

# **Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the Years 1840-1: Sent By the Colonists of South Australia, with the Sanction and Support of the Government: Including an Account of the Manne eBook**

## **Journals of Expeditions of Discovery into Central Australia and Overland from Adelaide to King George's Sound in the Years 1840-1: Sent By the Colonists of South Australia, with the Sanction and Support of the Government: Including an Account of the Manne by Edward John Eyre**

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## VOLUME I

JOURNAL OF EXPEDITIONS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA IN 1840.

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ORIGIN OF THE EXPEDITION—CONTEMPLATED EXPLORATION TO THE WESTWARD—MEETING OF THE COLONISTS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS ENTERED INTO FOR THAT PURPOSE—NOTES ON THE UNFAVOURABLE NATURE OF THE COUNTRY TO THE WESTWARD, AND PROPOSAL THAT THE NORTHERN INTERIOR SHOULD BE EXAMINED INSTEAD—MAKE AN OFFER TO THE GOVERNOR TO CONDUCT SUCH AN EXPEDITION—CAPTAIN STURT'S LECTURE—INTERVIEW WITH THE GOVERNOR, ARRANGEMENT OF PLANS—PREPARATION OF OUTFIT—COST OF EXPEDITION—NAME A DAY FOR DEPARTURE—PUBLIC BREAKFAST AND COMMENCEMENT OF THE UNDERTAKING.

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Before entering upon the account of the expedition sent to explore the interior of Australia, to which the following pages refer, it may perhaps be as well to advert briefly to the circumstances which led to the undertaking itself, that the public being fully in possession of the motives and inducements which led me, at a very great sacrifice of my private means, to engage in an exploration so hazardous and arduous, and informed of the degree of confidence reposed in me by those interested in the undertaking, and the sanguine hopes and high expectations that were formed as to the result, may be better able to judge how far that confidence was well placed, and how far my exertions were commensurate with the magnitude of the responsibility I had undertaken.

I have felt it the more necessary to allude to this subject now, because I was in some measure at the time instrumental in putting a stop to a contemplated expedition to the westward, and of thus unintentionally interfering with the employment of a personal friend of my own, than whom no one could have been more fitted to command an undertaking of the kind, from his amiable disposition, his extensive experience, and his general knowledge and acquirements.

Upon returning, about the middle of May 1840, from a visit to King George's Sound and Swan River, I found public attention in Adelaide considerably engrossed with the subject of an overland communication between Southern and Western Australia. Captain Grey, now the Governor of South Australia, had called at Adelaide on his way to England from King George's Sound, and by furnishing a great deal of interesting information relative to Western Australia, and pointing out the facilities that existed on its eastern frontier, as far as it was then known, for the entrance of stock from the Eastward, had called the attention of the flock-masters of the Colony to the importance of opening a communication between the two places, with a view to the extension of their pastoral interests. The notes of Captain Grey, referring to this subject, were published in the South Australian Register newspaper of the 28th March, 1840. On the 30th of the same month, a number of gentlemen, many of whom were owners of large flocks and herds, met together, for the purpose of taking the matter into consideration, and the result of this conference was the appointment of a Committee, whose duty it was to report upon the best means of accomplishing the object in view. On the 4th, 7th, and 9th of April other meetings were held, and the results published in the South Australian Register, of the 11th April, as follows:—

### **OVERLAND ROUTE TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

At a Meeting of the Committee for making arrangements for an expedition to explore an overland route to Western Australia, held the 7th of April, the Hon. the Surveyor-general in the chair, the following resolutions were agreed to:—

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That a communication be made to the Government of Western Australia, detailing the objects contemplated by this Committee, and further stating that the assistance of the Government of this province has been obtained.

That a communication be made to the Hon. the Surveyor-general, the Hon. the Advocate-general the Hon. G. Leake, Esq. of Western Australia, with a request that they will form a committee in conjunction with such settlers as may feel interested in the same undertaking, for the purpose of collecting private subscriptions, and co-operating with this committee.

Resolved, that similar communications be made to the Government of New South Wales, and to the following gentlemen who are requested to act as a committee with the same power as that of Western Australia: Hon. E. Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary; William Macarthur, Esq.; Captain Parker; P. King, R.N.; Stuart Donaldson, Esq.; George Macleay, Esq.; Charles Campbell, Esq.

That this Committee would propose, in order to facilitate the progress of the expedition, that depots be formed at convenient points on the route; that it is proposed to make Fowler's Bay the first depot on the route from Adelaide, and to leave it to the Government of Western Australia to decide upon the sites which their local knowledge may point out as the most eligible for similar stations, as far to the eastward as may appear practicable.

That a subscription list be immediately opened in Adelaide to collect funds in aid of the undertaking.

That R. F. Newland, Esq., be requested to act as Treasurer to this Committee, and that subscriptions be received at the Banks of Australasia and South Australia.

E. C. *Frome*, Chairman.  
*Chas. Bonney*, Secretary.

The Committee again met on the 9th April—the Hon. the Assistant Commissioner in the chair. It was resolved that the following statement head the subscription list:—

Several meetings having taken place at Adelaide of persons interested in the discovery of an overland route to Western Australia, and it being the general opinion of those meetings that such an enterprise would very greatly benefit the colonists of Eastern, Southern, and Western Australia, it was determined to open subscriptions for the furtherance of this most desirable object under the direction of the following Committee:

G. A. Anstey, Esq. John Knott, Esq.  
Charles Bonney, Esq. Duncan M'Farlane, Esq.  
John Brown, Esq. David McLaren, Esq.



Edward Eyre, Esq. John Morphett, Esq.  
John Finniss, Esq. Chas. Mann, Esq.  
J. H. Fisher, Esq. R. F. Newland, Esq.  
Lieutenant Frome, Dr. Rankin. Esq.  
Surveyor-general G. Stevenson, Esq.  
O. Gilles, Esq. F. Stephens, Esq.  
Captain Grey W. Smilie, Esq.  
J. B. Hack, Esq. T. B. Strangwaya, Esq.  
G. Hamilton, Esq. Capt. Sturt, Ass. Com.  
Ephraim Howe, Esq. John Walker, Esq.

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The very great importance of the undertaking as leading to results, and in all probability to discoveries, the benefits of which are at present unforeseen, but which, like the opening of the Murray to this Province, may pave the way to a high road from hence to Western Australia, will, it is hoped meet with that support from the public which undertakings of great national interest deserve, and which best evince the enterprise and well-doing of a rising colony.

That Captain Grey, being about to embark for England, the Committee cannot allow him to quit these shores without expressing their regret that his stay has been so short, and the sense they entertain of the great interest he has evinced in the welfare of the colony, and the disinterested support he has given an enterprise which is likely to lead to such generally beneficial results as that under consideration.

*Chas. Sturt*, Chairman.

*Chas. Bonney*, Secretary.

## LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED YESTERDAY.

The Government of South Australia 200 pounds His Excellency the Governor (absent at Port Lincoln) and the Colonists 349 pounds 10 shillings

Such was the state in which I found the question on my return from Western Australia. All had been done that was practicable, until answers were received from the other Colonies, replying to the applications for assistance and co-operation in the proposed undertaking.

Having been always greatly interested in the examination of this vast but comparatively unknown continent, and having already myself been frequently engaged in long and harassing explorations, it will not be deemed surprising that I should at once have turned my attention to the subject so prominently occupying the public mind. I have stated that the principal object proposed to be attained by the expedition to the westward, was that of opening a route for the transit of stock from one colony to the other—nay it was even proposed and agreed to by a majority of the gentlemen attending the public meeting that the first party of exploration should be accompanied by cattle. Now, from my previous examination of the country to the westward of the located parts of South Australia, I had in 1839 fully satisfied myself, not only of the difficulty, but of the utter impracticability of opening an overland route for stock in that direction, and I at once stated my opinion to that effect, and endeavoured to turn the general attention from the Westward to the North, as being the more promising opening, either for the discovery of a good country, or of an available route across the continent. The following extract, from a paper by me on the subject, was published in the South Australian Register of the 23rd May, 1840, and contains my opinion at that time of the little

prospect there was of any useful result accruing from the carrying out of the proposed expedition to the Westward:—

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"It may now, therefore, be a question for those who are interested in the sending an expedition overland to the Swan River to consider what are likely to be the useful results from such a journey. In a geographical point of view it will be exceedingly interesting to know the character of the intervening country between this colony and theirs, and to unfold the secrets hidden by those lofty, and singular cliffs at the head of the Great Bight, and so far, it might perhaps be practicable—since it is possible that a light party might, in a favourable season, force their way across. As regards the transit of stock, however, my own conviction is that it is quite impracticable. The vast extent of desert country to the westward—the scarcity of grass—the denseness of the scrub—and the all but total absence of water, even in the most favourable seasons, are in themselves, sufficient bars to the transit of stock, even to a distance we are already acquainted with. I would rather, therefore, turn the public attention to the Northward, as being the most probable point from which discoveries of importance may be made, or such as are likely to prove beneficial to this and the other colonies, and from which it is possible the veil may be lifted, from the still unknown and mysterious interior of this vast continent."

On the 27th I dined with His Excellency the Governor, and had a long conversation with him on the subject of the proposed Western Expedition, and on the exploration of the Northern Interior. With his usual anxiety to promote any object which he thought likely to benefit the colony, and advance the cause of science, His Excellency expressed great interest in the examination of the Northern Interior, and a desire that an attempt should be made to penetrate its recesses during the ensuing season.

As I had been the means of diverting public attention from a Western to a Northern exploration, so was I willing to encounter myself the risks and toils of the undertaking I had suggested, and I therefore at once volunteered to His Excellency to take the command of any party that might be sent out, to find one-third of the number of horses required, and pay one-third of the expenses. Two days after this a lecture was delivered at the Mechanics' Institute in Adelaide, by Captain Sturt, upon the Geography and Geology of Australia, at the close of which that gentleman acquainted the public with the proposal I had made to the Governor, and the sanction and support which His Excellency was disposed to give it. The following extract is from Captain Sturt's address, and shews the disinterested and generous zeal which that talented and successful traveller was ever ready to exert on behalf of those who were inclined to follow the career of enterprise and ambition in which he had with such distinction led the way.

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“Before I conclude, however, having drawn your attention to the science of geology, I would for a moment dwell on that of geography, and the benefit the pursuit and study of it has been to mankind. To geography we owe all our knowledge of the features of the earth’s surface, our intercourse with distant nations, and our enjoyments of numberless comforts and luxuries. The sister sciences of geography and hydrography have enabled us to pursue our way to any quarter of the habitable and uninhabitable world. With the history of geography, moreover, our proudest feelings are associated. Where are there names dearer to us than those of the noble and devoted Columbus, of Sebastian Cabot, of Cook, of Humboldt, and of Belzoni and La Perouse? Where shall we find the generous and heroic devotion of the explorers of Africa surpassed? Of Denham, of Clapperton, of Oudeny, and of the many who have sacrificed their valuable lives to the pestilence of that climate or to the ferocity of its inhabitants?—And where shall we look for the patient and persevering endurance of Parry, of Franklin, and of Back, in the northern regions of eternal snow? If, ladies and gentlemen, fame were to wreath a crown to the memory of such men, there would not be a leaf in it without a name. The region of discovery was long open to the ambitious, but the energy and perseverance of man has now left but little to be done in that once extensive and honourable field. The shores of every continent have been explored—the centre of every country has been penetrated save that of Australia—thousands of pounds have been expended in expeditions to the Poles—but this country, round which a girdle of civilization is forming, is neglected, and its recesses, whether desert or fertile, are unsought and unexplored. What is known of the interior is due rather to private enterprise than to public energy. Here then there is still a field for the ambitious to tread. Over the centre of this mighty continent there hangs a veil which the most enterprising might be proud to raise. The path to it, I would venture to say, is full of difficulty and danger; and to him who first treads it much will be due. I, who have been as far as any, have seen danger and difficulty thicken around me as I advanced, and I cannot but anticipate the same obstacles to the explorer, from whatever point of these extreme shores he may endeavour to force his way. Nevertheless, gentlemen, I shall envy that man who shall first plant the flag of our native country in the centre of our adopted one. There is not one deed in those days to be compared with it, and to whoever may undertake so praiseworthy and so devoted a task, I wish that success, which Heaven sometimes vouchsafes to those who are actuated by the first of motives—the public good; and the best of principles—a reliance on Providence. I would I myself could undertake such a task, but fear that may not be. However, there is a gentleman among us, who is anxious to undertake such a journey.



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He has calculated that in taking a party five hundred miles into the interior, the expense would not be more than 300 pounds and the price of ten horses. At a meeting held some time ago, on this very subject, about half that sum was subscribed.—His Excellency the Governor has kindly promised to give 100 pounds, and two horses—and I think we may very soon make up the remainder; and thus may set out an expedition which may explore the as yet unknown interior of this vast continent, which may be the means, by discovery, of conferring a lasting benefit on the colony—and hand down to posterity the name of the person who undertakes it.”

On the same day I received a note from the private secretary, stating that the Governor wished to see me, and upon calling on His Excellency I had a long and interesting interview on the subject of the expedition, in the course of which arrangements were proposed and a plan of operations entered into. I found in His Excellency every thing that was kind and obliging. Sincerely desirous to confer a benefit upon the colony over which he presided, he was most anxious that the expedition should be fitted out in as complete and efficient a manner as possible, and to effect this every assistance in his power was most frankly and freely offered. In addition to the sanction and patronage of the government and the contribution of 100 pounds, towards defraying the expenses, His Excellency most kindly offered me the selection of any two horses I pleased, from among those belonging to the police, and stated, that if I wished for the services of any of the men in the public employment they should be permitted to accompany me on the journey. The Colonial cutter, *Waterwitch*, was also most liberally offered, and thankfully accepted, to convey a part of the heavy stores and equipment to the head of Spencer’s Gulf, that so far, the difficulties of the land journey to that point, at least, might be lessened.

I was now fairly pledged to the undertaking, and as the winter was rapidly advancing, I became most anxious to get all preparations made as soon as possible to enable me to take advantage of the proper season. On the first of June I commenced the necessary arrangements for organizing my party, and getting ready the equipment required. To assist me in these duties, and to accompany me as a companion in the journey, I engaged Mr. Edward Bate Scott, an active, intelligent and steady young friend, who had already been a voyage with me to Western Australia, and had travelled with me overland from King George’s Sound to Swan River.

Meetings of the colonists interested in the undertaking were again held on the 2nd and 5th of June, at which subscriptions were entered into for carrying out the object of the expedition; and a brief outline of my plans was given by the Chairman, Captain Sturt, in the following extract from his address.

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“The Chairman went on to state, that Mr. Eyre would first proceed to Lake Torrens and examine it, and then penetrate as far inland in a northerly direction as would be found practicable. With regard to an observation which he (the Chairman) had made on Friday evening, regarding this continent having been formerly an archipelago, he stated, that he was of opinion that a considerable space of barren land in all probability existed between this district and what had formerly been the next island. This space was likely to be barren, though of course it would be impossible to say how far it extended. He had every reason to believe, from what he had seen of the Australian continent, that at some distance to the northward, a large tract of barren country would be found, or perhaps a body of water, beyond which, a good country would in all probability exist. The contemplated expedition, he hoped would set supposition at rest—and as the season was most favourable, and Mr. Eyre had had much personal experience in exploring, he had no doubt but the expedition would be successful. The eyes of all the Australasian colonies—nay, he might say of Britain—are on the colonists of South Australia in this matter; and he felt confident that the result would be most beneficial, not only to this Province, but also to New South Wales and the Australian colonies generally—for the success of one settlement is, in a measure, the success of the others.”

An advertisement, published in the Adelaide Journals of 13th June, shewed the progress that had been made towards collecting subscriptions for the undertaking, and the spirited and zealous manner in which the colonists entered into the project. Up to that date the sum of 541 pounds 17 shillings 5 pence had been collected and paid into the Bank of Australia.

Having now secured the necessary co-operation and assistance, my arrangements proceeded rapidly and unremittingly, whilst the kindness of the Governor, the Committee of colonists, my private friends and the public generally, relieved me of many difficulties and facilitated my preparations in a manner such as I could hardly have hoped or expected. Every one seemed interested in the undertaking, and anxious to promote its success; zeal and energy and spirit were infused among all connected with it, and everything went on prosperously.

In addition to the valuable aid which I received from his Excellency the Governor, I was particularly indebted to Captain Frome the Surveyor-general, Captain Sturt the Assistant-commissioner, and Thomas Gilbert, Esq. the Colonial storekeeper, for unceasing kindness and attention, and for much important assistance rendered to me by the loan of books and instruments, the preparation of charts, and the fitting up of drays, *etc. etc.*

Captain Frome, too, now laid me under increased obligations by giving up his own servant, Corporal Coles of the Royal Sappers and Miners, upon my expressing a wish to take him with me, and the Governor sanctioning his going.

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This man had accompanied Captain Grey in all his expeditions on the North-west coast of New Holland—and had been highly recommended by that traveller; he was a wheelwright by trade, and being a soldier was likely to prove a useful and valuable addition to my party; and I afterwards found him a most obliging, willing and attentive person.

To the Governor and to the Committee of colonists I owe many thanks, for the very flattering and gratifying confidence they reposed in me, a confidence which left me as unrestricted in my detail of outfit and equipment, as I was unfettered in my plan of operations in the field. This enabled me to avoid unnecessary delays, and to hasten every thing forward as rapidly as possible, so that when requested by the Governor to name a day for my departure I was enabled to fix upon the 18th of June.

Having already done all in their power to forward and assist the equipment and arrangement of the expedition, the Governor and Mrs. Gawler were determined still further to increase the heavy debt of gratitude which I was already under to them, by inviting myself and party to meet the friends of the expedition at Government House on the morning of our departure, that by a public demonstration of interest in our welfare, we might be encouraged in the undertaking upon which we were about to enter—and might be stimulated to brave the perils to which we should shortly be exposed, by a remembrance of the sympathy expressed in our behalf, and the pledge we should come under to the public upon leaving the abode of civilised man, for the unknown and trackless region which lay before us.

On the 15th of June I attended a meeting of the Committee, and presented for audit the accounts of the expenditure incurred up to that date. On the 16th I had a sale of all my private effects, furniture, *etc.* by auction, and arranged my affairs in the best way that the very limited time at my disposal would permit.

The 17th found me still with plenty of work to do, as there were many little matters to attend to at the last, which the best exertions could not sooner set aside.

Mr. Scott, who ever since the commencement of our preparations, had been most indefatigable and useful in his exertions, was even still more severely tasked on this day; at night, however, we were all amply rewarded, by seeing every thing completely and satisfactorily arranged—the bustle, confusion, and excitement over, and our drays all loaded, and ready to commence on the morrow a journey of which the length, the difficulty, and the result, were all a problem yet to be solved.

In the short space of seventeen days from the first commencement of our preparations, we had completely organized and fully equipped a party for interior exploration. Every thing had been done in that short time men hired, horses sought out and selected, drays prepared, saddlery, harness, and the thousand little things required on such journeys, purchased, fitted and arranged. In that short time too, the Colonists had subscribed and

collected the sum of five hundred pounds towards defraying the expenses, exclusive of the Government contribution of 100 pounds.

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Unfortunately, at the time the expedition was undertaken, every thing in South Australia was excessively dear, and the cost of its outfit was therefore much greater in 1840, than it would have been any year since that period; nine horses (including a Timor pony, subsequently procured at Port Lincoln) cost 682 pounds 10 shillings, whilst all other things were proportionably expensive. After the expedition had terminated and the men's wages and other expenses had been paid, the gross outlay amounted to 1391 pounds 0 shillings 7 pence:—of this

Amount of Donation from Government was 100 00 00  
Amount of Subscriptions of the Colonists 582 04 09  
Sale of the Drays and part of the Equipment 28 00 00  
Amount paid by myself 680 15 10

-----  
Total 1391 00 07

In addition to this expenditure, considerable as it was, there were very many things obtained from various sources, which though of great value did not come into the outlay already noted. Among these were two horses supplied by the Government, and three supplied by myself, making with the nine bought for 682 pounds 10 shillings, a total of fourteen horses. The very valuable services of the cutters "*Hero*" and "*Waterwitch*," were furnished by the Government; who also supplied all our arms and ammunition, with a variety of other stores. From my many friends I received donations of books and instruments, and I was myself enabled to supply from my own resources a portion of the harness, saddlery, tools, and tarpaulins, together with a light cart and a tent.

