out of the solid butt of some large tree, and very neatly finished. The tent was pitched, but not made much use of, for after dark the travellers left it and camped separately, each keeping vigilant watch all night. The natives spent it very differently, and, whether in honor of the whites, or in anticipation of picking their bones (it might have been either) they held high corroboree till about midnight, keeping up a fearful din, in which two large drums formed a prominent part. The name of this kind of drum is "Waropa" or "Burra Burra," and it is procured in barter or war from the Islanders of Torres Straits, who frequently visit the continent. It is neatly made of a solid piece of wood scooped out, in shape like an elongated dice box. One end is covered with the skin of a snake or iguana, the other being left open. When this instrument is played upon by a muscular and excited "nigger,"

Page 80

a music results which seems to please him in proportion to its intensity; keeping time with these, and aiding with their voices, they kept up their wild dance varying the chant with the peculiar b-r-r-r-r-r-oo, of the Australian savage (a sound made by “blubbing” his thick lips over his closed teeth,) and giving to their outstretched knees the nervous tremor peculiar to the corroboree. But a corroboree, like the ball of civilized life must have an end, and at length the tired dancers sought their several lairs, leaving the whites to watch the watery moon and lurid stars, and listen to the dull plashing of the tide through the mangroves, whilst waiting for daylight.

‘March’ 2.—At daylight the party started forward, accompanied by a strong detachment of “black guards,” who were much disgusted when the greater number of them were dismissed before they had proceeded far, no doubt wishing and expecting to share in the “bacca” or “bissiker,” which would reward the pilots. Mr. Jardine selected the three they had first met as guides, who turned out capital fellows. They explained that to go straight they would have “mouro pia” much scrub, and therefore led the way along the beach, carefully shewing the horsmen the hardest places on the sands. In rounding one of the rocky headlands, Eulah’s horse fell with him, causing the greatest amusement and merriment to the body-guard. To be laughed at by Myalls was nearly too much for Eulah’s equanimity, and could he have had his own way he would probably have resented the insult. As it was, his ire could only find vent in deeply muttered objurgations and abuse. At about noon the party sighted the Settlement, and involuntarily pulled up to gaze at the scattered and insignificant buildings they had so long and ardently desired to see and struggled to reach, hardly realizing that the goal was at last attained; when they again moved forward the guides set up an admonitory yell, which had the effect of bringing Mr. Jardine and their brother John to the door. For a considerable time before the arrival of the overland party, Mr. Jardine had not been without some uneasiness for the success and safety of the expedition. The time for their probable arrival had long elapsed. A report had reached him by the “Salamander” from Rockingham Bay, that the party were on the Lynd, unable to move forward for want of water, and that their provision was exhausted, and finally the wet season had set in. To facilitate their endeavours in finding the Settlement (a work of more than ordinary difficulty, arising from the intricacy of the rivers and scrubby nature of the country, at the apex of the Cape York peninsula,) Mr. Jardine had cut a marked tree line for 30 miles in a south-westerly direction, meeting a similarly marked line running east and west from the head of the Kennedy to the west or Gulf Coast, a distance of about 10 miles. On the latter and on either side of the longitudinal line, trees were marked at

Page 81

intervals, with instructions for their course, so that the party hitting the east and west line would be guided to the junction of the first one leading into the Settlement. The east and west line, it has been seen they overran, the rapid tropical growth of the scrub having so far obliterated it as to make it difficult to notice, or find, even if sought for. Yet through any depression that might naturally be induced by the delay, whatever his fears might have been for the success of the expedition, he felt none for the safety of his sons, well knowing and relying on their dauntless pluck, energy, and fitness for the work. His parting injunction to them had been, that whatever might betide, 'they should keep together'. He knew that he would not be disobeyed, and felt firm in the faith that, should the party by misfortune be reduced to their own two selves, with only their tomahawks in their hands, they would make their way to him. Thus, firmly reliant on the qualities of his boys, he waited with patience, and his faith was well rewarded. On the morning of the 2nd of March, Mr. Jardine being employed in some matters about the house, during an "evendown" pour of rain, was disturbed by a loud shouting, and looking out saw a number of blacks running up to the place. Imagining that the Settlement was about to receive another attack, (for the little community had already had to repulse more than one,) he seized his gun, always in readiness for an "alerte" and rushed out. Instead, however, of the expected enemy, he had the pleasure of seeing his long-looked-for sons, surrounded and escorted by their sable guides. For a long time previous, the natives who visited the Settlement had been made to understand that Mr. Jardine expected his sons with horses and cattle, and had been familiarized with their names, "Franco" "Alico" as also with others such as "Somerset," "Cape York," "Salamander," and "Toby," (Mr. Jardine's well-known retriever) the intention being that these should act as pass words when they met the party, a wise precaution, which, as it has been seen, probably prevented a collision. Thus, on nearing the Settlement the blacks set up the shouts that had alarmed him, screaming out his name Joko, Franco, Alicko, and such was the eagerness of each to prove that he (smiting himself on the breast) was "Kotaiga" or friend, pointing at the same time to the Brothers, as a witness of their truth, that it was with some difficulty that the Father could reach his sons to greet and welcome them. But for the horses they bestrode, even a father's eye might have failed to distinguish them from the blacks by whom they were surrounded. Six months of exposure to all weathers had tanned their skins, and so reduced their wardrobe, as to make their appearance primitive in the extreme, their heads being covered with a cap of emu feathers, and their feet cased in green hide mocassins. The rest of their costume was 'à l'ecossaise,' their pantaloons

Page 82

being reduced to the waist-bands and pockets, the legs having for a long time been matters of remembrance only. However, they were hearty and well, in high spirits, and in good case. During the hubbub caused by the tumultuous demonstrativeness of the natives, an amusing episode occurred, which is worthy of record. The attendant of Mrs. McClintock, a fine strapping girl from the Emerald Isle, whose good humour and light-heartedness in the discomforts of a new Settlement had earned her the name of cheerful Ellen, hearing the tumult outside, and seeing Mr. Jardine rush out gun in hand, imagined also that they were about to have another attack. Seizing her mistress in her arms, with more kindness than ceremony, she bore her away to her own room, where, having deposited her burden, she turned the key on her, saying, "that was no place for her whilst fighting was going on." Nor was it until she was well assured that there had been a false alarm that the kind-hearted wench released her mistress from durance.

It must be left to the imagination of the reader to realize the swelling feelings of joy and pride with which the Father grasped the hands of his gallant sons. After a separation of more than ten months, his boys had found their way to him at the extremity of the Australian Continent, by a journey of over 1600 miles, whose difficulties, hardships, dangers, and escapes, have seldom been paralleled, and never been surpassed in the whole annals of exploration. Had they, like poor Lichhardt, Kennedy, or Burke and Wills, perished in the attempt, they would have been honored as heroes, and a tablet or monument would have been handed down their names to posterity. As it was, thanks to a kind Providence, they were living heroes, who had sturdily accomplished their work, and brought their companions through without hurt or casualty. The modesty which is ever the attribute of true merit, will probably cause their cheeks to tinge in finding their exploits thus eulogized, but assuredly it is no exaggeration of praise to say, that they have won for themselves a lasting and honorable name in the records of Australian Exploration.

CHAPTER VI.

Chose Site for Station—Native Method of Using Tobacco—Return for the Cattle—The Lakes—Reach the Camp—Another Horse Dead —The Whole Party Cross the Jardine —Raft Upset—Cargo Saved— Deserted by Guides—Final Start for Settlement—Another Horse Abandoned—Horses Knocked Up—Cattle Missing—Choppagynya—Reach Vallack Point—Conclusion.

On the afternoon of their arrival in Somerset, the Brothers, after a "slight" luncheon, in which Mr. Jardine's preserved vegetables received very particular attention, manned the whale-boat belonging to the Settlement, and pulled over the Straits to Albany Island to get fresh horses. Two were got over, but night coming on, the crossing of the rest was deferred until the next day. The Strait is three-quarters-of-a-mile

Page 83

wide, which, with a current running upwards of five knots an hour, makes it an exhausting swim even for a strong horse. The next morning three more horses were crossed. The five expedition horses which these re-placed were in a miserable condition. Three of them had given in on the preceding day, two miles from the township, and had to be left behind for the time. With the fresh horses the Brothers were enabled to take a look about them, and select a site for the formation of a cattle station. A convenient spot was chosen at Vallack Point, about three miles from Somerset, to which it now only remained for them to fetch up their companions and the cattle. Two days were spent in recruiting the horses, the explorers themselves, probably, enjoying the “dolce far niente” and change of diet. The black guides were not forgotten, and received their reward of biscuit and tobacco. The manner in which they use this latter is curious, and worthy of notice. Not satisfied with the ordinary “cutty” of the whites, they inhale it in volumes through a bamboo cane. The effect is a profound stupefaction, which appears to be their acme of enjoyment. On the morning of the 5th, taking with them their younger brother, John Jardine, and their two guides, Harricome and Monuwah, and the five fresh horses, in addition to their own, the Brothers started to return to the cattle party, who were anxiously awaiting their return on the banks of the flooded Jardine. The black pilots were made to understand where the camp was, and promised to take them by a good road. The first stage was to the Saltwater Creek, on which they had camped with the tribe, which they reached in about 17 miles, passing on the way, three fine lakes, Wetura, Baronto, and “Chappagynyah,” at two, four, and eight miles from Somerset. The road was a fair one for the cattle, keeping along the line marked by Mr. Jardine the preceding year as before mentioned, and only presented a few light belts of scrub to go through. They were likewise enabled to choose a better crossing of the Saltwater Creek, where the swamps join and form a defined channel. The last two miles were very boggy, even the fresh and well-conditioned horses getting stuck occasionally.

‘March’ 6.—The camp was reached in the evening of to-day, at the end of about 22 miles, but the black pilots were of very little use, as shortly after starting they fairly got out of their latitude, and were obliged to resign the lead to the Brothers, who hit the river a little before dark, nearly opposite the camp. They found it about the same height as when first crossed, but it had been considerably higher during their absence. It being too late to cross, the party camped on their own side, and Messrs. Harricome and Monuwah swam over to see the new strangers and get a supply of beef. They returned with nearly a shoulder of a good sized steer, which entirely disappeared before morning, the whole night being devoted to feeding. The quantity of meat that a hungry native can consume is something astounding, but in this case beat anything that any of the whole party had ever seen. The natural result was a semi-torpor and a perfectly visible distention.

Page 84

'March' 7.—This morning the Brothers crossed over to the camp, when they had the satisfaction of finding, on counting the cattle, that a number were away, and when the horses were tried, two of them were found missing, besides one that had died during their absence, "Lady Scott." They were immediately sent for, and the remainder of the party employed in preparing for the crossing, and killing a beast. A fresh raft was made with the hide capable of carrying 400 lbs. weight. The two Somerset blacks evinced a great deal of surprise at sight of the cattle, and expressed it by chirping and making various curious noises with their tongues and mouths. Accustomed chiefly to fish, herbs, and roots, the succulent beef had charms which outweighed surprise, and another night was spent in feasting on the "oddments" of the fresh killed beef.

'March' 8.—The missing cattle and horses were brought in with the exception of three, which prevented the party crossing to-day, although all was now in readiness. The river was still 200 yards wide, and running strongly, so that it was expedient to cross the whole together.

'March' 9.—The three missing cattle not having been found, the crossing operations were commenced at mid-day. The width and appearance of the river made it difficult to make the cattle face it, but they were all safely crossed after a little time, with the exception of one, which broke away, and could not be recovered. The pack-horses were then put over, which was easily accomplished, and it then only remained to cross the packs and baggage. The raft answered admirably, and everything was ferried over in safety, till the last cargo, when a little adventure occurred, which nearly cost the life of one of the party. Cowderoy, being unable to swim, had to be taken across holding on to the raft, and was, therefore, left to the last; all went well with him until within 30 yards of the bank, when, whether from trepidation, induced by visions of alligators (with which the river indeed abounds), or from an attempt to strike out independently, he "succeeded" in upsetting and sinking the raft, and was with some difficulty got to the shore "quitte pour la peur." In truth it requires some nerve for a man who can't swim to cross a wide and rapid river. Without a confiding trust in the means adopted for his transport, a catastrophe is not an unlikely result. The writer has known instances of persons crossing broad rivers supported by a spear held between two blacks, by holding on to a bullock's tail, and even sitting on a horse's back, but in every case the success of the attempt depends almost entirely on the coolness of the individual, and even with this essential, he has known some fatal cases, so that Cowderoy might congratulate himself on his safe transit. The packs, *etc.*, which formed the last cargo, were recovered after some time, the distance from the shore being slight, and Cowderoy soon recovered his accustomed good humor. By four o'clock everything had been crossed in safety, save the four beasts before mentioned; but on camping for the night it was found that the guides had decamped, their unwonted high feeding, having, no doubt, induced an indisposition to work, a result not confined to blacks alone.

Page 85

'March' 10.—This morning the "Cowal," or watercourse, which had detained the Brothers on their first trip, had to be swum over, and here poor Ginger, one of the horses, got hopelessly bogged, and though got out and put on his legs with saplings, was too exhausted to go on, and had to be abandoned. The distance accomplished was 11 miles.

'March' 11.—The line marked by Mr. Jardine was followed to-day. A scrub occurred on a creek called Wommerah Creek, through which it took two hours to drive the cattle. Only 10 miles were made, and the camp was pitched at about 4 miles from the mouth of the creek where the corroboree was held. Three horses were knocked up during the day, which prevented their getting as far as intended.

'March' 12.—On counting the cattle it was found that 30 head had been dropped in coming through the scrub at Wommerah Creek. Two of the black-boys were sent after them, and the Brothers went out to find a crossing-place over Ranura Creek, (their last camp in Somerset.) Here they met the same tribe, (known as Wognie's,) and bartered "bacca" and "bissika," against "moro wappi," or fish, with which the camp was plentifully supplied in the evening. The cattle were recovered all but five. The country is described as being composed of ridges of white and red sand, intersected by swamps of tea-tree, pandanus, and banksia, the crest of the ridges being generally surmounted by a patch of scrub. The timber, bloodwood, mahogany, stringy-bark, and nonda.

'March' 13.—A late start was made to-day, for some of the horses were away. The camp was formed on the banks of the lake before-mentioned, 8 miles from Somerset, Chappagynyah, which is described as teeming with crocodiles. The next day the party reached their final resting place, probably not without some exhilaration in feeling that their journey was over. They were met at Baronto, by Mr. Jardine, who had ridden out from Somerset for the purpose. The camp was established at Vallack Point, where the wearied horses and cattle at length found rest, whilst their drivers were able to indulge in the unwonted luxuries of regular feeding and uninterrupted sleep: luxuries which few but those who have experienced hunger and broken rest can fully appreciate. They had been on the road for 5 months, travelled over 1600 miles, the last 250 of which were, as we have seen, performed on foot, and by most of the party barefooted, whilst for the last four weeks their food had consisted chiefly of jerked veal, fish without salt, and the wild fruits and herbs they might find in the bush. In addition to the distance travelled over by the whole party, and over which the cattle were driven, the Brothers traversed more than 1200 miles in their exploratory trips ahead, looking for the lost horses, *etc.* Alexander Jardine's journey down the Einasleih alone amounted to little less than 300. It may be imagined, therefore, that the return to the habits and fare of civilized life must have been an agreeable change.

Page 86

After an interval employed by the Brothers in forming a station at Vallack Point, they returned with their father to Brisbane, in H.M.S. Salamander, leaving their younger brother, John, in charge of the newly-formed station, where the cattle were doing well. Mr. Richardson left in the same vessel, and on arriving in Brisbane immediately set to work to chart the route. Having every facility at hand in the office of the Surveyor-General, the error of the river Lynd was rectified, and a map compiled, shewing the route, from which that now presented to the reader has been reduced. A glance at it will shew that a large tract of unexplored country exists between the track of the Jardines and that of Kennedy, which affords ample scope for, and may possibly repay future explorations. Already stock is on the road to occupy country on the lower Einasleih, and it is not improbable that before long the rich valley of the Archer will add its share to the pastoral wealth of Queensland.