June 18.—Calling my party up early, I ordered the horses to be harnessed, and yoked to the drays, at half past nine the whole party, (except the overseer who was at a station up the country) proceeded to Government House, where the drays were halted for the men to partake of a breakfast kindly provided for them by His Excellency and Mrs. Gawler, whilst myself and Mr. Scott joined the very large party invited to meet us in the drawing room.

The following account of the proceedings of the morning, taken from the South Australian Register, of the 20th June, may perhaps be read with interest; at least it will shew the disinterested spirit and enterprising character of the colonists of South Australia, even at this early stage of its history, and especially how much the members of our little party were indebted to the kindness and good feeling of the Governor and colonists, who were anxious to cheer and stimulate us under the difficulties and trials we had to encounter, by their earnest wishes and prayers for our safety and success.

## EXPLORATORY EXPEDITION TO THE CENTRE OF NEW HOLLAND

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The arrangements for the expedition into the interior, undertaken by Mr. Eyre, having been completed, His Excellency the Governor and Mrs. Gawler issued cards to a number of the principal colonists and personal friends of Mr. Eyre, to meet him at Government House on the morning of his departure. On Thursday last accordingly (the anniversary of Waterloo, in which His Excellency and the gallant 52nd bore so conspicuous a part) a very large party of ladies and gentlemen assembled. After an elegant *dejeuner A la FOURCHETTE*, His Excellency the Governor rose and spoke as nearly as we could collect, as follows:—

“We are assembled to promote one of the most important undertakings that remain to be accomplished on the face of the globe—the discovery of the interior of Australia. As Captain Sturt in substance remarked in a recent lecture, of the five great divisions of the earth, Europe is well known; Asia and America have been generally searched out; the portion that remains to be known of Africa is generally unfavourable for Europeans, and probably unfit for colonization; but Australia, our great island continent, with a most favourable climate, still remains unpenetrated, mysterious, and unknown. Without doing injustice to the enterprising attempts of Oxley, Sturt, and Mitchell, I must remark that they were commenced from a very unfavourable point—from the eastern and almost south-eastern extremity of the island—and consequently the great interior still remains untouched by them, the south-eastern corner alone having been investigated. As Captain Sturt some years since declared, this Province is the point from which expeditions to the deep interior should set out. This principle, I know, has been acknowledged by scientific men in Europe; and it is most gratifying to see the spirit with which our Colonists on the present occasion have answered to the claim which their position imposes upon them. Mr. Eyre goes forth this day, to endeavour to plant the British flag—the flag which in the whole world has “braved for a thousand years the battle and the breeze”—on the tropic of Capricorn (as nearly as possible in 135 degrees or 136 degrees of longitude) in the very centre of our island continent. On this day twenty-five years since, commencing almost at this very hour, the British flag braved indeed the battle, and at length floated triumphant in victory on the field of Waterloo. May a similar glorious success attend the present undertaking! Mr. Eyre goes forth to brave a battle of a different kind, but which in the whole, may present dangers equal to those of Waterloo. May triumph crown his efforts, and may the British flag, planted by him in the centre of Australia, wave for another thousand years over the pence and prosperity of the mighty population which immigration is pouring in upon us! Of the immediate results of his journey, no one, indeed, can at present form a solid conjecture. Looking to the dark side, he may traverse a country useless

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to man; but contemplating the bright side, and remembering that but a few years since Sturt, setting off on an equally mysterious course, laid the foundation for the large community in which we dwell, it is in reason to hope that Mr. Eyre will discover a country which may derive support from us, and increase the prosperity of our Province. I must express my gratification at the manner in which this enterprise, noble, let its results be what they may, has been supported by our colonists at large. It is a greater honor to be at the head of the government of a colony of enlightened and enterprising men, than at that of an empire of enslaved and ignorant beings in the form of men. I count it so. May the zeal which has been exhibited in the colony in the promotion of every good and useful work ever continue. Some ladies of Adelaide have worked a British Union Jack for Mr. Eyre. Captain Sturt will be their representative to present it to him. After that we will adjourn to the opposite rooms to invoke a blessing on the enterprise. All here, and I believe the whole colony, give to Mr. Eyre their best wishes, but to good wishes right-minded men always add fervent prayers. There is an Almighty invisible Being in whose hands are all events—man may propose, but it is for God only to dispose—let us therefore implore his protection.”

“The Hon. Captain Sturt then received a very handsome Union Jack, neatly worked in silk; and presenting it to Mr. Eyre, spoke nearly as follows:—

“It cannot but be gratifying to me to be selected on such an occasion as this, to perform so prominent a part in a duty the last a community can discharge towards one who, like you, is about to risk your life for its good. I am to deliver to you this flag, in the name of the ladies who made it, with their best wishes for your success, and their earnest prayers for your safety. This noble colour, the ensign of our country, has cheered the brave on many an occasion. It has floated over every shore of the known world, and upon every island of the deep. But you have to perform a very different, and a more difficult duty. You have to carry it to the centre of a mighty continent, there to leave it as a sign to the savage that the footstep of civilized man has penetrated so far. Go forth, then, on your journey, with a full confidence in the goodness of Providence; and may Heaven direct your steps to throw open the fertility of the interior, not only for the benefit of the Province, but of our native country; and may the moment when you unfurl this colour for the purpose for which it was given to you, be as gratifying to you as the present.”



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“Mr. Eyre, visibly and deeply affected, returned his warmest thanks, and expressed his sense of the kindness he had received on the present occasion. He hoped to be able to plant the flag he had just received in the centre of this continent. If he failed, he should, he hoped, have the consciousness of having earnestly endeavoured to succeed. To His Excellency the Governor, his sincere thanks were due for the promptitude with which so much effectual assistance to the expedition had been rendered. Mr. Eyre also begged leave to return his thanks to the Colonists who had so liberally supported the enterprise; and concluded by expressing his trust that, through the blessing of God, he would be enabled to return to them with a favourable report of the country into which he was about to penetrate.

“The company then returned to the library and drawing-room, where the Colonial Chaplain, the Rev. C. B. Howard, offered up an affecting and appropriate prayer, and at twelve precisely, Mr. Eyre, accompanied by a very large concourse of gentlemen on horseback, left Government House, under the hearty parting cheers of the assembled party.”

Leaving Government House under the hearty cheers of the very large concourse assembled to witness our departure outside the grounds; Mr. Scott, myself, and two native boys (the drays having previously gone on) proceeded on horseback on our route, accompanied by a large body of gentlemen on horseback, and ladies in carriages, desirous of paying us the last kind tribute of friendship by a farewell escort of a few miles.

At first leaving Government House we had moved on at a gentle canter, but were scarcely outside the gates, before the cheering of the people, the waving of hats, and the rush of so many horses, produced an emulation in the noble steeds that almost took from us the control of their pace, as we dashed over the bridge and up the hill in North Adelaide—it was a heart-stirring and inspiring scene. Carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, our thoughts and feelings were wrought to the highest state of excitement.

The time passed rapidly away, the first few miles were soon travelled over,—then came the halt,—the parting,—the last friendly cheer;—and we were alone in the wilderness. Our hearts were too full for conversation, and we wended on our way slowly and in silence to overtake the advance party.

## Chapter II.

First night's encampment with party—reflections—arrival at sheep station—*re-arrangement of loads—method of carrying fire-arms—complete the number of the party—their names—move onwards—valley of the light—extensive plains—head of the Gilbert—scarcity*



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of

*firewood—grassy well-watered districts—the hill and Hutt rivers—indications of change going on in appearance and character of the country, traceable in the remains of timber in the plains and in the openings among scrubs—the Broughton—reedy watercourse—Campbell's range—course of the Broughton.*

June 18.—The party having left Adelaide late in the forenoon, and it being the first day of working the horses, I did not wish to make a long stage; having followed the usual road, therefore, as far as the little Parra, the drays were halted upon that watercourse (after a journey of about twelve miles), and we then proceeded to bivouac for the first time. For the first time too since I had engaged to command the expedition, I had leisure to reflect upon the prospects before me.

During the hurry and bustle of preparation, and in the enthusiasm of departure, my mind was kept constantly on the stretch, and I had no time for calm and cool consideration, but now that all was over and the journey actually commenced, I was again able to collect my thoughts and to turn my most serious and anxious attention to the duty I had undertaken. The last few days had been so fraught with interest and occupation, and the circumstances of our departure this morning, had been so exciting, that when left to my own reflections, the whole appeared to me more like a dream than a reality. The change was so great, the contrast so striking. From the crowded drawing room of civilized life, I had in a few hours been transferred to the solitude and silence of the wilds, and from being but an unit in the mass of a large community, I had suddenly become isolated with regard to the world, which, so far as I was concerned, consisted now only of the few brave men who accompanied me, and who were dependant for their very existence upon the energy and perseverance and prudence with which I might conduct the task assigned to me. With this small, but gallant and faithful band, I was to attempt to penetrate the vast recesses of the interior of Australia, to try to lift up the veil which has hitherto shrouded its mysteries from the researches of the traveller, and to endeavour to plant that flag which has floated proudly in all the known parts of the habitable globe, in the centre of a region as yet unknown, and unvisited save by the savage or the wild beast.

Those only who have been placed in similar circumstances can at all appreciate the feelings which they call forth. The hopes, fears, and anxieties of the leader of an exploring party, must be felt to be understood, when he is about to commence an undertaking which *must* be one of difficulty and danger, and which *may* be of doubtful and even fatal result.

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The toil, care, and anxiety devolving upon him are of no ordinary character; everyday removes him further from the pale of civilization and from aid or assistance of any kind—whilst each day too diminishes the strength of his party and the means at his command, and thus renders him less able to provide against or cope with the difficulties that may beset him. A single false step, the least error of judgment, or the slightest act of indiscretion might plunge the expedition into inextricable difficulty or danger, or might defeat altogether the object in view. Great indeed was the responsibility I had undertaken—and most fully did I feel sensible of the many and anxious duties that devolved upon me. The importance and interest attached to the solution of the geographical problem connected with the interior of Australia, would, I well knew, engage the observation of the scientific world. If I were successful, the accomplishment of what I had undertaken would more than repay me in gratification for the toil and hazard of the enterprise—but if otherwise I could not help feeling that, however far the few friends who knew me might give me credit for exertion or perseverance, the world at large would be apt to reason from the result, and to make too little allowance for difficulties and impediments, of the magnitude of which from circumstances they could be but incompetent judges.

With such thoughts as these, and revolving in my mind our future plans, our chances of success or otherwise, it will not be deemed surprising, that notwithstanding the fatigue and care I had gone through during the last fortnight of preparation, sleep should long remain a stranger to my pillow; and when all nature around me was buried in deep repose I alone was waking and anxious.

From former experience in a personal examination of the nature of the country north of the head of Spencer's Gulf, during the months of May and June, 1839, I had learnt that the farther the advance to the north, the more dreary and desolate the appearance of the country became, and the greater was the difficulty, both of finding and of obtaining access to either water or grass. The interception of the singular basin of Lake Torrens, which I had discovered formed a barrier to the westward, and commencing near the head of Spencer's Gulf, was connected with it by a narrow channel of mud and water. This lake apparently increased in width as it stretched away to the northward, as far as the eye could reach, when viewed from the farthest point attained by me in 1839, named by Colonel Gawler, Mount Eyre. Dreary as had been the view I then obtained, and cheerless as was the prospect from that elevation, there was one feature in the landscape, which still gave me hope that something might be done in that direction, and had in fact been my principal inducement to select a line nearly north from Spencer's Gulf, for our route on the present expedition; this feature was the continuation, and the undiminished elevation of the chain of hills forming Flinders range, running nearly parallel with the course of Lake Torrens, and when last seen by me stretching far to the northward and eastward in a broken and picturesque outline.

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It was to this chain of hills that I now looked forward as the stepping-stone to the interior. In its continuation were centered all my hopes of success, because in its recesses alone could I hope to obtain water and grass for my party. The desert region I had seen around its base, gave no hope of either, and though the basin of Lake Torrens appeared to be increasing so much in extent to the northward, I had seen nothing to indicate its terminating within any practicable distance, in a deep or navigable water. True the whole of the drainage from Flinders range, as far as was yet known, emptied into its basin, but such was the arid and sandy nature of the region through which it passed, that a great part of the moisture was absorbed, whilst the low level of the basin of the lake, apparently the same as that of the sea itself, forbade even the most distant hope of the water being fresh, should any be found in its bed.

It was in reflections and speculations such as these, that many hours of the night of my first encampment with the party passed away. The kindness of the Governor and our many friends had been so unbounded; their anxiety for our safety and comfort so great; their good wishes for our success so earnest, and their confidence in our exertions, so implicit, that I could not but look forward with apprehension, lest the success of our efforts might not equal what our gratitude desired, and even now I began to be fearful that the high expectations raised by the circumstances of our departure might not be wholly realised.

We had fairly commenced our arduous undertaking, and though the party might appear small for the extent of the exploration contemplated, yet no expedition could have started under more favourable or more cheering auspices; provided with every requisite which experience pointed out as desirable, and with every comfort which excess of kindness could suggest, we left too, with a full sense of the difficulties before us, but with a firm determination to overcome them, if possible. And I express but the sentiments of the whole party when I say, that we felt the events of the day of our departure, and the recollection of the anxiety and interest with which our friends were anticipating our progress, and hoping for our success, would be cherished as our watchword in the hour of danger, and bethe incentive to perseverance and labour, when more than ordinary trials should call for our exertions. The result we were willing to leave in the hands of that Almighty Being whose blessing had been implored upon our undertaking, and to whom we looked for guidance and protection in all our wanderings.

June 19.—On mustering the horses this morning it was found, that one or two had been turned loose without hobbles, and being fresh and high fed from the stables, they gave us a great deal of trouble before we could catch them, but at last we succeeded, and the party moved on upon the road to Gawler town, arriving there (12 miles) about noon; at this place we halted for half an hour, at the little Inn to lunch, and this being the last opportunity we should have of entering a house for many months to come, I was anxious to give my men the indulgence. After lunch I again moved on the party for five miles, crossing and encamping upon, a branch of the Parra or Gawler, where we had abundance of good water and grass.

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June 20.—Having a long stage before us to-day, I moved on the party very early, leaving all roads, and steering across the bush to my sheep stations upon the Light. We passed through some very fine country, the verdant and beautiful herbage of which, at this season of the year, formed a carpet of rich and luxuriant vegetation. Having crossed the grassy and well wooded ranges which confine the waters of the Light to the westward, we descended to the plain, and reached my head station about sunset, after a long and heavy stage of twenty miles—here we were to remain a couple of days to break up the station, as the sheep were sold, and the overseer and one of the men were to join the Expedition party.

The night set in cold and rainy, but towards morning turned to a severe frost; one of the native boys who had been sent a short cut to the station ahead of the drays, lost his road and was out in the cold all night—an unusual circumstance, as a native will generally keep almost as straight a direction through the wilds as a compass will point.

Sunday, June 21.—We remained in camp. The day was cold, the weather boisterous, with showers of rain at intervals, and the barometer falling; our delay enabled me to write letters to my various friends, before finally leaving the occupied parts of the country, I was glad too, to give the horses and men a little rest after the fatigue they had endured yesterday in crossing the country.

June 22.—As we still remained in camp, the day being dark and cloudy with occasional showers, I took the opportunity of having one of the drays boarded close up, and of re-arranging the loads, oiling the fire-arms, and grinding the axes, spades, *etc.*; we completed our complement of tools, tents, tarpaulins, *etc.* from those at the station, and had everything arranged on the drays in the most convenient manner, always having in view safety in carriage and facility of access; the best place for the fire-arms I found to be at the outside of the sides, the backs, or the fronts, of those drays that were close boarded.

By nailing half a large sheepskin with the wool on in any of these positions, a soft cushion was formed for the fire-arms to rest against, they were then fixed in their places by a loop of leather for the muzzle, and a strap and buckle for the stock; whilst the other half of the sheepskin which hung loose, doubled down in front of the weapons. between them and the wheel, effectually preserving them from both dirt and wet, and at the same time keeping them in a position, where they could be got at in a moment, by simply lifting up the skin and unbuckling the strap; by this means too, all danger or risk was avoided, which usually exists when the fire-arms are put on or off the drays in a loaded state. I have myself formerly seen carbines explode more than once from the cocks catching something, in being pulled out from, or pushed in amidst the load of a dray, independently of the difficulty of getting access to them in cases of sudden emergency; a still better plan than the one I adopted, would probably be to have lockers made for the guns, to hang in similar places, and in a somewhat similar manner to that I have

described, but in this case it would be necessary for the lockers to be arranged and fitted at the time the drays or carts were made.

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All the time I could spare from directing or superintending the loading of the drays, I devoted to writing letters and making arrangements for the regulation of my private affairs, which from the sudden manner in which I had engaged in the exploring expedition, and from the busy and hurried life I had led since the commencement of the preparations, had fallen into some confusion. I was now, however, obliged to content myself with such a disposition of them as the time and circumstances enabled me to make.—I observed the latitude of the station to be 34 degrees 15 minutes 56 seconds S.

June 23.—Having got all the party up very early, I broke up the station, and sent one man on horseback into Adelaide with despatches and letters. My overseer and another man were now added to the party, making up our complement in number. Upon re-arranging the loads of the drays yesterday, I had found it inconvenient to have the instruments and tent equipage upon the more heavily loaded drays, and I therefore decided upon taking an extra cart and another horse from the station. This completed our alterations, and the party and equipment stood thus:—

Mr. Eyre.  
Mr. Scott, my assistant and companion.  
John Baxter, Overseer.  
Corporal Coles, R.S. and M.  
John Houston, driving a three horse dray.  
R. M'Robert, driving a three horse dray.  
Neramberein and Cootachah,  
Aboriginal boys, to drive the sheep, track, *etc.*

We had with us 13 horses and 40 sheep, and our other stores were calculated for about three months; in addition to which we were to have a further supply forwarded to the head of Spencer's Gulf by sea, in the *Waterwitch*, to await our arrival in that neighbourhood. This would give us the means of remaining out nearly six months, if we found the country practicable, and in that time we might, if no obstacles intervened, easily reach the centre of the Continent and return, or if practicable, cross to Port Essington on the N. W. coast.

About eleven I moved on the party up the Light for 8 miles, and then halted after an easy stage. As the horses were fresh and the men were not yet accustomed to driving them, I was anxious to move quietly on at first, that nothing might be done in a hurry, and every one might gradually settle down to what he had to perform, and that thus by a little care and moderation at first, those evils, which my former travelling had taught me were frequently the result of haste or inexperience, might be avoided. Nothing is more common than to get the withers of horses wrung, or their shoulders and backs galled at the commencement of a journey, and nothing more difficult than to effect a cure of this mischief whilst the animals are in use. By the precaution which I adopted, I succeeded in preventing this, for the present.

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As we passed up the valley of the Light, we had some rich and picturesque scenery around us—the fertile vale running nearly north and south, backed to the westward by well wooded irregular ranges grassed to their summits, and to the eastward shut in by a dark looking and more heavily timbered range, beyond which rose two peaks of more distant hills, through the centre of the valley the Light took its course, but at present it was only a chain of large ponds unconnected by any stream; and thus, I believe, it remains the greater part of the year, although occasionally swollen to a broad and rapid current.

June 24.—The horses having strayed a little this morning, and given us some trouble to get them, it was rather late when we started; we, however, crossed the low ridges at the head of the Light, and entering upon extensive plains to the north, we descended to a channel, which I took to be the head of a watercourse called the “Gilbert.”

Finding here some tolerably good water and abundance of grass, I halted the party for the night, though we were almost wholly without firewood, an inconvenience that we felt considerably, as the nights now were very cold and frosty. Our stage had been fourteen miles to-day, running at first over low barren ridges, and then crossing rich plains of a loose brown soil, but very heavy for the drays to travel over.

At our camp, a steep bank of the watercourse presented an extensive geological section, but there was nothing remarkable in it, the substrata consisting only of a kind of pipe clay.