Finis.

[Plate: *Somerset Cape York*. Lithograph.]

APPENDIX

The melaleuca ('Tea-tree Gum M. *Leucodendron*.')

This tree, of which there are several varieties, is very common to Northern Australia; the drooping kind ('*Melaleuca Leucodendron*'), occupying the beds and margins of the rivers, where its long pendant branches weeps the stream, as does the graceful willow of Europe. Its bark is in thin paper-like layers, whilst its leaves are like that of the gum, but thinner and straighter. It is remarkable for containing an extraordinary quantity of brackish water, which pours out in a torrent, when the bark is cut through, to the extent of from a quart to a gallon. Another variety is found chiefly in flat sandy country and shallow swamps. It is much smaller than that of the rivers, and the leaves broader, stiff, and upright, its blossoms nearly the same. It is indifferently called weeping gum, tea-tree gum, and tea-tree, although it is in no way allied to the latter. It is with the upright kind that the arid levels of the Staaten are chiefly timbered.

GARRAWAN.

This scrub, one of the numerous family of accacia, which together with the pandanus, gave the travellers so much annoyance on their journey, occupies a large extent of country about the Richardson range, from the Batavia to Cape York. It much resembles, and is probably identical with that which grows in the neighbourhood of

Sydney, to the appearance of which, indeed, that part of the Peninsula closely resembles.

FLOCK PIGEON OF THE GULF ('Phaps Histrionica.')

These beautiful pigeons which are alluded to by Leichhardt, are at certain seasons found in immense flocks in the plain country about the Gulf of Carpentaria. Their range is wide, as in 1846 they appeared in flocks of countless multitudes on the Murrumbidgee River, N.S.W., probably driven from their usual regions by drought. They are described and figured in Mr. Gould's great work on the Australian birds.

Page 87

THE EINASLEIH.

This river was erroneously supposed by its first settlers to be the Lynd of Leichhardt. That such was not the case, was proved by Alexander Jardine, who traced it down for 180 miles from Carpentaria Downs, when he turned back, within about a day's stage of its junction with the Gilbert, fully satisfied that it could not be the Lynd. Since then it has, I believe, been traced into the Gilbert, and thence to the Gulf. Its importance would lead to the supposition that it was the principal branch of the Gilbert. There is an excellent cattle country on the lower part, as described in the text which has probably ere this been occupied by our pioneers.

THE NONDA ('Parinarium Nonda. F. Mueller.')

This tree so named by Leichhardt's black-boys (described in Bentham's 'Flora Australiensis'), is very abundant north of the Einasleih, which is possibly the extreme latitude of its zone south. It formed an important accession to the food of the party, and it is highly probable that their good health may be attributable to the quantity of fruit, of which this was the principal, which they were able to procure, there being no case of scurvy during the journey, a distemper frequently engendering in settled districts, when there is no possibility of varying the diet with vegetables. The foliage of the tree is described as of a bright green, the fruit very abundant, and much eaten by the natives. It is of about the size and appearance of a yellow egg plum, and in taste like a mealy potatoe, with, however, a trace of that astringency so common to Australian wild fruits. The wood is well adapted for building purposes.

Burdekin duck ('Tadorna Raja').

This beautiful species of shelldrake, though not numerous, has a wide range, extending from the richmond river to Cape York. It frequents the more open flats at the mouths of rivers and creeks.

THE NATIVE BEE.

This little insect (called Wirotheree in the Wellington dialect), the invasion of whose hoards so frequently added to the store of the travellers, and no doubt assisted largely in maintaining their health, is very different from the European bee, being in size and appearance like the common house-fly. It deposits its honey in trees and logs, without any regular comb, as in the case of the former. These deposits are familiarly known in the colony as "sugar bags," (sugar bag meaning, aboriginice, anything sweet), and require some experience and proficiency to detect and secure the aperture by which the bees enter the trees, being undistinguishable to an unpractised eye. The quantity of

honey is sometimes very large, amounting to several quarts. Enough was found on one occasion to more than satisfy the whole party. Its flavor differs from that of European

Page 88

honey almost as much as the bee does in appearance, being more aromatic than the latter: it is also less crystalline. As the celebrated “Narbonne honey” derives its excellence from the bees feeding on the wild thyme of the south of France, so does the Australian honey derive its superior flavour from the aromatic flowers and shrubs on which the Wirotheree feeds, and which makes it preferred by many to the European.

THE APPLE-GUM ('Angophora?')

I have been at some pains to discover to what species this tree belongs, but further than that it is one of the almost universal family of the Eucalypti, have not been able to identify it. As mentioned in the text, it was found very valuable for forging purposes by the Brothers, who were able to bring their horse-shoes almost to a white heat by using it. It is like box in appearance, and very hard.

TERRY'S BREECH-LOADERS.

This formidable weapon can hardly receive too high a commendation, and to its telling efficiency is probably attributable the absence of any casualty to the party in their many encounters with the savages. Not only for its long range is it valuable, but for its superior certainty in damp or wet weather, its charge remaining uninjured after days and weeks of interval, and even after immersion in water, making it available when an ordinary piece would be useless. The effect of the conical bullet too is much more sure and complete, which, when arms 'must' be resorted to, is of great importance.

THE MARAMIE.

This shell-fish is to be found in almost all the Australian rivers and lagoons. It is in size and appearance very much like the little cray-fish or “Ecrevisses” which usually garnish the “Vol-au-vent” of Parisian cookery, and of very delicate flavor.

SPINIGEX, Spear Grass, Needle Grass, or “Saucy Jack” ('Triodia Irritans.')

This grass, so well known to all Australian travellers, is a certain indication of a sandy sterile country. The spinifex found in the Mally scrubs of the south attains a great size, generally assuming the appearance of a large tuft or bush from one to two feet in diameter, and twelve to eighteen inches high. When old, its sharp points, like those of so many immense darning needles set on end at different angles, are especially

annoying to horses, who never touch it as food, except when forced by starvation. In Northern Queensland the present species is found abundantly from Peak Downs to Cape York.

FIVE CORNERS ('Stypelia?')

This fruit is well known and very common in the neighbourhood of Sydney, and was found in the scrubby region about the Richardson Range, which, as before mentioned, is of similar character to that description of country. It does not, so far as I am aware, exist in any other part of Queensland.

Page 89

THE NATIVE PLUM ('Owenia.')

This tree, of which there are several species, ('Owenia Cerasifera' and 'Owenia Vanessa' being most common in Queensland), is found along the whole of the east coast, as far south as the Burnett, and is one of the handsomest of Australian forest trees. Its purple fruit has a pleasant acid flavor, and is probably a good anti-scorbutic. It is best eaten after having been buried in the ground for a few days, as is the custom of the natives. The stone is peculiar, having much the shape of a fluted pudding basin. The timber is handsomely grained and is of durable quality.

On the subjects of the fruits, edible plants, and roots of Queensland, Mr. Anthelme Thozet, of Rockhampton, whose name is well and deservedly known to Botanists, has been at great pains to prepare for the approaching Exhibition at Paris, a classified table of all that are known as consumed by the natives raw and prepared, and to his enthusiastic attention to the subject, we are indebted for the possession of a large and important list, a knowledge of which would enable travellers in the wilds of the colony to support themselves from their natural productions alone, in cases where their provision was exhausted.

THE CALAMUS ('Calamus Australis.')

This plant belongs to a genus of palms, the different species of which yield the rattan canes of commerce. Its form in the scrubs of the Cape York Peninsula is long and creeping, forming a net work of vines very formidable to progress.

THE PITCHER PLANT ('Nepenthes Kennedyana.')

This interesting plant was first noticed to the north of the Batavia River, and is common to the swamps of the peninsula. It has been described and named in honor of the unfortunate Kennedy, who first noticed it.

THE FERGUSON OR STAATEN.