June 25.—Upon starting this morning we traversed a succession of fine open and very grassy plains, from which we ascended the low ridges forming the division of the waters to the north and south. In the latter direction, we had left the heads of the “Gilbert” and “Wakefield” chains of ponds, whilst in descending in the former we came upon the “Hill,” a fine chain of ponds taking its course through a very extensive and grassy valley, but with little timber of any kind growing near it. On this account I crossed it, and passing on a little farther encamped the party on a branch of the “Hutt,” and within a mile and a half of the main course of that chain of ponds. Our whole route to-day, had been through a fine and valuable grazing district, with grass of an excellent description, and of great luxuriance.

We were now nearly opposite to the most northerly of the out stations, and after seeing the party encamp, I proceeded, accompanied by Mr. Scott, to search for the stations for the purpose of saying good bye to a few more of my friends. We had not long, however, left the encampment when it began to rain and drove us back to the tents, effectually defeating the object with which we had commenced our walk. Heavy rain was apparently falling to the westward of us, and the night set in dark and lowering.



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In some parts of the large plains we had crossed in the morning, I had observed traces of the remains of timber, of a larger growth than any now found in the same vicinity, and even in places where none at present exists. Can these plains of such very great extent, and now so open and exposed, have been once clothed with timber? and if so, by what cause, or process, have they been so completely denuded, as not to leave a single tree within a range of many miles? In my various wanderings in Australia, I have frequently met with very similar appearances; and somewhat analogous to these, are the singular little grassy openings, or plains, which are constantly met with in the midst of the densest Eucalyptus scrub.

Every traveller in those dreary regions has appreciated these, (to him) comparatively speaking, oases of the desert—for it is in them alone, that he can hope to obtain any food for his jaded horse; without, however, their affording under ordinary circumstances, the prospect of water for himself. Forcing his way through the dense, and apparently interminable scrub, formed by the Eucalyptus dumosa, (which in some situations is known to extend for fully 100 miles), the traveller suddenly emerges into an open plain, sprinkled over with a fine silky grass, varying from a few acres to many thousands in extent, but surrounded on all sides by the dreary scrub he has left.

In these plains I have constantly traced the remains of decayed scrub—generally of a larger growth than that surrounding them—and occasionally appearing to have grown very densely together. From this it would appear that the face of the country in those low level regions, occupied by the Eucalyptus dumosa, is gradually undergoing a process which is changing it for the better, and in the course of centuries perhaps those parts of Australia which are now barren and worthless, may become rich and fertile districts, for as soon as the scrub is removed grass appears to spring up spontaneously. The plains found interspersed among the dense scrubs may probably have been occasioned by fires, purposely or accidentally lighted by the natives in their wanderings, but I do not think the same explanation would apply to those richer plains where the timber has been of a large growth and the trees in all probability at some distance apart—here fires might burn down a few trees, but would not totally annihilate them over a whole district, extending for many miles in every direction.

June 26.—This morning brought a very heavy fog, through which we literally could not see 100 yards, when the party moved on to the “Hutt” chain of ponds, and then followed that watercourse up to the Broughton river, which was crossed in Lat. 33 degrees 28 minutes S. At this point the bed of the Broughton is of considerable width, and its channel is occupied by long, wide and very deep water holes, connected with one another by a strongly running stream, which seldom or never fails even in the driest seasons.



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The soil upon its banks however is not valuable, being generally stony and barren, and bearing a sort of prickly grass, (Spinifex). Wild fowl abound on the pools. On a former occasion, when I first discovered the Broughton, I obtained both ducks and swans from its waters, but now I had no time for sporting, being anxious to push on to the “reedy watercourse,” a halting place in my former journey, so as to get over all the rough and hilly ground before nightfall, that we might have a fair start in the morning. I generally preferred, if practicable, to lengthen the stage a little in the vicinity of watercourses or hills, in order to get the worst of the road over whilst the horses worked together and were warm, rather than leave a difficult country to be passed over the first thing in the morning, when, for want of exercise, the teams are chill and stiff, and require to be stimulated before they will work well in unison. Our journey to-day was about twenty miles, and the last five being over a rugged hilly road, it was late in the afternoon when we halted for the night.

“The reedy watercourse,” is a chain of water-holes taking its rise among some grassy and picturesque ranges to the north of us, and trending southerly to a junction with the Broughton. Among the gorges of this range, (which I had previously named Campbell’s range,)[Note 1: After R. Campbell, Esq. M. C. of Sydney.] are many springs of water, and the scenery is as picturesque as the district is fertile. Many of the hills are well rounded, very grassy, and moderately well timbered even to their summits. This is one of the prettiest and most desirable localities for either sheep or cattle, that I have yet seen in the unoccupied parts of South Australia, whilst the distance from Adelaide by land, does not at the most exceed one hundred and twenty miles. [Note 2: All this country, and for some distance to the north, is now occupied by stations.] The watercourse near our camp took its course through an open valley, between bare hills on which there was neither tree nor shrub for firewood and we were constantly obliged to go half a mile up a steep hill before we could obtain a few stunted bushes to cook with. As the watercourse approached the Broughton the country became much more abrupt and broken, and after its junction with that river, the stream wound through a succession of barren and precipitous hills, for about fifteen miles, at a general course of south-west; these hills were overrun almost everywhere with prickly grass and had patches of the *Eucalyptus dumosa* scattered over them at intervals.

Up to the point where it left the hills, there were ponds of water in the bed of the Broughton, but upon leaving them the river changed its direction to the northward, passing through extensive plains and retaining a deep wide gravelly channel, but without surface water, the drainage being entirely underground, and the country around comparatively poor and valueless.

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## Chapter III.

Spring hill—an aged native deserted by his tribe—rich and extensive plains—*surprise A party of natives—rocky river—crystal brook—Flinders range—the deep spring—Myall ponds—rocky water holes—dry watercourse—reach the depot near mount Arden—prepare for leaving the party—black swans pass to the north—arrival of the Waterwitch.*

During the night the frost had been so severe, that we were obliged to wait a little this morning for the sun to thaw the tent and tarpaulins before they would bend to fold up. After starting, we proceeded across a high barren open country, for about three miles on a W. N. W. course, passing close under a peak connected with Campbell's range, which I named Spring Hill, from the circumstance of a fine spring of water being found about half way up it.

Not far from the spring I discovered a poor emaciated native, entirely alone, without either food or fire, and evidently left by his tribe to perish there; he was a very aged man, and from hardship and want was reduced to a mere skeleton, how long he had been on the spot where we found him I had no means of ascertaining, but probably for some time, as life appeared to be fast ebbing away; he seemed almost unconscious of our presence, and stared upon us with a vacant unmeaning gaze. The pleasures or sorrows of life were for ever over with him: his case was far beyond the reach of human aid, and the probability is that he died a very few hours after we left him.

Such is the fate of the aged and helpless in savage life, nor can we wonder that it should be so, since self-preservation is the first law of nature, and the wandering native who has to travel always over a great extent of ground to seek for his daily food, could not obtain enough to support his existence, if obliged to remain with the old or the sick, or if impeded by the incumbrance of carrying them with him; still I felt grieved for the poor old man we had left behind us, and it was long before I could drive away his image from my mind, or repress the melancholy train of thoughts that the circumstance had called forth.

From the summit of Spring Hill, I observed extensive plains to the N. W. skirted both on their eastern and western sides, by open hills, whilst to the N. W. and N. E. the ranges were high, and apparently terminated in both directions by peaked summits on their eastern extremes; a little south of west the waters of Spencer's Gulf were distinctly visible, and the smokes ascending from the fires of the natives, were seen in many directions among the hills. After passing Spring Hill, we crossed some rich and extensive plains, stretching far away to the northward, and taking a nearly north and south direction under Campbell's range; in the upper part of these plains is the deep bed of a watercourse with water in it all the year round, and opposite to which, in lat. 33

degrees 14 minutes S, is a practicable pass for drays through Campbell's range, to the grassy country to the eastward.

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June 27.—In crossing the southern extremity of these large plains, we came suddenly upon a small party of natives engaged in digging yams of which the plains were full; they were so intent upon their occupation that we were close to them before they were aware of our presence; when they saw us they appeared to be surprised and alarmed, and endeavoured to steal off as rapidly as they could without fairly taking to their heels, for they were evidently either unwilling or afraid to run; finding that we did not molest them they halted, and informed us by signs that we should soon come to water, in the direction we were going. This I knew to be true, and about three o'clock we were in front of a water-course, I had on a former journey named the "Rocky river," from the ragged character of its bed where we struck it.

We had been travelling for some distance upon a high level open country, and now came to a sudden gorge of several hundred feet below us, through which the Rocky river wound its course. It was a most singular and wild looking place, and was not inaptly named by the men, the "Devil's Glen;" looking down from the table land we were upon, the valley beneath appeared occupied by a hundred little hills of steep ascent and rounded summits, whilst through their pretty glens, flowed the winding stream, shaded by many a tree and shrub—the whole forming a most interesting and picturesque scene.

The bed of the watercourse was over an earthy slate, and the water had a sweetish taste. Like most of the Australian rivers, it consisted only of ponds connected by a running stream, and even that ceased to flow a little beyond where we struck it, being lost in the deep sandy channel which it then assumed, and which exhibited in many places traces of very high floods. Below our camp the banks were 50 to 60 feet high, and the width from 60 to 100 yards, its course lay through plains to the south-west, over which patches of scrub were scattered at intervals, and the land in its vicinity was of an inferior description, with much prickly grass growing upon it.

Upwards, the Rocky river, after emerging from the gorges in which we found it, descended through very extensive plains from the north-north-east; there was plenty of water in its bed, and abundance of grass over the plains, so that in its upper parts it offers fine and extensive runs for either cattle or sheep, and will, I have no doubt, ere many years be past, be fully occupied for pastoral purposes.

From our present encampment a very high and pointed hill was visible far to the N.N. W. this from the lofty way in which it towered above the surrounding hills, I named Mount Remarkable. Our latitude at noon was 33 degrees 25 minutes 26 seconds S.

A very beautiful shrub was found this afternoon upon the Rocky river, in full flower: it was a tall slender stalked bush, about six or eight feet high, growing almost in the bed of the river, with leaves like a geranium, and fine delicate lilac flowers about an inch and a half in diameter; here, too, we found the first gum-trees seen upon any of the

watercourses for many miles, as all those we had recently crossed, traversed open plains which were quite without either trees or shrubs of any kind.

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June 28.—This morning we passed through a country of an inferior description, making a short stage to a watercourse, named by me the “Crystal Brook;” it was a pretty stream emanating from the hills to the north-east, and marked in its whole course through the plains to the northward and westward by lines of gum-trees. The pure bright water ran over a bed of clear pebbles, with a stream nine feet wide, rippling and murmuring like the rivulets of England—a circumstance so unusual in the character of Australian watercourses, that it interested and pleased the whole party far more than a larger river would have done; this characteristic did not, however, long continue, for like all the streams we had lately crossed, the water ceased to flow a short distance beyond our crossing place.

The country below us, like that through which the Rocky river took its course, was open and of an inferior description, but I have no doubt that by tracing the stream upwards, towards its source among the ranges, a good and well watered country would be found; I ascertained the latitude by a meridian altitude at Crystal brook to be 33 degrees 18 minutes 7 seconds S.

The hills on the opposite side of Spencer’s Gulf were now plainly visible, and one which appeared to be inland, I took to be the middle Back mountain of Flinders; between our camp and the eastern shores of the gulf, the land was generally low, with a good deal of scrub upon it, and nearer the shores appeared to be swampy, and subject to inundation by the tides.

June 29.—Upon moving from our camp this morning we commenced following under Flinders range. From Crystal brook, the hills rise gradually in elevation as they trend to the northward, still keeping their western slopes almost precipitous to the plains, out of which they appear to rise abruptly. Our course was much embarrassed by the gullies and gorges emanating from the hills, in some of which the crossing place was not very good, and in all the horses got much shaken, so that when we arrived at a large watercourse defined by gum trees, and in which was a round hole of water that had been on a former occasion called by me “The Deep Spring,” I halted the party for the night and found that the horses were a good deal fatigued. Fortunately there was excellent food for them, and plenty of water. The place at which we encamped was upon one of the numerous watercourses, proceeding from the gorges of Flinders range. It had a wide gravelly bed, divided into two or three separate channels, but without a drop of water below the base of the hills, excepting where we bivouacked, at this point, there was a considerable extent of rich black alluvial soil, and in the midst of it a mound of jet black earth, surrounded by a few reeds. In the centre of the mound was a circular deep hole containing water, and apparently a spring: the last time I was here, in 1839 it was full to overflowing, but now, though in the depth of winter, I was surprised

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and chagrined to see the water so much lower than I had known it before. It was covered up too so carefully with bushes and boughs, that it was evident the natives sometimes contemplated its being quite dried up, [Note 3: In October 1842, I again passed this way, in command of a party of Police sent overland to Port Lincoln, to search for Mr. C. C. Dutton: the spring was then dried up completely.] and had taken this means as the best they could adopt for shading and protecting the water. On the other hand the numerous well beaten tracks leading to this solitary pool appeared to indicate that there was no other water in the neighbourhood. We saw kangaroos, pigeons and birds of various descriptions, going to it in considerable number. At night too after dark we found that a party of natives were watching also for an opportunity to participate in so indispensable a necessity, which having secured, they departed, and we saw nothing more of them. I observed the latitude at this camp to be 33 degrees 7 minutes 14 seconds S. and the variation 8 degrees 53 minutes E.

June 30.—Our road to day was much better, and less interrupted by gullies, though we still kept close under Flinders range. We traversed a great extent of plain land which was generally stony, but grassy, and tolerably well adapted for sheep runs. Several watercourses take their rise from this range, with a westerly direction towards the gulf, these were all dry when we crossed them, but their course was indicated by gum trees, and as some of the channels were wide and large, and had strong traces of occasional high floods, I rode for many miles down one of the most promising, but without being able to find a drop of water. At noon our latitude was 32 degrees 59 minutes 8 seconds, S.

Late in the afternoon we reached a watercourse, which I had previously named “Myall Ponds,” [Note 4: Myall is in some parts of New Holland, the native name for the *Acacia pendula*.] from the many and beautiful *Acacia pendula* trees that grew upon its banks. There I knew we could get water, and at once halted the party for the night. Upon going to examine the supply I was again disappointed at finding it so much less than when I had been here in 1839. This did not augur well for our future prospects, and gave me considerable anxiety relative to our future movements.

For some days past the whole party had fully entered upon their respective duties, each knew exactly what he had to do, and was beginning to get accustomed to its performance, so that every thing went on smoothly and prosperously. My own time, when not personally engaged in conducting the party, was occupied in keeping the journals and charts, etc. in taking and working observations—in the daily register of the barometer, thermometer, winds, and weather, and in collecting specimens of flowers, or minerals. My young friend, Mr. Scott, was kept equally busy; for in many of these duties he assisted me, and in

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some relieved me altogether; the regular entry of the meteorological observations, and the collecting of flowers or shrubs generally fell to his share; independently of which he was the only sportsman in the party, and upon his gun we were dependant for supplies of wallabies, pigeons, ducks, or other game, to vary our bill of fare, and make the few sheep we had with us hold out as long as possible. As a companion I could not have made a better selection—young, active, and cheerful, I found him ever ready to render me all the assistance in his power. At our present encampment, several of a species of wallabie, very much resembling a hare in flavour, were shot by Mr. Scott, but hitherto we had not succeeded in getting a kangaroo.

July 1.—To-day we travelled through a similar country to that we were in yesterday, consisting of open plains and occasionally low scrub. Kangaroos abounded in every direction. Our stage was eighteen miles to a watercourse called by me the “Reedy water holes,” from the circumstance of reeds growing around the margin of the water. Upon arriving at this place I was surprised to find a strongly running stream, where formerly there had only been a reedy pond, although the two last watercourses we had encamped at had been much reduced and dried up. When I had been here in 1839, they were the running streams, and this only a pool, whilst singularly enough there did not appear to have been more rain at one place than the other.

We were now in full view of Spencer’s gulf, but as yet could observe no signs of the *Waterwitch*, which was to meet us at the head of the gulf with additional stores. At night I observed the latitude by altitude of a Bootis to be 32 degrees 41 minutes 28 seconds S.

July 2.—We moved on for 15 miles over extensive plains, covered principally with Rhagodia, and in some places stony, and halted early in the afternoon at a large dry watercourse, coming out from Flinders range. Though there was no water in this channel below the base of the hill, on sending a party a mile and a half up it with spades and buckets, we got, by digging in the gravelly bed, as much as sufficed for ourselves and horses. At this camp I observed the variation to be 7 degrees 24 minutes E.

July 3.—During the night our horses had rambled a little, so that we could not get away early, and as we had a long stage before us we were obliged to push on to a late hour. At dark we arrived at my former depot near Mount Arden, and took up our old position in the dry bed of the watercourse, at the base of the hills from which it emanated; but we had still to send the horses a mile and a half further up the gorge, over a hilly and stony road, before we could either get water for ourselves or them; it was therefore very late when the men returned, and the whole party were a good deal fatigued, having travelled from Adelaide to Mount Arden in 14 days, (deducting the two days in camp at the Light.) I now ascertained the latitude of the depot to be 32 degrees 14 minutes S.



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July 4.—Having mustered the horses this morning, I ordered an arrangement to be entered into for taking them to the water twice a day, and bringing down the supply required for the use of the party. Each person undertook this duty in turn, and thus the labour was divided. After breakfast I went up myself to examine the state of the water and found great abundance in its bed; there were strong traces of recent and high flooding, the drift timber being lodged among the bushes several feet above the ordinary channel. The grass I was sorry to find was rather old and dry, but still there was a very fair supply of it, a point of great importance to us at a time when it was necessary to detain the whole party for two or three weeks in depot, to enable me to examine the country to the north; my former experience having convinced me that it would be dangerous to attempt to push on, before ascertaining where grass and water could be procured.

We had now travelled upwards of eighty miles under Flinders range, from Crystal brook to Mount Arden, and hitherto the character of that range had varied but little. High, rocky, and barren, it rises abruptly from the plains, and so generally even is the country at its base, that we had no difficulty in keeping our drays within a mile or two of it. This was convenient, because we had not far to leave our line of route, when compelled to send up among the ravines for water. The slopes of Flinders range are steep and precipitous to the westward, and composed principally of an argillaceous stone or grey quartz, very hard and ringing like metal when struck with a hammer.

There was no vegetation upon these hills, excepting prickly grass, and many were coated over so completely with loose stones that from the steepness of the declivity it was unsafe, if not impossible to ascend them. At one or two points in our routs I climbed up to the top of high summits, but was not rewarded for my toil, the prospect being generally cheerless and barren in the extreme, nor did the account given by Mr. Brown of his ascent of Mount Brown in March 1802, tempt me to delay a day to enable me to view the uninteresting prospect he had seen from the summit of that hill—by far the highest peak in this part of Flinders range.

Having decided upon riding on a head of my party to reconnoitre, as soon as the *Waterwitch* should arrive, I at once commenced my preparations, and made the overseer put new shoes on the horses I intended to take with me. The very stony character of the country we had been lately traversing and the singularly hard nature of the stone itself, had caused the shoes to wear out very rapidly, and there was hardly a horse in the teams that did not now require new shoes; fortunately we had brought a very large supply with us, and my overseer was a skilful and expeditious farrier. At dusk a watch was set upon one of the hills near us, to look out for signals from the *Waterwitch* in the direction of Spencer's gulf, but none were seen.

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July 4.—Whilst writing in my tent this evening, my attention was attracted by the notes of swans, and upon going out I perceived a flight of several of the black species coming up from the southward; when they had got over the tents, they appeared to be alarmed and wheeled to the eastward, but soon returning, they took a nearly due northerly course. This was encouraging for us, and augured well for the existence of some considerable body of water inland, but we hoped and expected that a few days would perhaps give us a clue to the object of their flight.

Sunday, July 5.—A day of rest to all. In the afternoon I employed myself in writing out instructions for the overseer during my absence, as also for the master of the *Waterwitch*, for whose arrival we now kept a constant and anxious look out. In the evening about eight o'clock the sentinel on the hill reported a fire on the opposite side of Spencer's gulf. Upon receiving this intelligence I had blue lights exhibited, and rockets fired, which in a little time were replied to by rockets from the gulf and the lighting up of a second fire on shore assuring me at once of the safe arrival of the cutter.

## Chapter IV.

Make arrangements for getting up stores from the *Waterwitch*—leave the party—salt watercourse—mount Eyre—aspect of the country—lake Torrens—return towards the hills—native female—saline character of the country—mount deception—reach the eastern hills—large watercourses—water hole in A rock—grassy but hilly country—running stream—ascend A range—return homewards—decay of trees in the watercourses—shoot A kangaroo—arrive at the depot—bury stores—make preparations for leaving—send despatches to the vessel.

July 6.—*Being* anxious to pursue my explorations, and unwilling to lose another day solely for the purpose of receiving my letters, I sent down my overseer to arrange about getting our stores up from the vessel, which was about fourteen miles away, and to request the master to await my return from the north, and in the interval employ himself in surveying and sounding some salt water inlets, we had seen on the eastern shores of the gulf in our route up under Flinders range.

Having made all necessary arrangements and wished Mr. Scott good bye, I set off on horseback with the eldest of my native boys, taking a pack horse to carry our provisions, and some oats for the horses. After rounding a projecting corner of the range we passed Mount Arden, still traversing open plains of great extent, and very stony. In some of these plains we found large puddles of water much discoloured by the soil, so that it was evident there had been heavy rains in this direction, though we had none to the southward.

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After travelling twenty-four miles we came to a large watercourse winding from Flinders range through the plains, with its direction distinctly marked out by the numerous gum-trees upon its banks. This was the "salt watercourse" of my former journeys so called from the large reaches of salt water in its bed a mile or two among the hills. By digging in the gravelly bed of the channel, where the natives had scooped a small hole, we got some tolerable water, and were enabled to give as much as they required to our horses, but it was a slow and tedious operation. We could get very little out at once, and had to give it to them to drink in the black boy's duck frock, which answered the purpose of a bucket amazingly well.

There was not a blade of grass, or anything that the horses could eat near this creek, so I was obliged to tie them up for the night, after giving to each a feed of oats.

July 7.—Towards morning several showers of rain fell, and I found that I had got a severe attack of rheumatism, which proved both troublesome and painful. Pushing on for ten miles we reached the height standing out from the main range which Colonel Gawler named Mount Eyre, from its having been the limit of my first journey to the north in May 1839. This little hill is somewhat detached, of considerable elevation, and with a bold rocky overhanging summit to the southward. Having clambered to the top of it, I had an extensive view, and took several bearings.

The region before us appeared to consist of a low sandy country without either trees or shrubs, save a few stunted bushes. On the east this was backed by high rugged ranges, very barren in appearance, and extending northward as far as the eye could reach, beyond this level country to the West, and stretching far to the north-west, appeared a broad glittering stripe, looking like water, and constituting the bed of Lake Torrens. The lake appeared to be about twenty-five miles off, and of considerable breadth; but at so great distance, it was impossible to say whether there was actually any water in it or not.

Having completed my observations we descended again to the plains steering north-west for the lake. At two miles from Mount Eyre we found a puddle of water in the midst of the plains, and halted at it for the night. Our horses had good grass, but would not touch the water, which was extremely thick and muddy. Upon trying it ourselves we found it was not usable, even after it had been strained twice through a handkerchief, whilst boiling only thickened it; it was a deep red colour, from the soil, and was certainly an extraordinary and unpalatable mixture.

July 8.—Our horses having strayed this morning I sent the native boy to look for them, but as he did not return in a reasonable time, I got anxious and went after him myself, leaving the saddles and provisions at our sleeping place. In about four miles I met the boy returning with the runaways, which had rambled for several miles, though they had abundance of good feed around the camp; fortunately we found every thing safe when

we got back, but if any natives had accidentally passed that way we should probably have lost everything, and been left in very awkward predicament.

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This is a risk I have frequently been obliged to incur, and is one of the inconveniences resulting from so small a number as two travelling alone; it is not always practicable from want of grass to tether the horses, and frequently when they are tethered the ropes break, and occasion the necessity of both individuals leaving the encampment to search for them at the same time.

Moving on to the N. W. by N. we passed over heavy sandy ridges, with barren red plains between, and in one of the latter we found a puddle of rain water, this upon tasting. I found to be rather saline from the nature of the soil upon which it lay, the horses, however, drank it readily, and we put some in a small keg for ourselves. The only vegetation to be seen consisted of a few small stunted trees and shrubs, and even these as we approached the vicinity of the lake disappeared altogether, and gave place to Salsolaceous plants, the country being open and barren in the extreme.

I found Lake Torrens completely girded by a steep sandy ridge, exactly like the sandy ridges bounding the sea shore, no rocks or stones were visible any where, but many saline coasts peeped out in the outer ridge, and upon descending westerly to its basin, I found the dry bed of the lake coated completely over with a crust of salt, forming one unbroken sheet of pure white, and glittering brilliantly in the sun. On stepping upon this I found that it yielded to the foot, and that below the surface the bed of the lake consisted of a soft mud, and the further we advanced to the westward the more boggy it got, so that at last it became quite impossible to proceed, and I was obliged to return to the outer margin of the lake without ascertaining whether there was water on the surface of its bed further west or not.

The extraordinary deception caused by mirage and refraction, arising from the state of the atmosphere in these regions, makes it almost impossible to believe the evidence of one's own eyesight; but as far as I could judge under these circumstances, it appeared to me that there was water in the bed of the lake at a distance of four or five miles from where I was, and at this point Lake Torrens was about fifteen or twenty miles across, having high land bounding it to the west, seemingly a continuation of the table land at the head of Spencer's gulf on its western side.

Foiled in the hope of reaching the water, I stood gazing on the dismal prospect before me with feelings of chagrin and gloom. I can hardly say I felt disappointed, for my expectations in this quarter had never been sanguine; but I could not view unmoved, a scene which from its character and extent, I well knew must exercise a great influence over my future plans and hopes: the vast area of the lake was before me interminable as far as the eye could see to the northward, and the country upon its shore, was desolate and forbidding.

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It was evident, that I could never hope to take my party across the lake, and it was equally evident, that I should not be able to travel around its shores, from the total absence of all fresh water, grass, or wood, whilst the very saline nature of the soil in the surrounding country, made even the rain water salt, after lying for an hour or two upon the ground. My only chance of success now lay in the non-termination of Flinders range, and in the prospect it held out to me, that by continuing our course along it we might be able to procure grass and water in its recesses, until we were either taken beyond Lake Torrens, or led to some practicable opening to the north.

With a heavy heart I turned towards the mountains, and steering N. E. for ten miles, halted at dark, where there was nothing for our horses to eat or drink, and we were consequently obliged to tie them up for the night. We had still a few oats left and gave each horse three pints. A short time before encamping, I had observed that Lake Torrens was trending more to the eastward, and that when we halted, it was not at any very great distance from us.

July 9.—One of our horses having got loose last night, pulled the cork out of the keg in which was our small stock of the dirty brackish water we had found yesterday, and rolling the keg over, destroyed its contents; we were thus deprived of our breakfasts, and consequently had but little delay in starting. I intended to push on steadily for the hills, but after travelling six miles came to a puddle in the plains, with tolerable grass around, and at this I halted for the day, to rest the horses. Our latitude was 31 degrees 25 minutes S. by an altitude of Arcturus, Mount Eyre then bearing S. 7 degrees E.

July 10.—Our horses being much recruited I altered our course to-day to N. 5 degrees E. being the bearing of the most distant range to the northward, (subsequently named Mount Deception). We passed for the first ten miles through an open barren country, but found a puddle at which we watered our horses, and refilled the keg; we then entered heavy ridges of dense red sand lying nearly north and south, and having small barren plains between.

There were a few stunted bushes upon the ridges and occasionally some small straggling pines. Lake Torrens still trended easterly, being occasionally seen from, and sometimes approaching near to our track.

Emerging from the sandy ridges we again entered upon vast level plains covered with rhagodia. In the midst of these we came to the bed of a large dry watercourse, having good grass about it, but containing no water. I halted here for the day as our horses were not very thirsty.

Upon examining the bed of the watercourse, I found traces of a rather recent and high flood; much drift being still left upon the bushes where it had been swept by the torrent; I could, however, find no water anywhere.



A great many emus were seen during our ride, and I wounded one with my rifle, but did not get it. We found to-day a description of flower, which I had not seen before, white, and sweetly scented like the hawthorn, growing upon a low prickly bush near the watercourse.

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July 11.—To-day I left our course and rambled up the watercourse to examine its character and search for water, which however I could not find in its channel anywhere. Traces of natives were numerous and recent all the way as we went, till at last we came to where they had encamped the previous night, and where they had left a fire still fresh and burning.

Proceeding onwards we came upon a single native, a female, young, but miserably thin and squalid, fit emblem of the sterility of the country. We could gain no information from her, she was so much alarmed, but not long after parting with her we came to a puddle of water in the plains, and encamped for the night. Our stage had been a tortuous, but not a long one, and we halted early in the day, the latitude was 30 degrees 58 minutes S. by an altitude of the sun at noon.

After taking some refreshment, I walked to a rise about three miles off at N. 40 degrees E. from which I took several bearings, and among them I set Mount Deception at N. 25 degrees W., I then examined several of the gorges between the front hills, where the banks were broken away, and to my great dismay found in all of them salt mixed with the sand, the clay, and even the rocks; whilst in the bed of the watercourse, the salt water tea-tree was making its appearance, a shrub I had never before seen under Flinders range, and one which never grows where the soil is not of a very saline nature, and generally only where the water is too brackish for use.

The beds of the watercourses were in some places quite white and glazed with encrustations of salt, where the rains had lodged, and the water had evaporated. Some of the cliffs which I examined presented sections of 40 and 50 feet perpendicular height, in which layers of salt were embedded from the very top to the bottom.

In such a country, what accommodation could I expect, or what hopes could I entertain for the future, when the very water shed from the clouds would not be drinkable after remaining a few hours on the ground? Whichever way I turned myself, to the West, to the East, or the North, nothing but difficulties met my view.

In one direction was an impracticable lake, skirted by heavy and scrubby sand ridges; in another, a desert of bare and barren plains; and in a third, a range of inhospitable rocks. The very stones lying upon the hills looked like the scorched and withered scoria of a volcanic region; and even the natives, judging from the specimen I had seen to-day, partook of the general misery and wretchedness of the place.

My heart sank within me when I reflected upon the gradual but too obvious change that had taken place in the character of the country for the worse, and when I considered that for some days past we had been entirely dependent for our supply of water upon the little puddles that had been left on the plains by the rain, and which two or three more days would completely dry up. Under circumstances so unpropitious, I had many



misgivings, and the contemplation of our future prospect became a subject of painful anxiety.

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July 12.—We moved away early, steering for Mount Deception. Near its base, and emanating from it, we crossed the dry bed of a very large watercourse, more resembling that of a river in character, its channel being wide, deep, and well-defined, and lined with the salt-water tea-tree; whilst its course was marked by very large, green looking gum-trees, the bed consisted of an earthy, micaceous slate of a reddish colour, and in very minute particles, almost in some places as fine as sand, but we could find no water in it anywhere.

The range in which this watercourse has its source, is of the same slaty rock, and very rugged; it could not be less than 3,000 feet in elevation, and its summit was only attainable by winding along the steep and stony ridges that led round the deep gorges and ravines by which it was surrounded.

From the top the view was extensive and unsatisfactory. Lake Torrens appearing as large and mysterious as ever, and bearing in its most northerly extreme visible W. 22 degrees N. To the north was a low level cheerless waste, and to the east Flinders range trending more easterly, and then sweeping back to N. 28 degrees W. but its appearance seemed to be changing and its character altering; the ranges struck me as being more separated by ridges, with barren flats and valleys between, among which winding to the N. W. were many large and deep watercourses, but which when traced up, often for many miles, I found to emanate from gorges of the hills, and to have neither water nor springs in them.

I had fully calculated upon finding permanent water at this very high range, and was proportionally disappointed at not succeeding, especially after having toiled to the summit, and tired both myself and horses in tracing up its watercourses. There was now no other alternative left me, than to make back for the hills to the eastward, in the hope of being more fortunate there. I had only found permanent water once, (at Salt watercourse) since I left my party, having depended entirely upon puddles of rain water for subsistence; but it now became imperative on me to turn my attention exclusively to this subject, not only to enable me to bring up my men, but to secure the possibility of my own return, as every day that passed dried up more and more the small puddles I had found in the plains.

Descending Mount Deception, we travelled five miles upon a S. E. course, and encamped upon a small dry watercourse for the night, with good grass for our horses, but without water.

July 13.—Bending our steps backwards, to search for water in the eastern hills, we were lucky enough to fall in with a puddle in the plains, at which we watered our horses, and again proceeded.

Selecting one of the larger watercourses running out from the hills, we traced it up a considerable distance, examining all its minor branches carefully, and sparing no pains



in seeking a permanent spring of water; the channel, however, gradually diminished in size, as we occasionally passed the junctions of small branches from the various gorges; the gum-trees on its course were either dead or dying; the hills, which at a distance had appeared very rugged and lofty, upon a nearer approach turned out to be mere detached eminences of moderate elevation, covered with loose stones, but without the least sign of water.

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About two o'clock, P.M. we passed a little grass, and as the day appeared likely to become rainy, I halted for the night. Leaving the native boy to hobble the horses, I took my gun and ascended one of the hills near me for a view. Lake Torrens was visible to the west, and Mount Deception to the N.W. but higher hills near me, shut out the view in every other direction. In descending, I followed a little rocky gully leading to the main watercourse, and to my surprise and joy, discovered a small but deep pool of water in a hole of the rock: upon sounding the depth, I found it would last us some time, and that I might safely bring on my party thus far, until I could look for some other point for a depot still farther north; the little channel where the water was, I named Depot Pool.

Regaining the camp, I immediately set to work with the native boy to construct a bough hut, as the weather looked very threatening. We had hardly completed it before the rain came down in torrents, and water was soon laying every where in the ledges of rock in the bed of the watercourse. So little do we know what is before us, and so short a time is necessary to change the aspect of affairs, and frequently too, when we least expect it!

July 14.—Our hut not having been quite water-tight before the rain came, we got very wet during the night, and turned out early this morning to go and hunt for firewood to warm ourselves.

As the weather still continued rainy, I determined to give our horses a day's rest, whilst I walked up the watercourse to examine it farther. I found the hills open a good deal more as I proceeded, with nice grassy valleys between; and the hills themselves, though high and steep, were rounded at the summits, and richly clothed with vegetation: among them numerous watercourses took their rise in the gorges, and generally these were well marked by gum-trees. Altogether it was a pretty and fertile spot, and though very hilly, would do well for stock, if permanent water could be found near. I was quite unsuccessful, however, in my search for this, and the native boy, whom I sent in the opposite direction, after my return, was equally unfortunate. Towards evening, one of the horses having broken his hobbles, and got alarmed, galloped off, taking the other with him. Tired and wet as I was, I was obliged to go after them, and it was some miles from the camp, before I could overtake and turn them back. Our latitude was 30 degrees 55 minutes S.

July 15.—This morning was misty and clondy, and dreadfully cold. We set off early and commenced tracing up and examining as many of the watercourses as we could; we did not, however, find permanent water.

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Under one low ridge we met with what I took to be a small spring emanating from a limestone rock; but it was so small as to be quite useless to a party like mine, though the natives appeared frequently to have resorted to it. Finding the courses of the main channel become lost in its many branches, I ascended the dividing ridge, and crossed into the bed of another large watercourse, in which, after travelling but a short distance, I found a fine spring of running water among some very broken and precipitous ranges, which rose almost perpendicularly from the channel; in the latter, high ledges of a slaty rock stretched occasionally quite across its bed, making it both difficult and dangerous to get our horses along. In the vicinity of the water the grass was tolerably good, but the declivities upon which it principally grew, were steep and very stony.

Having hobbled the horses, I took my gun, and walked down the watercourse, to a place where it forms a junction with a larger one, but in neither could I find any more water. Upon my return, I found that the native boy had caught an opossum in one of the trees near, which proved a valuable addition to our scanty and unvaried fare. The latitude to-day was 30 degrees 51 minutes S.

July 16.—Tracing down the watercourse we were encamped on, to the junction before mentioned, I steered a little more to the north, to ascend a high stony range, from which I hoped to obtain a view to the eastward; but after considerable toil in climbing, and dragging our horses over loose rolling stones, which put them constantly in danger of falling back, I was not rewarded for the trouble I had taken: the view to the east was quite shut out by high rugged ranges of ironstone and quartz, whilst to the north, the hills appeared lower and more open.

It now became a matter of serious consideration, whether I should pursue my researches any farther at present. I was already about 120 miles away from my party, with barely provisions enough to last me back; and the country, in advance, appeared to be getting daily more difficult; added to this, the "*Waterwitch*" was waiting at the head of Spencer's Gulf for my return.

After reflecting on my position, I decided to rejoin my party without delay; and descending the range to the S. E., I steered for a large watercourse we had crossed in the morning; intending to trace it up, for the purpose of examining its branches. The bed of this watercourse, at first, was very wide, and lined with gum-trees; but as I advanced, I found its channel became contracted, and very rocky, the gum-trees disappearing, and giving place to the salt-water tea-tree. By nightfall, I was unable to proceed any further, owing to the large stones and rocks that interposed themselves. Retracing my steps, therefore, for a mile or two, to a little grass I had observed as I passed by, I bivouacked for the night, being, as well as the horses, quite knocked up. The native

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boy, who accompanied me, was equally fatigued; and we were both lame from walking across so rugged a country, over a great portion of which we found it quite impracticable to ride. Our stage could not have been less than twenty-five or twenty-six miles during the day, yet we had not met with a drop of water, even though we had high ranges, large watercourses, and huge gum-trees on every side of us. As usual, the traces of high floods were numerous; and the channels of these watercourses, confined as they are by precipitous ranges, must, at times, be filled by rapid and overwhelming torrents, which would collect there after heavy rains.

Some great progressive change appears to be taking place in the climate and seasons of this part of the country, as, in many of the watercourses, we found all the gum-trees either dying or dead, without any young trees growing up to replace them. The moisture which had promoted their growth, and brought them to maturity, existed no longer; and in many places, only the wreck of noble trees remained to indicate to the traveller what once had been the character of this now arid region. In other watercourses the gum-trees were still green and flourishing, and of giant growth; but we were equally unable to discover water in these,[Note 5: We had no means with us of digging—possibly moisture existed below the surface where the trees were so large and green.] as in those where the trees were decaying or withered.

July 17.—To-day we returned to our temporary camp, tracing up various branches of the water-courses as we went along, but without finding water. Many of the ranges in our route consisted of masses of ironstone, apparently containing a very large proportion of metal. In one place, I found a mineral which I took to be tin ore; the loss, however, of all the geological specimens I collected, after their arrival in Adelaide, has unfortunately put it now beyond my power to test any of the rocks or minerals, about which I was doubtful. As we encamped early, and I was desirous of recruiting the horses, I employed myself in taking an observation for latitude, whilst the black boy went out to look for an opossum. He succeeded in bringing in a fine large one, which formed a welcome addition to our meagre fare. The nights were still very frosty.

July 18.—In travelling to “Depot Pool,” the native boy caught another opossum, and we again halted early in the day for the sake of resting the horses.

July 19.—Concealing among some rocks every thing we did not absolutely require, we descended towards the plains, searching as we went, for the most favourable line of road to them, for the drays, but at best the country was very rough and stony.

After clearing the hills, we made a stage of twenty-eight miles along the plains running under Flinders range, and at night encamped upon a channel coming out of it, where we obtained water, but very little grass for our horses.

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July 20.—To-day I kept behind some of the low front hills, passing through some extensive valleys between them and the main range; and as I found abundance of water lying in pools upon the plains, I did not make for the hills at all.

Before sunset, I got a shot at a kangaroo with my rifle, which, though severely wounded, gave me a long chase before I could capture it; this furnished us with a welcome and luxurious repast. We had been so long living upon nothing but the bush baked bread, called damper (so named, I imagine, from its heavy, sodden character), with the exception of the one or two occasions upon which the native boy had added an opossum to our fare, that we were delighted to obtain a supply of animal food for a change; and the boy, to shew how he appreciated our good luck, ate several pounds of it for his supper. Our horses were equally fortunate with ourselves, for we obtained both good grass and water for them.

July 21.—Taking with us the best part of what was left of the kangaroo, we crossed a stony ridge to the S. W., and at four miles struck a watercourse with a large pool of water in its bed, and well adapted for a halting place for the party on their route to the north: we had not seen this in our outward course, having kept further to the westward in the plains. From the water-hole, Mount Eyre bore W. 30 degrees S. distant five miles.