This stream, whose arid banks Mr. Jardine was forced to trace to the sea, in consequence of the sterility and waterless character of the levels to the northward, is nevertheless of some importance. Like most of the northern rivers, it is a torrent stream, whose bed is insufficient to carry off its waters during the flooded season, causing the formation of lagoons, back-waters, and ana-branches, and yet in the dry months, containing only a thread of water trickling along a waste of sand, sometimes three or four hundred yards wide, and at intervals losing itself and running under the surface. Should the northern branch which was seen to join amongst the ana-branches near its

debouchure prove to be the larger stream, that followed by the party might still retain the name of "the Ferguson," given to it by the Brothers, in honor of the governor of Queensland. It receives Cockburn Creek, one of importance, which, just before

Page 90

joining it, receives the waters of another large creek from the south, which was supposed to be Byerley Creek, but this as mentioned in the text, is unlikely, for when the Brothers were in quest of the Lynd (which they never reached at all) they left Byerley Creek trending to the south, at a point considerably to the west of the longitude of that influence. It is more probable, therefore, that Byerley Creek is a tributary of either the Einasleih or Gilbert, or that it is an independant stream altogether, running into the Gulf between the Gilbert and Staaten rivers.

It appears unlikely also that any practicable route for stock will be discovered between the coast which Mr. Jardine skirted, and the heads of the rivers Staaten, Lynd, Mitchell, and Batavia. The interval between Kennedy's track and that of the Brothers has yet to be explored, when the best line will probably be found nearer to the former than the latter, for the country between the Staaten and Mitchell near their sources has been proven to be a barren and waterless waste, the good country only commencing beyond the Mitchell, and forming the valley of the Archer, but terminating about the Coen.

FATE OF THE MULE.

The fate of the unfortunate mule, whose loss was amongst the most severely felt of the journey, has come to light in rather an interesting manner. In a late letter from Cape York, Mr. Frank Jardine mentions that some natives had visited the Settlement at Somerset, amongst whom were seen some of the articles carried in the mule's pack bags. On questioning them he found that they were familiar with all the incidents of the journey, many of which they described minutely. The mule had been found dead, having shared the fate of Lucifer and Deceiver, and perished from thirst, and his packs of course ransacked. They had watched the formation of the Cache, when the party abandoned the heaviest articles of the equipment, and in like manner ransacked it. These blacks must have travelled nearly 500 miles, for the Staaten is nearly 450 miles in a straight line from Somerset, and were probably amongst those who dogged the steps of the party so perseveringly to within 100 miles of Cape York, frequently attacking it as described. From their accounts it appears that the expedition owed much of its safety to their horses, of which the blacks stood in great dread. They described minutely the disasters of the poison camp on the Batavia, particularising the fact of Frank Jardine having shot one of the poisoned horses, his favourite, with his revolver, their start on foot, and other things. From this it would appear that they closely watched and hung on to the steps of the party, though only occasionally daring to attack them; and proves that but for the unceasing and untiring vigilance of the Brothers, and their prompt action when attacked, the party would in all probability have been destroyed piece meal. The utter faithlessness, treachery,

Page 91

and savage nature of the northern natives is shown by their having twice attempted to surprise the settlement whilst Mr. Jardine, senior, was resident there, although they had been treated with every kindness from the first. In these encounters two of the marines were wounded, one of whom has since died from the effects, whilst others had narrow escapes, John Jardine, junr. having had a four-pronged spear whistle within two inches of his neck. Since then they have not ceased to molest the cattle, and in an encounter they wounded Mr. Scrutton. They have utilized their intercourse with the whites so far as to improve the quality of their spears by tipping them with iron, a piece of fencing wire, 18 inches long, having been found on one taken from them on a late occasion. In his last letter Frank Jardine mentions an encounter with a “friendly” native detected in the act of spearing cattle, in which he had a narrow escape of losing his life, and states that, despite their professions of friendship, they are always on the watch for mischief. It is evident therefore, that no terms can safely be held with a race who know no law but their own cowardly impulse of evil, and that an active and watchful force of bushmen well acquainted with savage warfare is necessary to secure the safety of the young settlement. For a description of the habits and the character of the Australian and Papuan races, which people the Peninsula and the adjacent islands of Torres Straits, the reader is referred to the interesting narrative of the voyage of the Rattlesnake, by Mr. John McGillivray, in which the subject is ably and exhaustively treated, and which leaves but little to add by succeeding writers.

THE MIDAMO.

The “villanous compound, a mixture of mangrove roots and berries,” which was presented to the explorers by the friendly natives as a peace-offering on first meeting them near Somerset, was probably what is described as the “Midamo” in Mr. Anthelme Thozets’ valuable pamphlet already alluded to above on “the roots, tubers, bulbs, and fruits used as vegetable food by the aboriginals of Northern Queensland.” The midamo is made by baking the root of the common mangrove (*Avicennia Tomentosa*), which is called Egaie by the tribes of Cleveland Bay, and Tagon-Tagon by those of Rockhampton. Its preparation is described at page 13.

Somerset.

A description of the settlement at Port Albany, Cape York, at the time of the arrival of the Brothers has been carefully drawn up in the shape of a report to the Colonial Secretary of Queensland by Mr. Jardine. It is so full and interesting that I cannot do better than

publish it in extenso. It first appeared in the 'Queensland Daily Guardian' of 24th June, 1865. A letter from Mr. Jardine to Sir George Bowen, reporting the arrival of the sons, and epitomising the events of the journey, together with the report of Dr. Haran, R.N., Surgeon in charge of the detachment of Royal Marines, on the climate of Cape York, showing its great salubrity, are also added:—

Page 92

Port Albany.

Somerset, March 1st, 1865.

Sir,—My former reports to you having been, to a certain extent, necessarily taken up with matters of detail in reference to the formation of the new settlement of Somerset, and that object being now in such a state of completion as to enable me to say that it is fairly established, so far as the comfort and safety of the present residents are concerned, I now do myself the honor to lay before you the result of such general observations as I have been able to make on what may be termed general matters of interest.

2. The portion of the country to which my observations will particularly apply is that which, I think, may correctly be termed the “York Peninsula proper,” and comprises the land lying to the northward of a line drawn from the estuary of the Kennedy River, at the head of Newcastle Bay, to the opposite or north-west coast. The general course of the Kennedy River runs in this line, and from the head of the tideway to the north-west coast the breadth of land does not exceed six miles. The mouth of the river falling into the sea a short distance to the southward of Barn Island will be nearly met by the western extremity of this line.

3. The land on the neck thus formed presents singular features. There is no defined or visible water shed; a succession of low irregular ridges, divided by swampy flats, extends from coast to coast, and the sources of the streams running into either overlap in a most puzzling manner. The large ant-hills which are spread over the whole of this country may be taken as sure indicators of the nature of the soils; on the ridges a reddish sandy loam, intermixed with iron-stone gravel, prevails; on the flats a thin layer of decomposed vegetable matter overlays a white sand, bearing ‘Melaleuca’ and ‘Pandanus’, with a heavy undergrowth of a plant much resembling tall heath. Nearly every flat has its stream of clear water; the elegant “pitcher” plant grows abundantly on the margins. The timber is poor and stunted, chiefly bloodwood and ‘grevillea’; and the grass is coarse and wiry.