Upon leaving this pool I pushed on as rapidly as I could, being anxious to rejoin my party; and after a hard and fatiguing ride of forty miles, arrived at the depot under Mount Arden, late in the day, having been absent sixteen days. I had been anxiously expected, and was cordially welcomed by the whole party, who were getting sadly tired of inactivity, and especially by my young friend Mr. Scott, whose eager and ardent disposition rendered him quite uneasy under the confinement and restraint of a depot encampment; he would gladly have shared with me the difficulties and hazards of exploring the country in advance, but from the very embarrassing nature of the undertaking, I did not think it right to take more than a single native with me, as every addition to the number of a party, on such occasions, only tends to increase the difficulty and anxiety of the task.

Having rested a little, and made innumerable inquiries, I was very much gratified to find that the whole party were in good health, and that every thing had been conducted in a satisfactory manner during my absence. No one had been idle, and every thing that I could have wished, had been properly arranged. The stores had been safely brought up from the *Waterwitch*, including a barometer kindly sent by the Governor, and a large packet of English letters, at any time a highly valued prize, and not the less so now that they were received 200 miles in the interior, amidst the labours and anxieties of an exploring expedition.

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During my absence all the harness, hobbles, tents, tarpaulins, *etc.* had been fully repaired; and according to my instructions, a large deep hole had been dug in the slope of the hill, to bury a portion of the stores in, that if compelled by circumstances to return from the north, we might still have supplies to fall back upon. Mr. Scott had employed his time in collecting botanical and geological specimens, and had already made a very fair commencement for our collections in both these departments of science. He had also regularly kept the meteorological journal, registering the observations three times in each day.

July 22.—After breakfast I had all the stores reweighed, and examined the supplies sent us in the *Waterwitch*, which consisted chiefly of flour, biscuit, sugar, tea, salt pork, soap, tobacco, salt, canvas, *etc.* besides many little luxuries which the kindness of the Governor, and the consideration of our many friends had added to the list.

The men during my absence, having been living entirely upon salt pork, to economize the sheep, were glad to receive the kangaroo which I brought home with me.

Having inspected the stores, the whole party were put upon their travelling rations, and the first week's allowance was issued to each, consisting of ten pounds of meat, seven pounds of biscuit or flour, a quarter of a pound of tea, a pound and a half of sugar, a quarter of a pound of soap, and the same quantity of tobacco.

Provisions of different kinds were then weighed out, headed up in casks, and buried in the hole dug by the men during my absence, to wait our return, if ever it should be our lot to reach the place again. The remainder were all properly packed up, and the drays loaded and arranged for moving on.

After satisfactorily concluding all the preparations for leaving the depot, I employed myself busily in writing letters and despatches until a very late hour of the night, as it was the last opportunity I should have for a long time, of reporting our prospects and progress, or of thanking the Governor and our numerous friends, for the many attentions we had experienced.

I had hardly retired to rest before I was suddenly seized with a violent attack of illness, arising probably from cold and over-exertion, now that a return to my party had removed the stimulus to activity, and permitted a reaction in the system to take place.

July 23.—This morning I felt weak, and still very ill, and it was with great difficulty I could manage to close my letters, and give the necessary instructions to the overseer, whom I sent down to the head of Spencer's Gulf, with orders to the master of the cutter to sail for Adelaide, and to report what he had seen at the salt inlets in the east side of Spencer's Gulf, which I had directed him to examine in the boats whilst I was absent exploring to the north. His reply was, that there was water enough for a ship to lie within one mile of the shore, that there was a tolerable landing place, but that he had found no



fresh water. The men were employed during the day making a new tarpaulin from the canvas sent up in the *Waterwitch*. The following is a copy of the Report sent to the Governor, and to the Chairman of the Committee for promoting the expedition.

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“Depot, near Mount Arden,  
July 22nd, 1840.

“Sir,—I have the honour to acquaint you for the information of His Excellency the Governor, and of the colonists interested in the northern expedition, with the progress made up to the present date.

“I arrived here with my party all well, on the 3rd July instant, and on the 6th I proceeded, accompanied by one of my native boys, on horseback, to reconnoitre Lake Torrens and the country to the north of the depot, leaving the party in camp to rest the horses and enable the overseer to get up, from the head of Spencer’s Gulf, the supplies kindly sent by His Excellency the Governor in the *Waterwitch*—her arrival having been signalled the evening previous to my leaving. I arrived on the shores of Lake Torrens the third day after leaving the depot, and have ascertained that it is a basin of considerable magnitude, extending certainly over a space varying in width from 15 to 20 miles, and with a length of from 40 to 50, from its southern extremity, to the most northerly part of it, visible from a high summit in Flinders range, (about ninety miles north of Mount Arden). The lake is girded with an outer ridge of sand, covered with salsolaceous plants, and with saline crusts, shewing above the ground at intervals. Its waters appear to extend over a considerable surface, but they are, seemingly, shallow. I could not approach the water, from the soft nature of that part of its bed, which is uncovered, and which appeared to reach from three to four miles from the outer bank to the water’s edge. There can be no doubt, however, of its being very salt, as that portion of its bed which lay exposed to our view was thickly coated with pungent particles of salt. There were not any trees or shrubs of any kind near the lake where we made it, nor could either grass or fresh water be procured for our horses. Lake Torrens is bounded on its western side by high lands—apparently a continuation of the table land to the westward of the head of Spencer’s Gulf.—I should think that it must receive a considerable drainage from that quarter, as well as the whole of the waters falling from Flinders range to the eastward.

“From the very inhospitable nature of the country, around the lake, I could not examine it so carefully or so extensively as I could have wished. My time, too, being very limited, made me hurry away to the northward, to search for a place to which I might bring on my party, as the grass in the neighbourhood of the depot was very old, and much less abundant than on either of my former visits there. It became, therefore, imperative on me to remove the horses as speedily as possible. Should circumstances permit, I shall, however, endeavour to visit Lake Torrens again, on my return from the northern interior. After leaving the lake I spent many days in examining the country to the northward of our depot. Its character seemed to vary but little; barren sandy plains

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still formed the lower level, and the hills constituting the continuation of Flinders range were still composed of quartz and ironstone; they were, however, gradually becoming less elevated and more detached, with intervals of stony valleys between, and the whole country was, if possible, assuming a more barren aspect, while the springs, which had heretofore been numerous among the hills, were very few in number—difficult to find—and very far in amongst the ranges. After most anxious and laborious search, I at last succeeded in finding a place about ninety miles (of latitude) north of Mount Arden, to which I can remove my depot, and from which I can again penetrate more to the northward.

“After an absence of sixteen days I rejoined my party under Mount Arden on the evening of the 21st July, and found they had safely received all the supplies sent for our use by the *Waterwitch*. The latter has been detained until my return, for despatches, which I shall send down to-morrow, and on the 24th I intend to move on with my party to the new depot. I regret it is not in my power to afford more certain information as to the future prospects of the expedition, but where so little alteration has taken place, in the features of the country I have been examining, conjectures alone can anticipate what may be beyond. From the very difficult nature of the country we are advancing into, our further progress must necessarily be very slow for some time, but I still hope that by patience and perseverance we shall ultimately succeed in accomplishing the object of the expedition.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,  
“Your most obedient humble Servant,  
“*Edward John Eyre*.”

“To the Chairman of the Committee of Colonists for promoting the Northern Expedition.”

\* \* \*

“Depot, near Mount Arden,  
July 22nd, 1840.

“My Dear Sir,—I beg to enclose a copy of the report of our proceedings up to the present date, for the perusal of his Excellency the Governor. By it his Excellency will perceive that the very inhospitable nature of the country around Lake Torrens, added to my anxiety to remove our horses from the depot near Mount Arden, where there was but very little grass for them, prevented my devoting so much time to the examination of the lake and the country around it, as I should have wished; and I therefore intend, if possible, on my return, to investigate it more fully, being anxious to ascertain, whether, as I suppose, there is a considerable drainage into it from the westward. The high land seen on its opposite side, appears to be a continuation of the table land, lying to the



west of the head of Spencer's Gulf; and though the fall of the country appears to be to the north, I begin to be of opinion now that it is not in reality. Lake Torrens is evidently the basin into which all the waters from Flinders range fall, and its extent is very considerable; in fact, where I last saw it to the north, it was impossible

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to say whether it terminated or not, from the very great distance it was off. The country lying between Flinders range on the one side, and the table land on the other, and north of Spencer's Gulf, is of so low and so level a character that the eye alone is not a sufficient guide as to the direction in which the fall may be. On my previous visits, I felt convinced it was northerly, but I am now inclined to think that the drainage from Lake Torrens in seasons of wet, is to the south, into the head of the Gulf; and I can only account for there not being a larger connecting watercourse than the small shallow one found when crossing from Streaky Bay—and which I did not then imagine extended far above the head of the Gulf—by supposing that the seasons have so altered of late years that the overflow of the lake has never been sufficient to cause a run of water to the Gulf. Should my present supposition be correct, the idea of a northerly drainage is done away with, and we have yet to come to a “division of the waters.” My uncertainty on this most important point has made me most anxious to get my party removed to a place where they can remain until I can decide so interesting a point, and one on which our future prospects so much depend. The same causes that prevented my staying a little longer in the neighbourhood of the Lake have also prevented, as yet, my extending my researches to the north for more than about forty miles farther than I had been when last in this neighbourhood. The only change I observed, was the increasing barren appearance of the country—the decrease in elevation of the ranges—their becoming more detached, with sterile valleys between—and the general absence of springs; the rock of the higher ridges, which were very rugged and abrupt, was still the same, quartz and ironstone, but much more of the latter than I had before seen, and, in some cases, with a very great proportion of metal to the stone. The lower ridges and steep banks, when washed away by the rains, presented great quantities of a very pungent salt to the eye of the observer, mixed with the clay and sand of which the banks were formed; and in this neighbourhood the watercourses were (though dry) all lined with the salt-water tea-tree—a shrub we had never before seen under Flinders range. My next push to the north will probably throw some light upon our future prospects, and I only regret it will not be in my power to communicate the intelligence. I intended to have sent his Excellency a rough sketch of my last route, but have not been able to get it ready in time, and I fear I have already detained the little cutter too long: during their detention, I requested the master to examine some salt water inlets on the east side of Spencer's Gulf, and he said he would, but I have not yet heard the result of his researches. Should he have found, a good landing-place for goods, it would be of much importance to the northern parts of the colony when they become

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stocked; and nearly all the country as far as the head of the Gulf is more or less adapted for grazing. Pray return my best thanks to his Excellency for the abundant supply of stores we have received by the *Waterwitch*—especially for the barometer, which has arrived quite safely. I shall take great care of it, and shall make observations, whenever practicable, three times a day—8, a.m., noon, and 5, p.m. I only returned late last night, and have been so busy to-day preparing every thing for leaving the depot, that I have been obliged to put off my writing until night; and I am now acribbling in the tent, on my bed, with my young friend, Mr. Scott, fast asleep, and a cold bleak wind whistling through the place, so that I fear my writing will be scarcely legible. I send down the letters to the cutter in the morning, and intend to move on my party on the 24th. With kind remembrance to his Excellency, Mrs. Gawler, and family—

“Believe me, *etc.*

“*Edward John Eyre.*

“G. Hall, Esq.”

## Chapter V.

Break up the encampment—arrive at depot pool—geological character of the country—barometers out of order—advance to reconnoitre—ascend termination hill—surprise native women—they abandon their children—ineffectual search for water—return towards mount deception—broken character of the country—find water—the Scott—rejoin the party—water all used at depot—embarrassing circumstances—remove to the Scott—reconnoitre in advance—barren country—table topped elevations—indications of the violent action of water—meet natives—reach lake Torrens—the water salt—obliged to return—arrival at depot—hostile demonstrations of the natives.

July 25.—To-day we broke up the camp, and commenced our labours in earnest, the men and the horses having had a rest of three weeks; the latter were in splendid condition and spirits, having eaten twenty-five bushels of oats, which had been sent up in the *Waterwitch*. Every thing had been well and conveniently arranged, and the whole moved on with an order and regularity that was very gratifying.

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I was very ill at starting, and remained so for some days after, but as I had already been twice over the ground, and as my native boy was able to act as guide to the party, my indisposition was not of so much consequence as it would have been under other circumstances. At times I was quite incapable of any exertion, and could not attend to any thing, being hardly able to sit upon my horse for half an hour together. From the 25th to the evening of the 30th, we were engaged in travelling from Mount Arden to Depot Pool, by the same line of route by which myself and the native boy had returned from our exploration. In our progress we noticed many traces of natives around us, and saw many native fires among the hills; the people themselves did not, however, appear.

By a little trouble in examining the watercourses before encamping, we were generally able to procure water for our horses, at some distance among the hills; and we were usually fortunate enough to obtain tolerable food for them also. The grass, it is true, was generally scanty, or dry; but we found a succulent plant of the geranium tribe, bearing a small blue flower, and growing where the channels of the watercourses spread out in the plains, in the greatest abundance, and in the wildest luxuriance; of this the horses were extremely fond, and it appeared to keep them in good condition and spirits.

July 30.—The geological formation of the country we had passed through, consisted in the higher ranges of an argillaceous rock, of quartz, or of ironstone. Upon some of the hills the small loose stones had a vitrified appearance—in others they looked like the scoria of a furnace, and appeared to be of volcanic origin, but nowhere did I observe the appearance of anything like a crater. In the lower or front hills the rock was argillaceous, of a hard slaty nature, and inclined at an angle of about 45 degrees from the horizontal. This formation was frequently traversed by dykes of grey limestone of a very hard texture.

Upon watering the horses at the hole in the rock, I was much disappointed to find that they had already sunk it eighteen inches, and now began to fear that it would not last them so long as I had anticipated, and that I should still be obliged to cross over the hills to the very rocky channel where I had found permanent water on the 15th of July. This I was desirous, if possible, to avoid, both from the difficult nature of the road by which that water must be reached, and from the circumstance that it was going so much out of our way into an all but impracticable country, and that consequently, when we did move on again to the north, we should be obliged to come all the way back again over the same bad road to gain the open country under Flinders range, where alone we could hope to make any progress with the drays.

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July 31.—Having remained all day in camp to rest the party, I found that the horses had again made a great diminution in the depth of the water in the rock, I therefore had the drays all prepared in the evening, intending to move away to the other water-course in the morning; but the next day the horses had unfortunately strayed, and it was late before they were brought up, so that we could not get away. Upon watering them when they arrived, I found that less impression was made upon the water than on the previous days; and after an anxious consultation with my overseer, I decided upon leaving the party in camp at Depot Pool until I could reconnoitre further north and return.

August 1.—To prevent any difficulties during my absence, in the event of the water failing in the rocky hole, I sent the native boy to shew the overseer the place where the permanent water was, and gave him instructions to move the party thither if he should find it necessary; but not until their safety absolutely required it, or before he had fully ascertained that no water was to be procured by digging in the bed of any of the adjoining watercourses. During his absence, I employed myself busily in getting ready for another push to the north with the native boy to search for a new depot, as in a country so difficult and embarrassing, it was quite impracticable to move on the party until after having previously ascertained where they could be taken to with safety. Upon examining the barometers to-day, I was much concerned to find that they were both out of order and useless; the damp had softened the glue fastening the bags of leather which hold the quicksilver, and the leathers that were glued over the joints of the cisterns, and so much of the mercury had escaped, before I was aware of it, that I found all the previous observations valueless. I emptied the tubes and attempted to refill them, but in so doing I unfortunately broke one of them, and the other I could not get repaired in a satisfactory manner, not being able, after all my efforts, to get rid of some small air bubbles that would intrude, in spite of every care I could exercise.

August 2.—Leaving early, I took with me a native boy, and a man on horseback, leading a pack-horse, to carry water, as I could not but be apprehensive, lest we might find none in the country into which we were advancing. In following down the Depot watercourse to the plains, we found a fire where the natives had encamped the previous night. This surprised us, because we were not aware that there were any so immediately in our vicinity. It however shewed us the necessity of vigilance and circumspection in our future movements.



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Steering for the most western point of Mount Deception range, until we opened one still more distant to the north-west, and which I named Termination Hill, we kept pushing on through barren stony plains, without grass or shrubs, and arrived late in the afternoon upon a large watercourse with gum-trees, but could find no water in its bed. Near it, however, in the plains, we were fortunate enough to discover a puddle of rain water, and at once halted for the night, though the feed was indifferent. We had travelled twenty-eight miles, and the pack-horse carrying twelve gallons of water, was considerably fatigued. At the puddle, two teal were seen, which indicated the existence of a larger body of water somewhere in the neighbourhood, but our efforts to find it were unsuccessful.

August 3.—Crossing very heavy sandy ridges, we passed at intervals one or two dry watercourses, and the beds of some small dry lakes among the sandy ridges, in one of which was a little rain water which appeared to be rapidly drying up. Watering the horses we moved on for Termination Hill, but the nature of the country had been so unfavourable, that the pack-horse was knocked up, and I was obliged to halt four miles short of our intended destination, and where there was but poor feed for the animals. After dinner I walked to Termination Hill and ascended it. Like all the others I had recently examined, it was composed principally of quartz, ironstone and a kind of slaty rock; the low hills in front exhibiting the grey limestone, whilst patches of gum scrub were observable in many places. From the summit of Termination Hill, Lake Torrens bore W. 20 degrees S. but the view was obstructed by intervening sand ridges, the elevated land on the opposite shore of the lake still appeared to continue, and was visibly further north than the lake itself, which, as I observed, was partially shut out by the ridges. To the north were low broken hills similar to those around me, but less elevated, and immediately under these hills to the westward, were heavy red sandy ridges, such as we had crossed during the day. To the eastward and ten degrees north of east were seen Flinders range, with which Mount Deception and Termination Hills were connected, by low long spurs thrown off to the northward. In the north-east the horizon was one unbroken, low, flat, level waste, with here and there small table-topped elevations, appearing white in the distance and seemingly exhibiting precipitous faces. Wherever I turned, or whatever way I looked, the prospect was cheerless and disheartening. Our stage had been twenty-two miles.

August 4.—After giving five gallons of water each to my own and the native boy's horse, I sent back the man with the pack-horse and the empty kegs to the depot. We then steered E. 5 degrees S. across some very extensive barren stony plains, occasionally broken into irregular surfaces with steep white banks (of a fine freestone), forming the termination of the higher levels, fronting the hollows. These hollows or flats were covered with salsolaceous plants and samphire, and appeared once to have been salt swamps.

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At twenty miles we came to a small watercourse emanating from the eastern hills, which we had now reached, and soon after to a larger one which we traced up for five miles among the front hills, which were composed of limestone, but were then obliged to encamp without water. Whilst rambling about after turning out the horses, I met with a party of native women and children, but could gain no information from them. They would not permit me to come near them, and at last fairly ran away, leaving at their fire two young children who could not escape. I then went to their camp and examined the bags and property which had been left, and amongst other things found two kangaroo skins full of water, each containing from six to eight quarts; it was quite muddy, and had evidently been taken from a puddle in the plains, and carried to the present encampment in the bed of the watercourse. Having helped ourselves to some of the water, I tied a red pocket handkerchief round one of the children, as payment for it and returned to our own camp.

August 5.—During the night I was taken very ill again, and felt quite weak when I arose this morning, but circumstances admitted of no delay, and I was obliged to go on with my exploration: I continued to trace up the creek, which I found to be large and lined with gum-trees for many miles among rocky and precipitous hills, but altogether without water, and as I knew of none of this requisite, of a permanent character, behind me, I determined to retrace my steps again to Mount Deception range. In doing so, I had to pass near the place from whence the natives had taken flight, and from curiosity called to see if the children had been taken away; to my surprise and regret I found them still remaining, they had been left by their unnatural or terrified parents without food, and exposed to the inclemency of a cold winter's night; the fire had gone out, and the eldest of the children had scraped a hole among the ashes in which both were lying. They were alarmed when they saw me, and would take nothing I offered them. The child around whom I had tied the handkerchief, had managed to get it off and throw it to one side. I now scarcely knew what to do, as I was fearful if I left them there, and the parents did not return, the poor little children might perish, and yet I was so far away from my own party, and in such difficult circumstances, that I knew not how I could take them with me. Upon due reflection, and considering that I had not seen a single male native, it struck me that the women might have gone for the men and would probably return by the evening to see where their little ones were.

Under this impression, I put the handkerchief again round the eldest child, and tying it firmly, I left them; I had hopes too, that some of the natives were watching our movements from the hills, and in this case they would at once return, when they saw us fairly depart from the neighbourhood.

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Keeping a little to the south of west, I still found the country very much broken into hollows, with high steep banks bounding them, this singular formation being apparently the result of the violent action of water; but how long ago and under what circumstances I had no means of judging. Having found a puddle of water in the plains, I halted for the night, our stage having been about twenty miles.

August 6.—We again passed many of those singular hollows fronted by the high steep banks of the upper levels, and then crossed some low ironstone ridges to a channel emanating from Mount Deception range. This I traced through the hills to the westward without finding any water, and then following down the Mount Deception range in its western slopes, I examined all the watercourses coming from it; in one, which I named The Scott, after my young friend and fellow traveller, I found a large hole of rain water among the rocks, and at this I halted to rest and feed the horses. The latitude of the water in The Scott was 30 degrees 32 minutes S. Pushing on again, late in the afternoon, I reached our camp of the 2nd August, quite tired, and the horses much fatigued, the puddle of water we had found here on our outward course was now nearly all dried up.

August 7.—Making an early start I returned to the Depot Pool, and found the party all well. They were, however, just preparing to move away, as the water was nearly all gone. The drays were packed and everything ready when I arrived; they had tried to obtain water by digging, but had failed, having been stopped by hard rock.

I was now in a very awkward dilemma. The water where we were, had been all used, and we must consequently remove at once,—but where to, was the question? If I went to the permanent water to the eastward, I gained nothing, as I only harassed my party by travelling through an almost impracticable country, over which we must return before we could move further to the north,—and if I went to the N. W. to The Scott, I went to a mere puddle of water, precarious and uncertain at the best, and at which, under any circumstances, we could not remain long:—yet move I must, as soon as the morning dawned. Many and anxious were the hours I spent in consideration and reflection.

Little indeed are the public aware of the difficulties and responsibilities attached to the command of an expedition of exploration;—the incessant toil, the sleepless hours, the anxious thoughts that necessarily fall to the share of the leader of a party under circumstances of difficulty or danger, are but imperfectly understood and less appreciated by the world at large. Accustomed to judge of undertakings only by their results, they are frequently as unjust in their censure as they are excessive in their approval. The traveller who discovers a rich and well watered district, encounters but few of the hardships, and still fewer of the anxieties, that fall to the lot of the explorer in desert regions, yet is the former lauded with praise, whilst the latter is condemned to obloquy; although the success perhaps of the one, or the failure of the other, may have arisen from circumstances over which individually neither had any control.

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August 8.—The horses having rambled a little this morning it was rather late before we got away, I had, however, made up my mind to advance at all risks, and we accordingly travelled sixteen miles to the N. W.; halting without any water upon the large watercourse emanating from Mount Deception; there was no grass either, and we were consequently obliged to tie up our horses for the night.

August 9.—The sheep had broken out of their yard, and could not be found this morning; so sending the party on with the native boy as a guide, I remained behind myself with the overseer, to search for them; they were soon found, and we moved on after the drays. In going up the watercourse I again found a native fire, where natives had been encamped within a mile of us during the night, without our being aware of it; so difficult is it always to know the proximity of these children of the wilds.

Having overtaken the party, I conducted them to The Scott, at which we arrived early in the day, though the distance could not be less than 20 miles. At night a party of natives were seen near, but did not come up to us.

August 10.—To day I prepared for another exploration to the N. W. and had all our casks and kegs new coopered and filled with water, to make them water tight. I found it necessary also to have our horses new shod, which was the third set of shoes they had required in less than two months, in consequence of the hard and stony roads over which we had travelled. The natives were again encamped near us at night, but did not come up.

August 11.—Leaving directions for the overseer to dig for water during my absence, I took a native boy and one man driving a cart loaded with water; we had mustered all the casks and kegs in the party, holding altogether 65 gallons, and to draw this I had our three best draught horses yoked to the light cart, being determined to push as far as possible to the N. W. before I returned. At first we passed over a good road but stony, then over heavy red sand ridges, and at night encamped in a gorge coming from Termination Hill, where we had excellent feed for the horses, but no water. The traces of natives were numerous and recent, and I imagine they must obtain their supply of water at puddles in the plains, but we could find none at present. The weather was very hot and the flies excessively annoying, even at this early period of the year. We gave each of the horses three gallons of water out of the kegs, after which they fed well; the hills, as we advanced were getting lower, and the sandy ridges now wound close under them, and in some instances even among them; still there were many birds around us, amongst which cockatoo parrots were very numerous. Our stage was about 23 miles.



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August 12.—Steering to the N. W. to a low range (the highest summit of which I named Mount North-west,) we just kept far enough in the plains to intercept the watercourses from the hills where they spread into the level country, and by this means we got excellent feed for our horses; generally the same rich succulent herbage I have mentioned before, occasionally mixed with wild oats. It was only in places of this description that we could expect to find anything for our horses. In the plains or on the hills there was not a blade of of anything green; at night we encamped upon a small dry channel with tolerable feed, but no water, and we again gave each horse three gallons from our kegs.

The country we were traversing as yet under-went no alteration, the only difference being, that the hills were getting lower and the watercourses less numerous, and both apparently without water; the sand ridges came more in among the hills, and the dry beds of small salt lakes were often met with; the salsolae were more abundant, but the traces of natives were now less frequent; whilst those we fell in with seemed for the most part to have been left during the wet season. The rock formation still continued the same, quartz, ironstone, slate, and grey limestone, with saline crusts peeping above the ground in many places in the lower levels; the sky was cloudy and threatened rain, but none fell: our stage was 18 miles.

August 13.—Continuing our course to the N. W. I took on the cart for 13 miles to a large dry channel, coming from the hills, upon which we halted for an hour or two to rest and feed the horses, as there were some sprinklings of grass around. We had now a change in the appearance of the country; the ironstone ranges seemed to decrease rapidly in elevation to the north, and the region around appeared more level, with many very singular looking table-topped elevations from 50 to 300 feet in height and with steep precipitous sides which were red, with the ironstone above, and white, with a substance like chalk, below. The country was covered with salsolae, and we passed the beds of many dried up salt lakes. Ascending the highest ridge near us, I found Lake Torrens was no longer visible, being shut out by the sandy ridges to the westward, whilst the low ironstone hills impeded our view to the north, and to the east. Having given our horses water, we buried twelve gallons against our return, and sending back the man with the cart, and extra horses, the native boy and I still pushed on to the N. W., taking a pack-horse to carry our provisions and a few quarts of water for ourselves.

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As we proceeded, the country changed to extensive plains and undulations of stones and gravel, washed perfectly level by water, and with the stones as even in size and as regularly laid as if they had been picked out and laid by a paviour. At intervals were interspersed many of the fragments of table land I have alluded to before, only perhaps a little less elevated than they had previously been; we passed also the beds of several small dry watercourses, and encamped upon one of the largest, long after dark, having travelled twenty-five miles since we left the cart, and having made in the whole a day's journey of thirty-seven miles. There was tolerable food in the bed of the watercourse, but the horses were thirsty and eat but little. Unfortunately, in crossing the stony ground, one of them cast a shoe, and began to go a little lame.

August 14.—Moving away very early we travelled sixteen miles due north, through a very similar country, only that the stones and gravel in the plains had become much finer and a good deal mixed with sand; the fragments of table land still continued in every direction at intervals, and their elevations still varied from 50 to 300 feet. In the upper part these elevations appeared red from the red sandy soil, gravel, or iron-stone grit which were generally found upon their summits. They had all steep precipitous sides, which looked very white in the distance, and were composed of a chalky substance, traversed by veins of very beautiful gypsum. There were neither trees nor shrubs, nor grass, nor vegetation of any kind except salsolaceous plants, and these every where abounded.

In the midst of these barren miserable plains I met with four natives, as impoverished and wretched looking as the country they inhabited. As soon as they saw us they took to their heels, apparently in great alarm, but as I was anxious to find out from them if there was any water near, I galloped after two of them, and upon coming up with them was very nearly speared for my indiscretion; for the eldest of the two men, who had in his hand a long, rude kind of spear with which he had been digging roots or grubs out of the ground (although I could not see the least sign of anything edible) finding that he was rather close pressed, suddenly halted and faced me, raising his spear to throw.

The rapid pace at which I had been pursuing prevented my reining in my horse, but by suddenly spurring him when within but a few yards of the native, I wheeled on one side before the weapon had time to leave his grasp, and then pulling up I tried to bring my friend to a parley at a less dangerous distance.

Finding that I did not attempt to injure him, the native stood his ground, though tremblingly, and kept incessantly vociferating, and waving me away; to all my signs and inquiries, he was provokingly insensible, and would not hear of anything but my immediate departure. Sometimes he pointed to the north, motioning me to go in that direction, but the poor wretch was in such a state of alarm and trepidation that I could make nothing of him and left him. He remained very quietly until I had gone nearly a quarter of a mile, and then thinking that he had a fair start, he again took to his heels, and ran away as fast as he could in the direction opposite to that I had taken.



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Continuing our course northerly I steered for what appeared to be a small lake not far away to the N. W. and crossed over some heavy ridges of white sand; upon reaching the object of my search it proved to be a winding arm of the main lake (Torrens) at first somewhat narrow, but gradually enlarging as we traced it downwards. The bed of this arm was coated over, as had been the dry part of the bed of the main lake, with a very pungent salt, with mud and sand and water intermixed beneath the upper crust.

Following the arm downwards I came to a long reach of water in its channel, about two feet deep, perfectly clear, and as salt as the sea, and I even fancied that it had that peculiar green tinge which sea-water when shallow usually exhibits.

This water, however, was not continuous; a little further on, the channel again became dry, as it increased in width in its approach to the main lake, the bed of which, near its shores, was also dry. From a high bank which I ascended, I had a full view of the lake stretching away to the north-east, as far as the eye could reach, apparently about thirty miles broad, and still seeming to be bounded on its western shores by a low ridge, or table land, beyond which nothing could be seen. No hills were visible any where, nor was there the least vegetation of any kind.

I was now upwards of 100 miles away from my party in a desert, without grass or water, nor could I expect to obtain either until my return to the creek, where I had left the twelve gallons, and this was about fifty miles away. The main basin of Lake Torrens was still four or five miles distant, and I could not expect to gain any thing by going down to its shores; as on previous occasions, I had ascertained that to attempt to cross it, or even to reach the water a few miles from its outer edge, was quite impossible, from the boggy nature of its bed. From my present elevation, the lake was seen bending round to the N. E., and I became aware that it would be a barrier to all efforts to the north. My horses were suffering, too, from want of water and food; and I had, therefore, no alternative but to turn back from so inhospitable and impracticable a country.

With a heavy heart, and many misgivings as to the future, I retreated from the dismal scene, and measured back my steps as rapidly as possible towards the creek where our stock of water was buried. From the state in which our horses were, I knew, that to save their lives, it was necessary to get them to water without loss of time, and I therefore continued our homeward course during the whole night, and arrived early in the morning at the place where I had parted from the cart.

August 15.—It was now necessary to use great caution in the management of our jaded animals. During the last two days we had ridden them fully 100 miles over a heavy country, without food or water; and for the last twenty-four hours they had never had a moment's rest; and now we had only twelve gallons of water for three horses and ourselves, and were still fifty miles away from the depot, without the possibility of getting a further supply until our arrival there.

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Having hobbled the horses out for an hour, we watched them until they had rested a little, and got cool. I then gave them half of our supply of water; and leaving them to feed under the superintendence of the native boy, took my gun, and walked seven or eight miles up the creek, under a scorching sun, to look for water, examining every gorge and nook, with an eagerness and anxiety, which those only can know who have been similarly circumstanced; but my search was in vain, and I returned to the encampment tired and disappointed. Out of what was left of our water, the boy and myself now made each a little tea, and then gave the remainder to the horses; after which we laid down for an hour whilst they were feeding. About four in the afternoon, we again saddled them, and moved homewards, riding, as before, the whole night, with the exception of about an hour, when we halted to feed the horses, upon meeting with a rich bed of the succulent geranium, of which they were so fond.

August 16.—Travelling on steadily, we began early in the afternoon to draw near to the depot; and when within a mile and half of it, I was surprised, upon looking back, to see two natives trying to steal upon us with spears, who, as soon as they perceived they were observed, rose up, and made violent gestures of defiance, but at once desisted from following us. A little further on, upon a rise not far from the depot, I was still more astonished to see at least thirty of these savages; and I hurried forwards as quickly as possible to ascertain what it could mean, not without some anxiety for the safety of my party.

## Chapter VI.

*Gause of hostility of the natives—well sunk unsuccessfully—overseer sent to the east—the Scott examined—rock wallabie—overseer's return—another visit to lake Torrens—boggy character of its bed—extraordinary effects of mirage and refraction—return to the camp—supply of water exhausted—leave the depot—the Mundy—the Burr—mount Serle—lake Torrens to the east—melancholy prospects.*

August 16.—Upon reaching the camp the extraordinary behaviour of the natives was soon explained to me. At the time when I left the depot on the 11th of August, in giving the overseer general directions for his guidance, I had among other matters requested him, if he found any natives in the neighbourhood, to try and get one up to the camp and induce him to remain until my return, that we might, if possible, gain some information as to the nature of the country or the direction of the waters. In endeavouring



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to carry out my wishes, it seems he had one day come across two or three natives in the plain, to whom he gave chase when they ran away. The men escaped, but he came up with one of the females and took her a prisoner to the camp, where he kept her for a couple of days, but could gain no information from her; she either could not be understood, or would not tell where there was water, although when signs were made to her on the subject, she pointed to the east and to the north-west. After keeping her for two days, during which, with the exception of being a prisoner, she had been kindly treated, she was let go with the present of a shirt and handkerchief.

It was to revenge this aggression that the natives had now assembled; for which I could not blame them, nor could I help regretting that the precipitancy of my overseer should have placed me in a position which might possibly bring me into collision with the natives, and occasion a sacrifice of life; an occurrence I should deplore most deeply under any circumstances, but which would be doubly lamentable when I knew that my own party had committed the first act of aggression.

The number of natives said to have been seen altogether, including women and children, was between fifty and sixty, and though they had yet actually committed no overt act against us, with the exception of trying to steal upon myself and the native boy as we returned; yet they had established themselves in the close vicinity of our encampment, and repeatedly exhibited signs of defiance, such as throwing dust into the air, shouting, and threatening with their weapons, and once or twice, the evening before my arrival, crossing within a very short distance of the tents, as if for the purpose of reconnoitring our position and strength; I determined, however, nothing but the last extremity should ever induce me to act on the defensive. [Note 6: "And they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air."—Acts xxii. 23.]

When on my return to the depot, I had seen the natives creeping after me with their spears, I and the native boy at once halted, turned round and went slowly towards them, upon this they retreated. They would see by this that we did not fear them, and as the party at the camp had been increased in number by our return, I thought they might probably be more cautious in their hostile demonstrations, which for the present was the case, for we saw nothing more of them for some time.

During my absence, the overseer, according to my instructions, had put a party of men to dig for water in the bed of the creek, about four miles from the depot, in a westerly direction and down upon the plains. They were busy when I arrived at the depot; the soil already dug through had been a very hard gravel, but as yet no water had been found, they had got to a depth of about ten feet; but from the indurated character of the soil were proceeding very slowly.

I was, however, too much fatigued to go and inspect the work immediately, the boy and myself as well as the horses being completely worn out. We had ridden in the last five days and a half, about two hundred miles, and walked about twenty up and down rocky and precipitous creeks, whilst, for the last two nights before our arrival we had scarcely been off the horses' back.

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On the 17th, which was dreadfully hot, I went in the afternoon to see what progress was being made at the well, and found that only two feet had been dug in the last twenty-four hours, whilst just as I arrived the men came to a solid mass of rock, and could sink no further; I at once ordered them to return to the camp, as I did not think it worth while to make further attempts in so unkindly a soil, and indeed I was unwilling to have my little party too much divided in the neighbourhood of so many natives. The men themselves were very glad to get back to the camp, having been apprehensive of an attack for the last two or three days.

August 18.—This morning I sent off the overseer and a native boy to the eastward, to look for water in the watercourses I had been at on the 5th of August, the Scott not having then been discovered; they would now be thirty-six miles nearer water than any I was acquainted with at that time, and would consequently be less hurried and embarrassed in their movements than I was. By giving them a pack-horse to carry ten gallons of water, I hoped they would be able to examine all the watercourses so effectually as to secure the object of their search, for I felt satisfied that water was to be found somewhere among the high ranges we had seen in the direction they were going; I also directed the overseer to visit the camp where the two native children had been left, and to see what had been their fate.

During the day I employed myself in writing; the weather was excessively close and oppressive, with heavy clouds coming up from the S. W. against the wind at N. E. At night it blew almost a hurricane, accompanied by a few drops of rain, after which, the wind then veered round to the north.

The 19th was another oppressive hot day, with a northerly wind, and clouds of dust which darkened the air so that we could not see the hills distinctly, although we were close under them. The flies were also incessant in their persecuting attacks. What with flies and dust, and heat and indisposition, I scarcely ever remember to have spent a more disagreeable day in my life. My eyes were swollen and very sore, and altogether I was scarcely able to attend to any thing or employ myself in any profitable way.

August 20.—Some slight showers during the night made the weather cool and pleasant, the day too was cloudy, and I was enabled to occupy myself in charting, working out observations, *etc.* whilst Mr. Scott, by shooting, supplied us with some wallabies. This animal is very like a rabbit when running, and quite as delicate and excellent in eating.

August 21.—Not having seen the natives for the last two days, I thought I might venture to explore the watercourse we were encamped upon, and set off on horseback immediately after breakfast, accompanied by Mr. Scott.

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We traced up its stony and rugged bed for about seven miles among the hills, to a point where the scenery was peculiarly grand and sublime. The cliffs rose perpendicularly from the channel of the watercourse to a height of from six to eight hundred feet, towering above us in awful and imposing prominencies. At their base was a large pool of clear though brackish water; and a little beyond a clump of rushes, indicating the existence of a spring. In the centre of these rushes the natives had dug a small well, but the water was no better than that in the larger pool.

The natives generally resort to such places as these when the rain water is dried up in the plains or among the hills immediately skirting them. Far among the fastnesses of the interior ranges, these children of the wilds find resources which always sustain them when their ordinary supplies are cut off; but they are not of corresponding advantage to the explorer, because they are difficult of access, not easily found, and seldom contain any food for his horses, so that he can barely call at them and pass on. Such was the wretched and impracticable character of the country in which we were now placed.

Having tied up our horses, Mr. Scott and I ascended to the top of the high cliff by winding along the ridges at the back of it. From its summit we had an extensive view, and I was enabled to take several angles. One of the high peaks in the Mount Deception range bearing S. 35 degrees W. about five miles off I named Mount Scott. To the east were seen high ranges, to which I had sent my overseer. Descending the hill we examined the course of the watercourse a few miles further, and ascertaining that there was no more water in it, retraced our steps towards the depot, somewhat fatigued with clambering up rocky ranges under the oppressive heat of an almost tropical sun.

In the course of the morning Mr. Scott shot a rock wallaby of rather a large species, and many more were seen about the high perpendicular cliff under which we had found the water. These singular animals appeared to have a wonderful facility for scaling precipices, for they leapt and clambered up among the steep sides of the cliffs in a manner quite incredible, and where it was perfectly impossible for any human being to follow them.

In the evening the overseer and native boy returned, they had traced up the watercourse I turned back from on the 5th of August, and had found water in it about eight miles beyond where I gave up the search. They had also visited the native camp where the two little children had been left deserted, they were now gone, and the whole plain around had been strewn with green boughs. The handkerchief I had tied round the eldest child had been taken off and left at the camp, the natives probably dreading to have anything to do with property belonging to such fearful enchanters as they doubtless suspected us to be.