4. Leaving this neck of barren and uninteresting country, the land to the northward rises, and a distinct division or spine is formed, ending in Cape York. From it, on either side, spurs run down to the coast, frequently ending in abrupt precipices overhanging the sea; in other places gradually declining to the narrow belt of flat land which occasionally borders the shore. The formation is, I may say, entirely sandstone, overlaid in many places by a layer of lava-like ironstone. Porphyry occurs occasionally in large masses, split and standing erect in large columns, at a distance resembling basalt. The sandstone is of the coarsest quality, almost a conglomerate, and is soft and friable; exposure to the air might probably harden it if quarried, when it would be available for rough building. The ridges, with very few

Page 93

exceptions, are topped with large blocks of ferruginous sandstone, irregularly cast about, and are covered with a thick scrub, laced and woven together with a variety of vines and climbers, while the small valleys intervening bear a strong growth of tall grass, through which numerous creeping plants twine in all directions, some of them bearing beautiful flowers. Among them I may particularise two species of 'Ipomea', which I believe to be undescribed, and a vine-like plant, bearing clusters of fruit much resembling in appearance black Hambro Grapes, wholesome and pleasant to the taste. The scrubs are formed of an immense variety of trees and shrubs, far too numerous for me to name, were I able to do so. Some of them have fine foliage, and bear handsome flowers and agreeably tasted fruit, and would form most ornamental additions to our southern gardens and pleasure grounds. Several species of the numerous climbing plants produce a fine and strong fibre, from which the natives make their fishing lines. Some fine varieties of palm are found on the moister lands near the creeks, two especially elegant, a 'Seaforthia' and a 'Caryota'. A wild banana, with small but good fruit, is also found in such localities. On the open grounds the bloodwood, Moreton Bay ash, and a strong growing acacia are the principal trees. Timber for building is scarce, and of very indifferent quality. The iron-bark and pine are unknown here.

5. The soil on these grounds is a reddish loam, more or less sandy, and thinly covered with a coarse ironstone gravel. Much of the ironstone has a strong magnetic property—so much so as to suspend a needle; and it was found a great inconvenience by Mr. Surveyor Wilson, from its action on the instruments. As the land descends, the soil becomes more sandy. Near the creek patches with a considerable mixture of vegetable loam are found, which would be suitable for the growth of vegetables, bananas, *etc.* The grass is generally long and coarse, and soon after the rainy season ceases becomes, under the influence of the strong south-east winds, withered and dry. Horses and cattle keep their condition fairly, but sheep do not thrive; the country is quite unsuited to them. Goats may be kept with advantage; and pigs find an abundant supply of food in the scrubs and swamps.

6. In the Zoology of the district, the careful researches of Mr. M'Gillivray—the naturalist attached to H.M.'s surveying ship *Rattlesnake*—have left little room for the discovery of many positive novelties. I have, however, been able to note many interesting facts in the economy and habits of the birds, especially such as relate to their migration. Several of the species found here are season visitors of New South Wales, and it is interesting to compare the times of their arrival and departure in this place with those in the southern colony.

7. The animals afford small variety. The dingo, or native dog, four species of the smaller kangaroos, and two other marsupials are found. One, an elegant little squirrel-like opossum, striped lengthways with black and white, I believe to be new.

Page 94

8. The birds are more plentiful. My collection comprises more than one hundred species of land birds, many of them remarkable for beauty of plumage, and peculiarity of form, structure, and habit. Among them the most remarkable are the great black macaw, ('*Microglossus Atterrimus*') the magnificent rifle bird, ('*Ptiloris Magnifica*') and the rare and beautiful wood kingfisher, ('*Tan Ts-ptera Sylvia*'). The latter first made its appearance here on the 30th of November last. On the afternoon and night of the 28th and the 29th of that month there was a heavy storm of rain, with wind from the north-east, and the next morning the bush along the shore was ringing with the cries of the new arrivals. To my constant enquiries of the blacks for this bird, I was always told by them that when the wind and rain came from the north-west the birds would come, and their prediction was verified to the letter. They also say the birds come from "Dowdui" (New Guinea). I think this probable, as several of the birds described by the French naturalist, M. Lesson, as found by him in New Guinea have also appeared here for the breeding season. The '*Megapodius Tumulus*' is also worthy of mention, on account of the surprising structure of its nest. The mound resembles, and is composed of the same materials as that of the brush turkey ('*Talegulla*'), but is very much larger in size. Some that I have measured are upwards of thirty (30) feet in diameter at the base, and rise at the natural angle to a height of fifteen (15) feet or more. It is wonderful how birds so comparatively diminutive can accumulate so large a pile. These birds live in pairs, and several pairs use the same mound. The eggs are deposited at a depth of from one to three feet; the heat at that depth is very great, more than the hand can bear for any length of time. I cannot say whether the young, when released from the mounds, are tended by the parents; they, however, return and roost in the mounds at night. The flesh of the '*Megapodius*' is dark and flavorless, being a mass of hard muscle and sinew. birds, which may be called game, are not numerous. The brush turkey ('*Talegalla*'), the '*Megapodius*', several species of pigeon, with a few ducks and quail, comprise the whole.

9.—Fish are in abundance, and in great varieties; some of them of strange form and singular brilliancy of coloring. The grey mullet, the bream—a fish much resembling in general appearance the English pike—and several others, are excellent eating.

10.—Three species of turtle are plentiful during the season, that is, the period when they approach the shores to deposit their eggs, the green, the hawksbill, and another species, which grow to a much larger size than either of the above. The natives take large numbers of the former; indeed, from the month of November till February turtle forms their principal food. The green turtle are taken in the water by the blacks, who display great address in "turning"

Page 95

them; they are approached when asleep on the surface; the black slips gently from his canoe and disappears under water, and rising beneath the animal, by a sudden effort turns it on its back, and by a strong wrench to the fore flipper disables it from swimming. The fisherman is assisted by his companions in the canoe, and a line is secured to the turtle. This is hazardous sport, and deep wounds are frequently inflicted by the sharp edges of the shells, which in the female turtle are very sharp. A singular mode of taking the hawksbill turtle is followed by the natives here. This custom, though said to be known so long back as the time of the discovery of America by Columbus, is so strangely interesting that I will give a short account of it, as I have seen it practised. A species of sucking fish ('Remora') is used. On the occasion to which I allude two of these were caught by the blacks in the small pools in a coral reef, care being taken 'not to injure them'. They were laid in the bottom of the canoe, and covered over with wet sea weed—a strong fishing line having been previously fastened to the tail of each. Four men went in the canoe; one steering with a paddle in the stern, one paddling on either side, and one in the fore-part looking out for the turtle and attending to the fishing lines, while I sat on a sort of stage fixed midship supported by the outrigger poles. The day was very calm and warm, and the canoe was allowed to drift with the current, which runs very strong on these shores. a small turtle was seen, and the sucking fish was put into the water. At first it swam lazily about, apparently recovering the strength which it had lost by removal from its native element; but presently it swam slowly in the direction of the turtle till out of sight; in a very short time the line was rapidly carried out, there was a jerk, and the turtle was fast. The line was handled gently for two or three minutes, the steersman causing the canoe to follow the course of the turtle with great dexterity. It was soon exhausted and hauled up to the canoe. It was a small turtle, weighing a little under forty pounds (40 lbs.), but the sucking fish adhered so tenaciously to it as to raise it from the ground when held up by the tail, and this some time after being taken out of the water. A strong breeze coming on, the canoe had to seek the shore without any more sport. I have seen turtle weighing more than one hundred (100) pounds, which had been taken in the manner described. Though large numbers of the hawksbill turtles are taken by the Cape York natives, it is very difficult to procure the shell from them; they are either too lazy to save it, or if they do so, it is bartered to the Islanders of Torres' Straits, who use it for making masks and other ornaments.

Page 96

11. Although there is a considerable variety of reptiles, snakes do not appear to be very numerous. The common brown snake and death-adder are found; carpet snakes (a kind of 'boa'), appear to be the most common, and grow to a large size. They have been very troublesome by killing our poultry at night. They seem to be bloodthirsty creatures, frequently killing much larger animals than they can possibly swallow, and are not satisfied with one victim at a time. One which was killed in my fowl-house had three half grown chickens compressed in its folds and held one in its jaws. A short time since I was roused in the middle of the night by the piteous cries of a young kangaroo dog, and on running out found it rolling on the ground in the coils of a large carpet snake. The dog was severely bitten in the loin, but in the morning was quite well, proving that the bite of this reptile is innocuous. This snake measured nearly twelve feet in length.

12. Crocodiles are found in numbers in the Kennedy River and a lagoon, which has communication with its estuary. They are also seen occasionally in the bays in Albany Passage.