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Our party being once more all together, it became necessary to decide upon our future movements, the water in the hole at the depot being nearly all used, and what was left being very muddy and unpalatable. Before I abandoned our present position, however, I was anxious to make a journey to the shores of Lake Torrens to the westward; I had already visited its basin at points fully 150 miles apart, viz. in about 29 degrees 10 minutes S. latitude, and in 31 degrees 30 minutes S. I had also traced its course from various heights in Flinders range, from which it was distinctly visible, and in my mind, had not the slightest doubt that it was one continuous and connected basin. Still, from the hills of our present depot, it was not visible to the north of west, and I should not have felt myself justified in going away to the eastward, without positively ascertaining its connection with the basin I was at to the north-west; accordingly, as soon as the overseer returned I got ready for another harassing and uninteresting journey to the westward.

August 22.—Setting off early this morning, accompanied by a native boy, I steered W.N.W. For the first four miles, I took my overseer along with me, to shew him the direction I intended to take, so that if I did not return in two days, he might send a pack-horse with water to meet me along the tracks.

After he had left I pushed steadily on for thirty-five miles, principally over heavy sandy ridges, which were very fatiguing to the horses, and at dark reached the outer dunes of the lake, where I was obliged to tie the horses up to some small bushes, as there was neither water nor grass for them. The bed of the lake where I struck it, seemed dry for some distance from the shore, but towards the middle there appeared to be a large body of water. From our camp Mount Deception bore E. 26 degrees S. and Termination Hill, E. 35 degrees N.

August 23.—Starting early, I traced the course of the lake north-westerly for ten miles, and was then able to satisfy myself that it was a part of the same vast basin I had seen so much further to the north, it inclined here considerably to the westward, and this circumstance added to the high sandy ridges intervening between it and Flinders range fully explained the cause of our not having observed its course to the north of west from the hills near our depot. Crossing the sandy ridge bounding the basin of the lake, I was surprised to see its bed apparently much contracted, and the opposite shore distinctly visible, high, rocky and bluff to the edge of the water, seemingly only seven or eight miles distant, and with several small islands or rocks scattered over its surface. This was however only deceptive, and caused by the very refractive state of the atmosphere at the time, for upon dismounting and leading the horses into the bed of the lake, the opposite shore appeared to recede, and the rocks or islands turned out to be only very small lumps of dirt or clay lying in the bed of the lake, and increased in magnitude by refraction.

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I penetrated into the basin of the lake for about six miles, and found it so far without surface water. On entering at first, the horses sunk a little in a stiff mud, after breaking through a white crust of salt, which everywhere coated the surface and was about one eighth of an inch in thickness, as we advanced the mud became much softer and greatly mixed with salt water below the surface, until at last we found it impossible to advance a step further, as the horses had already sunk up to their bellies in the bog, and I was afraid we should never be able to extricate them, and get them safely back to the shore. Could we have gone on for some distance, I have no doubt that we should have found the bed of the lake occupied by water, as there was every appearance of a large body of it at a few miles to the west. As we advanced a great alteration had taken place, in the aspect of the western shores. The bluff rocky banks were no longer visible, but a low level country appeared to the view at seemingly about fifteen or twenty miles distance. From the extraordinary and deceptive appearances, caused by mirage and refraction, however, it was impossible to tell what to make of sensible objects, or what to believe on the evidence of vision, for upon turning back to retrace our steps to the eastward, a vast sheet of water appeared to intervene between us and the shore, whilst the Mount Deception ranges, which I knew to be at least thirty-five miles distant, seemed to rise out of the bed of the lake itself, the mock waters of which were laving their base, and reflecting the inverted outline of their rugged summits. The whole scene partook more of enchantment than reality, and as the eye wandered over the smooth and unbroken crust of pure white salt which glazed the basin of the lake, and which was lit up by the dazzling rays of a noonday sun, the effect was glittering, and brilliant beyond conception.

[Very similar appearances seem to have been observed by Monsieur Peron, on the S. W. coast near Geographe Bay. “A cette époque nous éprouvions les effets les plus singuliers du mirage; tantôt les terres les plus uniformes et les plus basses nous paroissoient portées au dessus des eaux, et profondément déchirées dans toutes leurs parties; tantôt leurs crêtes supérieures sembloient renversées, et reposer ainsi sur les vagues; à chaque instant on croyoit voir au large de longues chaînes de récifs, et de brisants qui sembloient se reculer à mesure qu’on s’en approchoit davantage.”—*Voyage de DECOUVERTES aux terres AUSTRALES REDIGÉ par Peron.*]

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Upon regaining the eastern shore, I found that all I had been able to effect was to determine that the lake still continued its course to the N.W. that it was still guided as before, by a ridge like a sea shore, that its area was undiminished, that its bed was dry on the surface for at least six miles from the outer margin, and that from the increasing softness of the mud, occasioned by its admixture with water, as I proceeded there was every probability that still further west, water would be found upon the surface. Beyond these few facts, all was uncertainty and conjecture in this region of magic. Turning away from the lake, I retraced my steps towards the depot, and halted at dark after a stage of nearly forty miles. Here was neither grass nor water, and again I was obliged to tie up the unfortunate horses, jaded, hungry and thirsty.

During the night, I released one of the poor animals for an hour or two, thinking he would not stray from his companion, and might, perhaps, crop a few of the little shrubs growing on the sand ridges, but on searching for him in the morning he was gone, and I had to walk twelve miles over the heavy sand tracking him, the boy following along our outward track with the other horse, for fear of missing the man who was to meet us with water.

The stray horse had fortunately kept near the line we had followed in going to the lake, and I came upon him in a very weak and miserable condition, soon after the arrival of the man who had been sent to meet us with water. By care and slow travelling, we reached the depot safely in the afternoon, having crossed in going and returning, upwards of 100 miles of desert country, during the last three days, in which the horses had got nothing either to eat or drink. It is painful in the extreme, to be obliged to subject them to such hardships, but alas, in such a country, what else can be done.

In the evening, I directed the overseer to have every thing got ready for breaking up our encampment on the morrow, as the party had been fifteen days in depot, and little else than mud remained in the hole which had supplied them with water.

August 25.—Slight showers during the night, and the day dark and cloudy, with rather an oppressive atmosphere. The horses had strayed during the night, so that it was nine o'clock before we got away.

We had scarcely left the place of encampment, when shoutings were heard, and signal fires lit up in every direction by the natives, to give warning I imagine of our being abroad, and to call stragglers to their camp. These people had still remained in our immediate vicinity, and were now assembled in very considerable numbers on the brow of one of the front ridges, to watch us pass by. They would not approach us, but as the drays moved on kept running in a line with them, at some distance, and occasionally shouting and gesticulating in an unintelligible manner.



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In our first and only intercourse with these natives, we had unfortunately given them just cause of offence, and I was most anxious, if possible, before leaving, to efface the unfavourable impression which they had received. Letting the drays therefore move on, I remained behind with Mr. Scott, leading our horses, and trying to induce some of the natives to come up to us; for a long time, however, our efforts were in vain, but at last I succeeded in persuading a fine athletic looking man to approach within a moderate distance; I then shewed him a tomahawk, which I laid on the ground, making signs that I intended it for him. When I had retired a little, he went and took it up, evidently comprehending its use, and appearing much pleased with the gift; the others soon congregated around him, and Mr. Scott and I mounting our horses, followed the party, leaving the sable council to discuss the merits of their new acquisition, and hoping that the unfavourable opinion with which we had at first impressed them, would be somewhat modified for the future.

Steering N. 43 degrees W. for five miles, and then winding through the range, in the bed of a watercourse to the plains on the other side, we took a direction of E. 20 degrees N. for fifteen miles, arriving about dark upon a small channel that I had crossed on the 14th of August. Here was good feed for the horses, and plenty of water a little way up among the hills. This watercourse I had not examined when I was here before, preferring to trace up the larger one beyond instead. Had I followed this, I should easily have found water, and been relieved from much of the anxiety which I had then undergone.

In travelling through a country previously unexplored, no pains should be spared in examining every spot, even the most unlikely, where it is possible for water to exist, for after searching in vain, in large deep rocky and likely looking watercourses, I have frequently found water in some small branch or gorge, that had appeared too insignificant, or too uninviting to require to be explored. This I named The Mundy, after my friend, Alfred Mundy, Esq., now the Colonial Secretary of South Australia.

Early this morning, I took Mr. Scott with me, to examine The Mundy, leaving the overseer to proceed with the party.

After entering the hills a short distance, we found in the bed of the Mundy a strongly running stream, connecting several reaches of waters, upon which many black ducks were sailing about. This appeared to be one of the finest and best streams we had yet discovered, although the water was slightly impregnated with alum. After the watercourse left the hills, the surface water all disappeared, the drainage being then absorbed by the light sandy soil of the plains, and this had invariably been the case with all the waters emanating from Flinders range.



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Crossing some stony ridges, we followed the party up the large watercourse, which I had traced so far on the 5th of August, since named the Burr, after the Deputy Surveyor-general of the colony, and at nineteen miles halted early in the afternoon, at some springs rising among rocks and rushes in its bed. The water was very brackish, though drinkable, but did not extend far on either side of the spot we were encamped at, and when after dinner, I took a long walk up the watercourse to search for more, I was unable to find any either in the main channel or its branches. The grass was abundant and good. The latitude of the camp I ascertained to be 30 degrees 27 minutes S.

August 27.—Having risen and breakfasted very early, I took Mr. Scott and a native boy with me, and steered for a very high hill with rather a rounded summit, bearing from our camp E. 17 degrees S. This I named Mount Serle, in accordance with a request made to me before my departure, by the Governor, that I would name some remarkable feature in the country after Mr. Serle. This was the most prominent object we had hitherto met with; among high ranges it appeared the highest, and from a height above our present encampment, it had been selected by us as the most likely point from which to obtain a view to the eastward.

The elevation of this hill could not be less than three thousand feet above the level of the sea; but unfortunately, the injury my barometer had sustained in the escape of some of the mercury, and my being unable to fill it again properly, quite precluded me from ascertaining the height with accuracy.

In our route to Mount Serle, we observed another hill rather more to the northward, seemingly of as great an altitude as Mount Serle itself; this was not situate in the Mount Serle range, nor had it been seen by us in our view from the height above the depot.

At ten miles from our camp, we came to a large watercourse, emanating from the Mount Serle range on the south side, and running close under its western aspect, with an abundance of excellent clear water in it. This I named the Frome, after the Surveyor-general of the colony, to whose kindness I was so much indebted in preparing my outfit and for the loan of instruments for the use of the expedition.

Having watered our horses we tied them up to some trees, and commenced the ascent of Mount Serle on foot. The day was exceedingly hot, and we found our task a much harder one than we had anticipated, being compelled to wind up and down several steep and rugged ridges before we could reach the main one.

At length, however, having overcome all difficulties we stood upon the summit of the mountain. Our view was then extensive and final. At one glance I saw the realization of my worst forebodings; and the termination of the expedition of which I had the command. Lake Torrens now faced us to the east, whilst on every side we were hemmed in by a barrier which we could never hope to pass. Our toils and labours and

privations, had all been endured to no purpose; and the only alternative left us would be to return, disappointed and baffled.

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To the north and north-west the horizon was unbroken to the naked eye, but with the aid of a powerful telescope I could discover fragments of table land similar to those I had seen in the neighbourhood of the lake in that direction. At N. 8 degrees W. a very small haycock-looking hill might be seen above the level waste, probably the last of the low spurs of Flinders range to the north. To the north-east, the view was obstructed by a high range immediately in front of us, but to the east and as far as E. 13 degrees S. we saw through a break in the hills, a broad glittering belt in appearance, like the bed of a lake, but apparently dry.

The ranges seemed to continue to the eastward of Mount Serle for about fifteen miles, and then terminated abruptly in a low, level, scrubby-looking country, also about fifteen miles in extent, between the hills and the borders of the lake. The latter appearing about twenty-five miles across, whilst beyond it was a level region without a height or elevation of any kind.

Connecting the view before me with the fact that on the 14th August, when in about lat. 29 degrees S., I had found Lake Torrens turning round to the north-east, and had observed no continuation of Flinders range to the eastward of my position, I could now no longer doubt that I had almost arrived at the termination of that range, and that the glittering belt I now saw to the east, was in fact only an arm of the lake taking the drainage from its eastern slopes.

Sad and painful were the thoughts that occupied my mind in returning to the camp. Hitherto, even when placed in the most difficult or desperate circumstances I was cheered by hope, but now I had no longer even that frail solace to cling to, there was no mistaking the nature of the country, by which we were surrounded on every side, and no room for doubting its impracticability.

## Chapter VII.

Excursion to the north-east—trace down the frome—water becomes salt—pass beyond the ranges—cockatoos seen—heavy rains—dry water-courses—mount distance—brine springs—mount hopeless—termination of Flinders range—lake Torrens to the north and to the east—all further advance hopeless—young emus caught—rejoin party—move back towards mount Arden—loss of A horse—arrive at the depot—plans for the future—take up stores—prepare for leaving.

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Upon returning to the depot at the Burr, I decided upon making an excursion to the north-east, to ascertain the actual termination of Flinders range, and the nature of the prospect beyond it; not to satisfy myself, for a single glance from the eminence I had recently occupied at Mount Serle, had for ever set my curiosity at rest on these points, but in discharge of the duty I owed to the Governor, and the promoters of the expedition, who could not be expected to be satisfied with a bare conjecture on a subject which they had sent me practically to demonstrate, however fairly from circumstances the conclusions might be deduced at which I had been compelled to arrive. Accordingly, on the morning of the 29th, I took with me my overseer, one man, a native boy, and a cart drawn by three horses to carry water; and making an early start, proceeded to attempt for the last time to penetrate into those regions of gloom.

After travelling ten miles, we arrived at the Frome, where we watered and fed the horses. From this place I sent the overseer on before us, to see how far the water extended, that we might determine where to fix our halting-place for the night. After resting awhile we proceeded on with the cart, tracing down the watercourse over a very rough and stony road on which the cart was upset, but without any serious damage, and passing several very large and fine water-holes with many teal and wood-duck upon them.

At eight miles from where we lunched, we encamped with abundance of water, but very little grass. The latitude by meridian altitude of Altair was 30 degrees 18 minutes 30 seconds S. In the evening the overseer returned, and stated there was water for nine miles further, but that the road was very rocky and bad.

August 30.—Leaving the overseer to bring on the cart, I rode on a-head down the watercourse to trace the continuance of the water. The road I found to be very bad, and at twenty-three miles, upon tasting the water I found it as salt as the sea, and the bed of the creek quite impracticable for a cart; I therefore hurried back for seven miles, and halted the party at the last good water-hole, which was about sixteen miles from our yesterday's camp.

We had seen many ducks during the day, two of which I shot, and the black boy found a nest with fresh eggs in it, so that we fared more luxuriously than usual. The night set in very dark and windy, but no rain fell.

August 31.—This morning I sent the overseer back to the depot with the cart and two horses, whilst I and the native boy proceeded on our route on horseback, taking also a man leading a pack-horse to carry water for us the first day. Following down the watercourse, we passed through some imposing scenery, consisting of cliffs from six to eight hundred feet in height, rising perpendicularly from their bases, below which were recesses, into which the sun never shone, and whose gloomy grandeur imparted a melancholy cast to the thoughts and feelings, in unison with the sublimity of the scene around.

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After travelling twelve miles from the camp, we got clear of the hills, and found an open country before us to the north; through this we proceeded for ten miles further, still following the direction of the watercourse, and halting upon it for the night, after having made a stage of twenty-two miles. We had tolerable grass for the horses, but were obliged to give them water from the kegs.

At this place I was much astonished to see four white cockatoos, flying about among the gum-trees in the watercourse, and immediately commenced a narrow search for water, as I knew those birds did not frequently go far away from it: there was not, however, a drop to be found anywhere, nor the least sign of there having been any for a long time. What made the circumstance of finding cockatoos here so surprising and unusual was, that for the last two hundred miles we had never seen one at all. Where then had these four birds come from? could it be that they had followed under Flinders range from the south, and had strayed so far away from all others of their kind, or had they come from some better country beyond the desert by which I was surrounded, or how was that country to be attained, supposing it to exist? Time only may reply to these queries, but the occasion which prompted them was, to say the least, extraordinary.

Towards night the sky became overcast with clouds, and as I saw that we should have rain, I set to work with the boy and made a house of boughs for our protection, but the man who accompanied us was too indolent to take the same precaution, thinking probably that the rain would pass away as it had often done before. In this, however, he was disappointed, for the rain came down in torrents [Note 7 at end para.]—in an hour or two the whole country was inundated, and he was taught a lesson of industry at the expense of a thorough and unmitigated drenching.

[Note 7: This will not appear surprising, when the great amount of rain which falls annually in some parts of Australia, is taken into account. The Count Strzelecki gives 62.68 inches, as the average annual fall for upwards of twenty years, at Port Macquarie. —At p. 193, that gentleman remarks:—"The greatest fall of rain recorded in New South Wales, during 24 hours, amounted to 25 inches. (Port Jackson)."]

September 1.—This morning I sent the man back to the depot with the pack-horse, with orders to the overseer to move back the party as rapidly as possible towards Mount Arden, that by taking advantage of the rain we might make a short route through the plains, and avoid the necessity of going up among the rugged and stony watercourses of the hills.

This retrograde movement was rendered absolutely necessary from our present position, for since we had wound through the hills to the north, and come out upon the open plains, I saw that Flinders range had terminated, and I now only wished to trace its northern termination so far east as to enable me to see round it to the southward, as well as to ascertain the character and appearance of the country to the north and to the east; as soon therefore as the man had left, I proceeded at a course of E. 35 degrees N.

for a low and very distant elevation, apparently the last of the hills to the eastward, this I named Mount Distance, for it deceived us greatly as to the distance we were from it.

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In passing through the plains, which were yesterday so arid and dry, I found immense pools, nay almost large reaches of water lodged in the hollows, and in which boats might have floated. Such was the result of only an hour or two's rain, whilst the ground itself, formerly so hard, was soft and boggy in the extreme, rendering progress much slower and more fatiguing to the horses than it otherwise would have been. By steadily persevering we made a stage of thirty-five miles, but were obliged to encamp at night some miles short of the little height I had been steering for.

During our ride we passed several dry watercourses at five, ten, twenty-five, thirty, and thirty-five miles from our last encampment. The last we halted upon with good feed for the horses, and rainwater lodged everywhere. All these watercourses took their course to the north, emptying and losing themselves in the plains. In the evening heavy showers again fell, and the night set in very dark.

September 2.—After travelling seven miles we ascended Mount Distance, and from it I could see that the hills now bore S. and S.E. and were getting much lower, so that we were rapidly rounding their northern extremity. To the north and north-east were seen only broken fragments of table lands, similar to what I found near the lake to the north-west; the lake itself, however, was nowhere visible, and I saw that I should have another day's hard riding before I could satisfactorily determine its direction. Upon descending I steered for a distant low haycock-like peak in the midst of one of the table-topped fragments; from this rise I expected the view would be decisive, and I named it Mount Hopeless.—From Mount Distance it bore E. 25 degrees N.

Crossing many little stony ridges, and passing the channel of several watercourses, I discovered a new and still more disheartening feature in the country, the existence of brine springs. Hitherto we had found brackish and occasionally salt water in some of the watercourses, but by tracing them up among the hills, we had usually found the quality to improve as we advanced, but now the springs were out in the open plains, and the water poisoned at its very source.

Occasionally round the springs were a few coarse rushes, but the soil in other respects was quite bare, destitute of vegetation, and thickly coated over with salt, presenting the most miserable and melancholy aspect imaginable. We were now in nearly the same latitude as that in which Captain Sturt had discovered brine springs in the bed of the Darling, and which had rendered even that river so perfectly salt that his party could not make use of it.

September 2.—At thirty-five miles we reached the little elevation I had been steering for, and ascended Mount Hopeless, and cheerless and hopeless indeed was the prospect before us. As I had anticipated, the view was both extensive and decisive. We were now past all the ranges; and for three quarters of the compass, extending from south, round by east and north, to west, the horizon was one unbroken level, except where the fragments of table land, or the ridge of the lake, interrupted its uniformity

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The lake was now visible to the north and to the east; and I had at last ascertained, beyond all doubt, that its basin, commencing near the head of Spencer's Gulf, and following the course of Flinders range (bending round its northern extreme to the southward), constituted those hills the termination of the island of South Australia, for such I imagine it once to have been. This closed all my dreams as to the expedition, and put an end to an undertaking from which so much was anticipated. I had now a view before me that would have damped the ardour of the most enthusiastic, or dissipated the doubts of the most seepical. To the showers that fell on the evening of the 31st of August, we were solely indebted for having been able to travel thus far; had there been much more rain the country would have been impracticable for horses,—if less we could not have procured water to have enabled us to make such a push as we had done.