13. Of the aborigines of Cape York I can say little more than has already been so often repeated in descriptions of the natives of other parts of the Australian continent. The only distinction that I can perceive, is that they appear to be in a lower state of degradation, mentally and physically, than any of the Australian aboriginal tribes which I have seen. Tall well-made men are occasionally seen; but these almost invariably show decided traces of a Papuan or new Guinea origin, being easily distinguished by the "thrum" like appearance of the hair, which is of a somewhat reddish tinge, occasioned no doubt by constant exposure to the sun and weather. The color of their skin is also much lighter, in some individuals approaching almost to a copper color. The true Australian aborigines are perfectly black, with generally woolly heads of hair; I have however, observed some with straight hair and features prominent, and of a strong Jewish cast. The body is marked on each shoulder with a shield-like device, and on each breast is generally a mark in shape of a heart, very neatly executed. The large cicatrices which appear on the bodies of the tribes of Southern Australia are not used here; nor is a front tooth taken out at the age of puberty. The 'septum' of the nose is pierced, and the crescent-shaped tooth, of the dugong is worn in it on state occasions; large holes are also made in the ears, and a piece of wood as large as a bottle cork, and whitened with pipe clay, is inserted in them. A practise of cutting the hair off very close is followed by both sexes, seemingly once a year, and wigs are made of the hair. These are decorated with feathers, and worn at the 'corrobories' or gatherings. The women hold, if possible, a more degraded position than that generally assigned to them among the Australian aborigines. They are indeed wretched creatures. The only covering worn by them is a narrow belt of twisted grass, with a fringe of strips of palm leaves in front. the men go entirely naked. The aborigines make no huts. In the wet weather a rude screen of leafy boughs, with palm leaves—if any happen to grow in the neighbourhood—is set up as a shelter.

Page 97

14. The arms used by these natives are few and simple. Four sorts of spears, made from the suckers of a very light wood tree with large pith, headed with hard wood and generally topped with bone so as to form a point or barb, are the most common. The end of the tail of a species of ray fish is sometimes used as a point. It is serrated and brittle, and on entering any object breaks short off. It is said to be poisonous, but I do not believe such to be the case, as one of the marines stationed here was speared in the shoulder with one of these spears, and no poisonous effect was produced. The point which broke short off, however, remained in the wound, and could not be extracted for many months. The spear most commonly in use, and the most effective, has merely a head of very hard wood, from a species of acacia, scraped to a very fine sharp point. These are the only spears which can be thrown with any precision to a distance—they are sent with considerable force. I extracted two from the thigh of one of my horses; the animal had another in the shoulder, which had entered to a depth of five and a half inches. All spears are thrown with the 'wommera', or throwing stick. A rudely made stone tomahawk is in use among the Cape York natives, but it is now nearly superseded by iron axes obtained from the Europeans. I have seen no other weapons among them; the boomerang and nulla-nulla (or club) are not known.

15. The greatest ingenuity which the natives display is in the construction and balancing of their canoes. These are formed from the trunk of the cotton tree ('Cochlospermum') hollowed out. The wood is soft and spongy, and becomes very light when dry. The canoes are sometimes more than fifty feet in length, and are each capable of containing twelve or fifteen natives. The hull is balanced and steadied in the water by two outrigger poles, laid athwart, having a float of light wood fastened across them at each end—so that it is impossible for them to upset. A stage is formed on the canoe where the outriggers cross, on which is carried the fishing gear, and, invariably, also fire. The canoes are propelled by short paddles, or a sail of palm-leaf matting when the wind is fair. Considerable nicety is also shown in the making of fishing lines and hooks. The former are made from the fibres of a species of climber very neatly twisted. The fish-hooks are made of tortoise-shell, or nails procured from wreck timber. They are without barbs, and our fish-hooks are eagerly sought for in place of them.

16. The food of the natives consists chiefly of fish, and, in the season, turtle, with roots and fruits. These latter and shell-fish it is the business of the females to collect and prepare. They may, however, be truly said to be omnivorous, for nothing comes amiss to them, and the quantity they can consume is almost incredible. I have seen them luxuriating on the half putrid liver of a large shark cast up on the beach, the little black children scooping up the filthy oil, and discussing it with apparently the greatest gusto.

Page 98

17. These remarks apply to the four tribes which inhabit the territory within the limits mentioned at the commencement of this report—viz., the peninsula to the northward of the Kennedy River. These four tribes are not distinguishable from each other in any distinct peculiarity that I can perceive. They keep each to their own territory, except on the occasion of a grand “corroborie,” when the whole assemble. They are at present on terms of peace nominally. Should a safe opportunity of cutting off a straggler offer, I have no doubt it would be taken advantage of. They are cowardly and treacherous in the extreme. The “Gudang” tribe, claiming the land from Cape York to Fly Point, at the entrance of Albany Pass, is small in numbers, having, I fancy, been seriously thinned by their neighbours, the “Kororegas,” from the Prince of Wales’ Island, in Torres’ Straits, who frequently come down upon them. Paidá, Mr. M’Gillivray’s ‘kotaiga’ (friend), was not long since killed by them. The “Goomkoding” tribe, who live on the north-western shore, I have seen little of. They and the “Gudang” seem to hold most communication with the islanders of ‘Torres’ Straits, the intermixture of the races being evident. “Kororega” words are used by both these tribes, and the bow and arrow are sometimes seen among them, having been procured from the island. The “Yadaigan” tribe inhabit the south side of Newcastle Bay and the Kennedy River; the “Undooyamo,” the north side. These two tribes are more numerous than the two first-mentioned, and appear to be of a more independant race than the others, and gave us much trouble on our first settlement, by continual thefts and otherwise. The tract of country which they inhabit is nearly covered with the densest scrub and with swamp, into which they took refuge with their booty as soon as any depredation was committed, so as to render it next to impossible for us to pursue them. These four tribes together do not number in all more than 250 to 300 men.

18. All these people are much addicted to smoking. Tobacco is used by them in preference when it can be got. Before its introduction, or when it was not procurable from Europeans, the leaves of a large spreading tree, a species of ‘Eugenia’, was, and is still used. These leaves must possess some strong deleterious or narcotic property. I was for some time puzzled to assign a cause for so many of the natives being scarred by burns. Nearly every one shows some marks of burning, and some of them are crippled and disfigured by fire in a frightful manner. They smoke to such excess as to become quite insensible, and in that state they fall into their camp-fires, and receive the injuries mentioned. The pipe used is a singular instrument for the purpose. It is a hollow bamboo about 2 1/2 feet long, and as thick as a quart bottle; one of the smoking party fills this in turn with smoke from a funnel-shaped bowl, in which the tobacco is placed by blowing it through a hole at one end of the tube. When filled it is handed to some one who inhales and swallows as much of the smoke as he can, passing the pipe on to his neighbour. I have seen a smoker so much affected by one dose as to lie helpless for some minutes afterwards.

Page 99

19. Thus much for the general appearance and habits of the Cape York natives. A very accurate vocabulary of their language has been published by Mr. M’Gillivray in his account of the voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake. Of their superstitions I am unable to speak with certainty. That they have no belief in the existence of a Supreme Being is, I think, positive. They are, like all the Australian tribes, averse to travelling about at night if dark; this, I believe, chiefly arises from the inconvenience and difficulty of moving about at such times, and not from any superstitious fear. They travel when there is moonlight. They are true observers of the weather, and before the approach of a change move their camps so as to obtain a sheltered position. They do not seem to give the slightest thought to cause or effect, and would, I believe eat and pass away their time in a sort of trance-like apathy. Nothing appears to create surprise in them, and nothing but hunger, or the sense of immediate danger, arouses them from their listlessness.

20. I am aware of the great interest taken by his Excellency the Governor and all the members of the Government of Queensland in the promotion of missionary enterprise. I much fear, however, that the mainland here will be found but a barren field for missionary labors. One great obstacle to successful work is the unsettled nature of the people. No inducement can keep them long in one place. Certainly a missionary station might be formed on one of the neighbouring islands —Albany or Mount Adolphus Island, for instance, where some of the young natives might be kept in training, according to the system used by Bishops Selwyn and Patterson for the instruction of the Melanesians.

21. With the Kororegas or Prince of Wales Islanders, who, from constant communication with the islands to the northward, have acquired a higher degree of intelligence than the pure Australians, I believe a successful experiment could be made. Missionary enterprise beyond the protection and influence of this new settlement at Somerset would, of course, at present be attended with considerable risk.

22. To the Banks and Mulgrave Islanders in Torres’ Straits, a similar remark will apply. Those people, however, seem to be of a more savage nature, although intelligent, and giving considerable attention to the cultivation of yams, bananas, *etc.* Both the good and bad features in their characters may, I believe, in a great measure be attributed to the strong influence exercised among them by a white man, called by the natives “Wini,” who has been living there for many years. This man, who is supposed to be an escaped convict from one of the former penal settlements in Australia, no doubt considers it politic to keep Europeans from visiting the island where he resides, “Badu”. The natives of Cape York hold him and the Banks Islanders generally in the greatest dread, giving me to understand that all strangers going to these islands are killed, and their heads cut off. The latter appears to be the custom of these and the neighbouring islands towards their slain enemies.

Page 100

23. The natives of the islands more to the northward and eastward are said to be of milder dispositions, especially the Darnley Islanders—of whom Captain Edwards, of Sydney, who had a “Bech-de-mer” fishing establishment there during the last year, speaks in high terms as being of friendly dispositions and displaying very considerable intelligence, living in comfortable huts and cultivating yams, bananas, coconuts, *etc.*, in considerable quantities. Among these islanders I should think missionaries might establish themselves without great difficulty, and with a satisfactory result.

24. I think that the simple fact of a settlement of Europeans being established at Cape York will very much tend to curb the savage natures of the natives, not only of the mainland, but also of the islands, and any unfortunates who may be cast among them from shipwrecked vessels will, at all events, have their lives spared; and I believe that, should such an event take place, I should soon hear of it from the natives here. The communication between the islanders and the natives of the mainland is frequent, and the rapid manner in which news is carried from tribe to tribe to great distances is astonishing. I was informed of the approach of H.M.S. Salamander on her last visit two days before her arrival here. Intelligence is conveyed by means of fires made to throw smoke up in different forms, and by messengers who perform long and rapid journeys.

25. I should like much to send one or two of the Cape York natives to Brisbane to remain there a short time. I believe that the reports which they would bring back to their tribe of the wonders seen among the white men would tend more than any other means to promote friendly feelings towards us, and to fit their minds to receive favourable impressions.

26. From what I have previously said of the soil here, it will be seen that no large portion of it is suited for agriculture. Even were the land good, the peculiar climate, which may be considered dry for eight months in the year, would not permit satisfactory cultivation to any large extent. During the rainy months, from December to April, vegetables suitable to the temperature may be grown in abundance.

27. Of the agreeableness and salubrity of the climate of Somerset, I can not speak too favorably. The wet season commenced here last year (1864) with the month of December, and continued till the latter part of March. During that time the rain was intermittent, a day or two of heavy wet being succeeded by fine weather. The winds from the north west were light, and falling away to calm in the evening and night. During this season the highest range of my thermometer was 98 degrees in the shade; but it very rarely exceeds 90 degrees, as may be seen from Dr. Haran’s meteorological sheets. During the calms immediately succeeding wet the heat was disagreeable, and mosquitoes appeared, but not numerously. The nights were invariably cool.

Page 101

The weather for the remaining seasons of the year may be termed enjoyable. A fresh bracing breeze from the south east blows almost continually, the thermometer averaging during the day from 80 to 85 degrees. This temperature, with the cool nights, (sufficiently so to render a blanket welcome) and delightful sea bathing, prevent any of the lassitude or enervating influence so common to tropical climates elsewhere from being felt at Somerset.

28. During the time of my residence here no serious indisposition has occurred among the European residents. Occasional slight attacks of illness generally traceable to some cause, has taken place, but as far as can be judged there is no 'local malady'. There has been no symptom of fever or ague, which it was apprehended would be prevalent during the rainy season, as in other hot countries. Dr. Haran, R.N., (the naval surgeon in charge) reports very favorably of the salubrity of the climate. I have every reason to believe with Dr. Haran, that at no very distant period, when steam communication through Torres Straits shall have been establish, Somerset will be eagerly sought by invalids from the East as an excellent and accessible sanatorium.

29. At all events, there can be no doubt but that the new settlement will fulfil admirably the objects for which it was founded, 'i.e.', a port of call and harbor of refuge for trade in the dangerous navigation of Torres Straits, and a coal depot for steamers.

30. I almost fear that in the foregoing remarks it may be considered that on some subjects I have entered too much into details, while on others my notices have been too slight. I have endeavored, as much as possible, to confine myself to subjects of interest, and you may rely on my statements as the result of personal observation. Should there be any particular point on which the Government may require more specific information, I shall be most happy, if it be in my power, to afford it.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
John Jardine, P.M.

Port Albany.

Overland journey of the Messrs. Jardine to the port Albany settlement.

Somerset, May 1, 1865.

Sir,—Since the date of my last report the most important intelligence which I have to communicate is the arrival of my sons, Frank and Alexander Jardine, with their overland party, all safe and well, after an extremely arduous and toilsome journey of five months, almost entirely over country which for the greater part may be termed barren, the distance travelled over being somewhat more than 900 miles.

Page 102

2. The party, consisting of my two sons and four other Europeans (including Mr. Surveyor Richardson, attached to the expedition by the Government of Queensland), with four aborigines of the Rockhampton district, made their final start from Mr. J. G. McDonald's station, Carpentaria Downs, in latitude 18 deg. 37 min 10 sec S., longitude 144 deg. 3 min 30 sec. E, (the farthest out-station on the supposed Lynd River), on the 11th of October, 1864, and reached this place on the 13th of March, ult. Rockhampton was the first point of departure, my second son leaving it, with the horses and men, on the 16th of May, 1864, making the journey for them about 1800 miles.

3. It would appear from the journals kept that a great portion of the country on the west coast of the York Peninsula, especially in the locality of the Mitchell River, is at times (I presume periodically) subject to inundation; the water, however, soon disappears from the flat and sandy land, and for the greater portion of the year, till the next rainy season, the country is destitute of water, and in other respects little better than an absolute desert.

4. It is a subject of great regret to myself, and in which I am sure you will share, that this long journey should be, so far as at present appears, productive of so poor a result to the public in developing new resources to the colony. However, a large and valuable addition to geographical information has certainly been gained; but at the same time few of the important discoveries in lands suitable for pastoral or agricultural occupation, or in minerals, *etc.*, *etc.*, and which might in so large a tract of country have reasonably been expected, have been made.

5. My sons have experienced a severe disappointment to their hopes and expectations in the nature of the country around, and within a reasonable distance of this place, as well as a heavy loss in prosecuting their undertaking. However at their ages, 23 and 21 respectively, the spirit is very buoyant, and they are again quite ready for another venture. Their journey, which, from the nature of the country traversed, has been one of unusual difficulty and hardship; and it is surprising to me that, hampered as they were with a herd of 250 cattle, for which providing food and water in a barren and unknown country is in itself no easy matter, they should have come through so successfully.

6. Next to the general barrenness of the country, the difficulties they had to encounter were—first, the destruction of a quantity of their supplies and gear, through the camp being carelessly permitted to catch fire during their absence in pioneering the route. Next, the determined hostility of the natives, who were almost continually on their track, annoying them on every favorable opportunity; on one occasion, the crossing of the "Mitchell," opposing them so obstinately that a considerable number were shot before they would give way. Then the

Page 103

loss of two-thirds of their horses (all the best) from eating some poisonous plant, and which necessitated the last 300 miles of the journey being travelled on foot; and last, the flooded state of the country during the season of the rains. And I think it is not too much for me to say, that nothing but a thorough knowledge of their business, supported by determined energy, could have carried them through what must be considered one of the most arduous tasks in exploration on record.

7. I will not attempt in the small space of a letter to give you more full particulars of the journey and its incidents. Mr. Surveyor Richardson has, of course, his journal and maps of the route as directed by the government, and from these, with the information gained by my sons in their numerous "offsets" in search of the best courses to follow, which will be placed at the disposal of the Government, I believe a pretty accurate idea of the nature of the country on the west coast of the York Peninsula may be gathered.

8. My sons have at present formed their station near Point Vallack, on the north shore of Newcastle Bay, between two or three miles from the settlement of Somerset. They are on good terms with the natives, and their black servants fraternise with them, but are kept under strict rule. The natives of Cape York from the first have shown a friendly feeling towards them, having, on their first arrival, met them about twenty miles from the settlement, and shown them the nearest way to it, and they have since been very useful in carrying timber to build huts, stockyards, *etc.*, *etc.*; and I believe that for the future, if well treated, they will offer no annoyance to the present settlers. The establishment of a cattle station in the neighborhood is of great advantage to the settlement, serving as an outpost to secure its safety, and in opening up the country, besides affording a ready supply of fresh meat. Already my sons and their blacks have cut good passages through the scrub to the settlement, and also through the various belts of scrub dividing their station from open grounds; so that now a large extent of country can be 'ridden' over without obstruction.

9. I have little else of importance to communicate. The affairs of this settlement have gone on slowly but steadily. The several works left unfinished are, under the charge of the acting foreman, Private Bosworth, Royal Marines, (and of whom I can speak most highly for his attention and work), completed, with the exception of the Custom House, which is well advanced.

10. The natives are on good terms with us, and work for us in various ways, being duly paid in food, tobacco, *etc.*

11. On the 23rd ultimo there was a slight shock of an earthquake felt distinctly by myself and other persons here. It occurred in the afternoon, about two o'clock, was accompanied by a rumbling sound, but lasted little more than a minute. The health of the royal Marines, and all other residents at the settlement, continues to be very good,

as will be seen from the report of the surgeon Dr. Haran, R.N. I have the honor to be,
Sir,

Page 104

Your most obedient servant,

John Jardine. P.M.

To the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Brisbane.

Dr. Haran's report.

Somerset, May 22, 1865.

Sir,

It affords me much pleasure to have again to forward to your Excellency a most favourable report of the climate of this settlement, and of the uninterrupted good health of our small community, military and civil. the dreaded summer season, with its calms, light winds and heavy rains, has passed off without causing a single case of sickness, attributable to noxious exhalations, which prevail at that season in most tropical climates, but which, in my opinion, cannot exist here, owing to the preventive causes enumerated in my letter of the 13th January last; neither have we experienced that oppressiveness of the atmosphere which its saturated condition at that season through the sun's direct influence in favoring evaporation in the surrounding seas would lead one to expect. Some slight oppressiveness was felt immediately before the rains, but speedily disappeared on their occurrence. I can only account for this valuable immunity by attributing it to some peculiarity of climate, in all probability to the same causes which counteract the evolution of noxious exhalations; for we did experience calms and very light winds, and the hygrometer during the greater part of the time indicated a very large amount of moisture in the atmosphere.

2. The meteorological sheets forwarded by this opportunity, contain full particulars regarding the winds, temperature, etc., for the last four months, and having been prepared from a series of observations, conducted with care and regularly registered, they cannot fail, amongst other important objects bearing on general climatology, to afford convincing proof that, as a climate, even during the summer season, that of Somerset, although in close proximity to the equator, possesses many advantages not attainable in higher latitudes, and is, in my opinion, from its mildness and equable character, especially suited for such as may have the misfortune to be predisposed to, or suffering from, pulmonary consumption.

3. The S.E. Trade ceased as a continuous wind in these seas on the 24th December last. Calms, light winds, from all points of the compass, but chiefly from the points between North and West to South, or against the sun's course, and heavy rains, with electric phenomena of a comparatively mild character, succeeded and persisted until

the 11th of March; when the sun's more direct influence having been diverted from its course, and in a manner dissipated by the great heat and evaporation, again resumed its ascendancy, and has continued since without interruption.

4. On the 25th of January two of the Marines were seized with a severe headache and other suspicious symptoms while working in the sun during a calm; and I consider it my duty at once to recommend such alteration in the working hours as would protect the men from sun-exposure during its period of greatest heat. These alternations were adopted, and continued in force until the 22nd of March, when the former working hours were resumed, as no danger was apprehended from solar heat at any time of the day during the prevalence of the S.E. Trade wind.



Page 105

5. One well-marked case of scurvy became developed at the end of January; and a few of several cases of cutaneous eruption under treatment at the time closely resembled the symptoms characteristic of that disease. the only anti-scorbutic dietary available, viz.,—preserved meats and potatoes, compressed vegetables and lemon juice, was issued at once, and continued on the salt-meat days for three weeks, when all the indications of scurvy having disappeared, the usual dietary was resumed. Since then the entire adult community have enjoyed very good health.

I am, *etc.*,

T. J. *Haran*, Surgeon, R.N.

His Excellency, Governor Sir G.F. Bowen, G.C.M.G.

JARDINE'S JOURNAL—NOTES BY THE ETEXT-MAKER.

Spelling errors and typos listed below are as shown in the paper text and have been copied into the electronic text.

FRONT MATTER

The footnote in the *introduction* does not have a referent in the text— there is no asterisk in the text. It is not clear whether the 'settlement' it refers to as having been abandoned is at Adam Bay or in Western Australia.

P ix—'loosing' instead of 'losing'

P xi—re-placed

CHAPTER 1

There are several words in this chapter which do not conform to today's spelling, but which appear in the paper text as copied: p 1—faciliate p 3—agreable p 5—speers p 5—Gaala Creek—(should be Galaa Creek) p 5—discription p 7—amunition

CHAPTER 2

P 9—amunition

P 9—earthern

P 9—cheifly

P 10—stoney



P 10—occurring
P 11—villanous
P 11—vestage
P 16—potatoe
P 16—oppossum
P 17—apparantly
P 18—despatch
P 18—amunition
p 19—muscles—probably should be 'mussels'
p 19—(about 18 miles....—no closing bracket
p 23—a cawbawn saucy—should probably be 'as cawbawn....
p 23—agressors
p 24—succeded
p 24—'where' instead of 'were'
p 24—'frighened' instead of 'frightened'
p 26—emeu
p 27—double and single quotes on "Ferguson," don't match
p 27—'spenifex' instead of 'spinifex'

Chapter 3

P 30—too (too days)
P 30—dilirious
P 32—carcase
p 32—indispensible
P 32—chissel
P 33—'these' should probably be 'they'
p 33—pigmy
P 34—agreably
P 34—a-head
P 35—degnified
P 36—'course' instead of 'coarse'
P 37—steadilly
P 37—abondoned
p 37—wirey
P 38—cheifly
p 38—seives
P 38—permenantly
p 39—occurring
P 40 —frightended
P 40—bythe (all one word)
P 40—gratuitious

CHAPTER 4

P 42—they (no capital on beginning of sentence) P 43—horses (no possessive apostrophe) P 43—varities P 44—varities p 44—gulley p 46—sheild p 48—agressor p



49—peices p 50—bitcher plant—(instead of pitcher plant?) p 50—pelluced



Page 106

CHAPTER 5

p 59—'course sandstone'—should probably be 'coarse' p 63—a-head p 64—the latitude measurements seem to have reversed the signs for

minutes and seconds in measuring latitude. I have spelled out the words.

p 67—'meet' instead of 'meat' p 68—'eat' instead of 'ate' p 69—horsmen p 69—admonitory p 70—Lichhardt p 70—retreiver p 70—mocassins

CHAPTER 6

p 72—distention p 73—'gotting' should be 'getting'? p 73—exhilation

APPENDIX

p 75—weeps the stream—should be 'sweeps the stream'? or was the author being poetic?

p 77—SPINIGEX—should be 'Spinifex' p 77—genuis—genus p 77—nevertheless p 77—loosing—losing p 78—vigilence p 79—Thozets'—Thozet's p 82—easily—easily p 82—entirley p 83—surperseded