The lake where it was visible, appeared, as it had ever done, to be from twenty-five to thirty miles across, and its distance from Mount Hopeless was nearly the same. The hills to the S. and S. W. of us, seemed to terminate on the eastern slopes, as abruptly as on the western; and from the point where we stood, we could distinctly trace by the gum-trees, the direction of watercourses emanating from among them, taking northerly, north-easterly, easterly and south-easterly courses, according to the point of the range they came from. This had been the case during the whole of our route under Flinder's range. We had at first found the watercourses going to the south of west, then west, north-west, north, and now north-east, east and south-east. I had, at the same time, observed all around this mountain mass, the appearance of the bed of a large lake, following the general course of the ranges on every side, and receiving, apparently, the whole drainage from them.

On its western, and north-western shores, I had ascertained by actual examination, that its basin was a very low level, clearly defined, and effectually inclosed by an elevated continuous sandy ridge, like the outer boundary of a sea-shore, its area being of immense extent, and its bed of so soft and yielding a nature, as to make it quite impossible to cross it. All these points I had decided positively, and finally, as far as regards that part of Lake Torrens, from near the head of Spencer's Gulf, to the most north-westerly part of it, which I visited on the 14th of August, embracing a course of fully 200 miles in its outline. I had done this, too, under circumstances of great difficulty, toil, and anxiety, and not without the constant risk of losing my horses, from the fatigues and privations of the forced labours I was obliged to impose upon them.



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Having ascertained these particulars, and at so much hazard, relative to Lake Torrens, for so great a part of its course, what conclusion could I arrive at with regard to the character of its other half to the north-east, and east of Flinders ranges, as seen from Mount Hopeless, and Mount Serle points, nearly ninety miles apart! The appearances from the ranges were similar; the trend of all the watercourses was to the same basin, and undoubtedly that basin, if traced far enough, must be of nearly the same level on the eastern, as on the western side of the ranges. I had completely ascertained that Flinders range had terminated to the eastward, the north-east, and the north; that there were no hills or elevations connected with it beyond, in any of these directions, and that the horizon every where was one low uninterrupted level.

With such data, and under such circumstances, what other opinion could I possibly arrive at, than that the bed of Lake Torrens was nearly similar in its character, and equally impracticable in its eastern, as its western arm; and that, considering the difficulties I had encountered, and the hazards I had subjected myself to, in ascertaining these points so minutely on the western side, I could not be justified in renewing those risks to the eastward, where the nature and extent of the impediments were so self-evidently the same, and where there was not the slightest hope of any useful result being attained by it.

I was now more than a hundred miles away from my party; and having sent them orders to move back towards Mount Arden, I had no time to lose in following them. With bitter feelings of disappointment I turned from the dreary and cheerless scene around me, and pushing the horses on as well as circumstances would allow, succeeded in retracing ten miles of my course by a little after dark, having completed a stage of fully forty-five miles during the day. Here there was tolerable good grass, and plenty of water from the late rains, so that the horses were more fortunate on this excursion than usual. I observed the variation to be 4 degrees E.

September 3.—Travelling early, we made a long stage of about forty miles, and encamped with good grass and water. During the day we caught four young emus in the plains, which we roasted for supper, being very hungry, and upon short allowance, as I had not calculated upon remaining out so long; the black boy enjoyed them exceedingly, and I managed to get through one myself. They were about the size of full grown fowls.

September 4.—Making a very early start, we travelled twenty miles to the watercourse, where we had encamped on the 31st of August, striking it a little lower down. As I had left one or two trifles here, that I wished to take on with me, I sent the black boy for them, telling him to follow my tracks while I went slowly on. Upon finding that he did not overtake me so soon as I expected, I halted for some time, but still he did not come up, and I again proceeded; for as I had left my former track, I concluded he had taken that line, and thus missed me. Steering, therefore, across the hills, some of which were very

stony and broken, I made for the Mundy, which I reached very late in the evening, and found the party safely encamped there.

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I had rode fifty-five miles, and had been on horseback about thirteen hours, so that both myself and horse were well nigh knocked up. The black boy had not arrived, nor did he come up during the night.

The next day, becoming uneasy about his absence, I detained the party in the camp, and sent Mr. Scott to search for him, who fortunately met him almost immediately he had left us. The boy's detention had been occasioned by the fagged condition of his horse, which prevented the possibility of his overtaking me. As the day was wet, I did not move on, but gave the party a day's rest, whilst I employed myself in meditating upon the disappointment I had experienced, and the future steps it might be most advisable to take to carry out the objects of the expedition. I was still determined not to give up the undertaking,—but rather to attempt to penetrate either to the eastward or westward, and to try to find some other line of route that might afford a practicable opening to the interior.

September 6.—Moving on the party early to-day, I pushed steadily towards the depot near Mount Arden. In doing this, the favourable state of the weather enabled us to keep more in the open plains, and thus both to avoid a good deal of rough ground, and to shorten the road considerably.

Upon mustering the horses on the 9th, the overseer reported to me that one of them was lying down with a broken leg, and upon going to examine him, I found that it was one of the police horses kindly lent to the expedition by the Governor. During the night some other horse had kicked him and broken the thigh bone of the hind leg. The poor animal was in great pain and unable to rise at all, I was therefore obliged to order the overseer to shoot him. By this accident we lost a most useful horse at a time when we could but ill spare one.

During our progress to the south we had frequently showers and occasionally heavy rains, which lodging in puddles on the plains, supplied us abundantly with water, and we were unusually fortunate enough to obtain grass also. We were thus enabled to push on upon nearly a straight course, which, after seven days of hard travelling, brought us once more, on the afternoon of the 12th, to our old position at the depot near Mount Arden. I had intended to have halted the party here for a day or two, to recruit after the severe march we had just terminated; but the weather was so favourable and the season so far advanced, that I did not like to lose an hour in following out my prospective plans.

During the homeward journey from the Mundy, I had reflected much on the position in which I was placed, and spent many an anxious hour in deliberating as to the future. I had one of three alternatives to choose, either to give up the expedition altogether;—to cross to the Murray to the east and follow up that river to the Darling;—or by crossing over to Streaky Bay to the westward, to endeavour to find

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some opening leading towards the interior in that direction. After weighing well the advantages and disadvantages of each (and there were many objections to them all,) I determined upon adopting the last, for reasons which will be found in my Report sent to the Governor, and to the Chairman of the Northern Expedition Committee from Port Lincoln. [Note 8: Vide Chapter IX.] My mind having thus been made up, I knew, from former experience, that I had no time to lose, now that the weather was showery and favourable, and that if I delayed at all in putting my plans into execution I might probably be unable to cross from Mount Arden to Streaky Bay. The distance between these two points was upwards of two hundred miles, through a barren and desert region, in which, though among high ranges, I had on a former occasion been unable to discover any permanent water, and through which we could only hope to pass by taking advantage of the puddles left by the late rains; I therefore decided upon halting at the depot to rest the horses even for a day; and the party had no sooner reached their encampment, than, while one portion of the men took the horses up the watercourse to water, the others were employed in digging up the stores we had buried here, and in repacking and rearranging all the loads ready to move on again immediately. By the evening all the arrangements were completed and the whole party retired to rest much fatigued.

## Chapter VIII.

*Proceed to the westward—channel of communication between lake Torrens and Spencer's gulf—Baxter's range—divide the party—route towards port Lincoln—scrub—fruitless search for water—send dray back for water—plundered by the natives—return of dray—dense scrub—refuge rocks—dense scrub—salt creek—mount hill—dense scrub—large watercourse—arrive at A station—rich and grassy valleys—character of port Lincoln peninsula—unable to procure supplies—engage A boat to send over to Adelaide—buy sheep.*

September 13.—*Upon* leaving the depot this morning I was obliged to leave behind a very large tarpaulin which we did not require, and which from the extra weight we had last night put upon the drays, we could not conveniently carry. Steering to the south-west we came at twelve miles to the head of Spencer's Gulf, and crossed the channel connecting it with Lake Torrens. At this place it is not very wide, but its bed like that of the lake is soft

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and boggy, with salt water mixed with the mud. We had a good deal of difficulty in getting over it, and one of the drays having stuck fast, we had to unload it, carrying the things over on men's backs. A few miles beyond this we halted for the night, where there was good grass for the horses and plenty of water in the puddles around us. We crossed principally during the day, a rather heavy sandy country, but were now encamped in plains of a firmer and better character for the drays.

September 14.—Travelling on through open plains with loose gravelly stones, lying on their surface, we passed to the south of a small table-topped hill, visible from Mount Arden, and very much resembling the fragments of table land that I had met with to the north. This however was somewhat larger than those, and though steep-sided as they were it did not disclose the same white strata of chalk and gypsum, its formation being more rocky and of rather a slaty character.

September 15.—Pushing on rapidly over extensive plains very similar to those we had already crossed, we arrived, after a long stage, under Baxter's range, and encamped upon a small channel coming from it, with abundance of water and good grass. This range is high and rocky, rising abruptly out of the plains, and distinctly visible from Mount Arden, from which it is about fifty miles distant. Its formation is entirely conglomerate of rather a coarse description. Among its rugged overhanging steeps are many of the large red species of wallaby similar to those we had seen to the north at the Scott. Two of these we shot. The latitude of our camp at Baxter's range was 32 degrees 40 minutes S.

September 16.—Remained in camp to-day to rest the horses and prepare for dividing the party, as from the great abundance of rain that had fallen, I no longer apprehended a scarcity of water on the route to Streaky Bay, and therefore decided upon sending my overseer across with the party, whilst I myself took a dray down direct to Port Lincoln, on the west side of Spencer's Gulf, to obtain additional supplies, with the intention of joining them again at Streaky Bay.

Having spent some time in taking bearings from the summit of Baxter's range, I examined all the channels and gorges coming from it, and in most of these I found water. I am of opinion however that in a very dry season, the water which I now found will be quite dried up, and especially in the largest of the watercourses, or the one upon which we were encamped. [Note 9: In October 1842, this was quite dry, but water was still found in holes in the rocks in the southernmost gorge, above the waterfall, at the base of which water was also procured by digging in the gravel.]

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A little further south, there is a rocky ravine winding through a gorge and terminating in a waterfall, with a large pool of beautiful water at the base, and with many large and deep holes of water in the rocks above. In this ravine I imagine water might be procured at any period of the year, and I am confirmed in this opinion by the circumstance of three well beaten native roads, coming from different points of the compass, and all converging at this place. This is an important position for parties crossing to the westward, or going overland to Port Lincoln. Baxter's range is the nearest point at which permanent water can be procured on the west side of the head of Spencer's Gulf, as the Depot creek near Mount Arden is on the eastern. Having completed my examination of the range, and taken all my observations, I spent the remainder of the day in constructing a chart of my former route from Streaky Bay in 1839, and in writing out instructions for the overseer during my absence, as a guide for him in crossing to the westward.

September 17.—Placing under the charge of the overseer, two drays, seven of our best horses, all the sheep, one native boy, and two men, I saw him fairly started this morning, and wished him a speedy and prosperous journey. I had left with me one dray, five horses, one man, one native boy, and Mr. Scott; with fourteen days provision and forty gallons of water. Steering S. 25 degrees W. for sixteen miles, we halted for the night upon a patch of tolerable grass but without any water; I was consequently obliged to give a bucket of water to each of the horses out of the small stock which we had brought with us. The country we travelled through was low, level, and for the most part covered with salsolae, or brush, the latter in some places being very dense, and causing great fatigue to the horses in dragging the dray through it.

September 18.—Upon taking a view of the country, this morning, previous to starting, it appeared so low and level, and held out so little prospect of our finding water, that I was induced to deviate from the course I had laid down, and steering S. 20 degrees E. made for some hills before us. After travelling four miles upon this course, I observed a native fire upon the hills at a bearing of S. 40 degrees E. and immediately turned towards it, fully hoping that it was at a native camp and in the immediate vicinity of water.

At eight miles we were close under the hills, but found the dray could not cross the front ridges; I therefore left Mr. Scott to keep a course parallel with the range, whilst I and the native boy rode across to where we had seen the fire. Upon arriving at the spot I was greatly disappointed to find, instead of a native camp, only a few burning bushes, which had either been lit as a signal by the natives, after noticing us in the plains, or was one of those casual fires so frequently left by them on their line of march. I found the hills scrubby, barren, and

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rocky, with much prickly grass growing upon their slopes. There were no watercourses upon the west side of the range at all, nor could I by tracing up some short rocky valleys coming from steep gorges in the face of the hill find any water. The rock was principally of ironstone formation. Upon ascending to the summit of the hill, I had an extensive but unsatisfactory view, a vast level field of scrub stretching every where around me, interspersed here and there with the beds of small dried up lakes, but with no signs of water any where. At S. W. by S. I saw the smoke of a native fire rising in the plains. Hurrying down from the range, I followed the dray, and as soon as I overtook it, halted for the night in the midst of a thick scrub of large tea-trees and minor shrubs. There was a little grass scattered among the trees, on which, by giving our horses two buckets of water each, they were able to feed tolerably well. During the day we had travelled over a very heavy sandy country and through dense brush, and our horses were much jaded. Occasionally we had passed small dried up salt lakes and the beds of salt water channels; but even these did not appear to have had any water in them for a long time.

Upon halting the party, I sent Mr. Scott to explore the range further south than I had been, whilst I myself went to search among the salt lakes to the southwest. We, however, both returned equally unsuccessful, and I now found that I should be compelled to send the dray back for a supply of water from Baxter's range. The country was so scrubby and difficult to get a dray through that our progress was necessarily slow; and in the level waste before us I had no hope of finding water for some distance further. I thought, therefore, that if the dray could bring a supply to last us for two days after leaving our present encampment, we should then be enabled to make a fresh push through a considerable extent of bad country, and might have a better chance of finding water as we advanced to the south-west.

September 19.—This morning I unloaded the dray of every thing except the water casks, and pitching my tent among the scrub took up my quarters alone, whilst I sent back the man, the native boy, the dray, and all the horses with Mr. Scott to Baxter's range. As they made an early start, I gave them instructions to push on as rapidly as possible, so as to get the range that night, to rest the horses next day and fill the casks with water, and on the third day, if possible, to return the whole distance and rejoin me.

Having seen them fairly away, I occupied myself in writing and charting during the day, and at night amused myself in taking stellar observations for latitude. I had already taken the altitude of Vega, and deduced the latitude to be 32 degrees 3 minutes 23 seconds S.; leaving my artificial horizon on the ground outside whilst I remained in the tent waiting until Altair came to the meridian, I then took my sextant and went



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out to observe this star also; but upon putting down my hand to take hold of the horizon glass in order to wipe the dew off, my fingers went into the quick-silver—the horizon glass was gone, and also the piece of canvass I had put on the ground to lie down upon whilst observing so low an altitude as that of Vega. Searching a little more I missed a spade, a parcel of horse shoes, an axe, a tin dish, some ropes, a grubbing hoe, and several smaller things which had been left outside the tent, as not being likely to take any injury from the damp.

It was evident I was surrounded by natives, who had stolen all these things during the short time I had been in my tent, certainly not exceeding half an hour. The night was very windy and I had heard nothing, besides I was encamped in the midst of a very dense brush of large wide-spreading tea-trees and other bushes, any of which would afford a screen for a considerable number of natives. In daylight it was impossible to see many yards in distance, and nothing could be discerned at night.

The natives must have watched the dray go away in the morning, and waited until dark for their opportunity to rob me; and most daringly and effectually had they done it. At the time that I lay on the ground, taking the star's altitude, they must have been close to me, and after I went into the tent, they doubtless saw me sitting there by the light of the candle, since the door was not quite closed, and they had come quite in front to obtain some of the things they had stolen. The only wonder with me was that they had not speared me, as they could scarcely have been intimidated by my individual presence.

As soon as I missed my horizon glass, and entertained the suspicion of natives being about, I hurried into the tent and lighting a large blue light, run with it rapidly through the bushes around me. The effect of this was very beautiful amidst the darkness and gloom of the woods, and for a great distance in every direction objects could be seen as well as by day; the natives, however, were gone, and I could only console myself by firing a couple of balls after them through the underwood to warn them of the danger of intruding upon me again; I then put every thing which had been left outside, into the tent, and kept watch for an hour or two, but my visitors came no more. The shots, or the blue light, had effectually frightened them. They had, however, in their turn, produced as great an effect upon me, and had at least deprived me of one night's rest.

September 20.—Rising very early I set to work, with an axe, to clear away the bushes from around my tent. I now discovered that the natives had been concealed behind a large tea-tree not twenty yards from the tent; there were numerous foot-marks there, and the remains of fire-sticks which they had brought with them, for a native rarely moves at night without fire.



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By working hard I cleared a large circle with a radius of from thirty to forty yards, and then piling up all the bushes outside and around the tent, which was in the centre, I was completely fortified, and my sable friends could no longer creep upon me to steal without my hearing them. I spent great part of the day in charting, and took a few angles from the tent, but did not dare to venture far away. At night, when it was dark, I mounted guard with my gun for three hours, walking round outside the tent, and firing off my gun before I lay down, which I did with my clothes on, ready to get up at a moment's notice. Nothing, however, disturbed me.

September 21.—I had been occupied during the greater part of the day in charting, and in the evening was just shouldering my gun to mount guard again, when I was delighted to see Mr. Scott returning with the dray, and the party all safe. They had executed the duty entrusted to them well, and had lost no time in rejoining me; the horses were, however, somewhat fatigued, having come all the way from the range in one day. Being now reinforced, I had no longer occasion to mount guard, and for the first time since the natives had stolen upon me, enjoyed a sound sleep.

September 22.—Moving on the party for ten miles at a course of S. 35 degrees W., we passed through a dreadful country, composed of dense scrub and heavy sandy ridges, with some salt water channels and beds of small dry lakes at intervals. In many cases the margins bounding these were composed of a kind of decomposed lime, very light and loose, which yielded to the slightest pressure; in this our horses and drays sank deep, throwing out as they went, clouds of fine white dust on every side around them. This, added to the very fatiguing and harassing work of dragging the dray through the thick scrub and over the heavy sand ridges, almost knocked them up, and we had the sad prospect before us of encamping at night without a blade of grass for them to eat. Just at this juncture the native boy who was with me, said he saw rocks in one of the distant sand hills, but upon examining the place with a telescope I could not make out distinctly whether they were rocks or only sand. The boy however persisted that there were rocks, and to settle the point I halted the dray in camp, whilst I proceeded with him to the spot to look.

At seven miles W. 10 degrees S. of the drays we reached the ridge, and to my great delight I found the boy was right; he had seen the bare sheets of granite peeping out near the summit of a sandy elevation, and in these we found many holes with water in them. At the base of the hill too, was an opening with good grass around, and a fine spring of pure water. Hastening back to the dray, I conducted the party to the hills, which I named Refuge Rocks, for such they were to us in our difficulties, and such they may be to many future travellers who may have to cross this dreary desert.

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From the nature of the road and the exhausted state of our horses, it was very late when we encamped, but as the position was so favourable a one to recruit at, I determined to take advantage of it, and remain a couple of days for that purpose.

September 23.—Leaving my party to rest, after the fatigue they had endured in forcing a way through the scrub, I set off after breakfast to reconnoitre our position at Refuge Rocks, and to take a series of angles. The granite elevation, under which we were encamped, I found to be one of three small hills, forming a triangle, about a mile apart from each other, and having sheets of granite lying exposed upon their summits, containing deep holes which receive and retain water after rains. The hill we were encamped under, was the highest of the three, and the only one under which there was a spring. [Note 10: This was dried up in October, 1842.] There was also better grass here than around either of the other two; it appeared, too, to be the favourite halting place of the natives, many of whose encampments still remained, and some of which appeared to have been in use not very long ago. The bearings from the hill we were under, of the other two elevations, which, with it, constitute the Refuge Rocks, were N. 15 degrees W. and W. 35 degrees N. Baxter's range was still visible in the distance, appearing low and wedge-shaped, with the high end towards the east, at a bearing of N. 24 degrees E. In the western extreme it bore N. 22 degrees E. Many other hills and peaks were apparent in various directions, to all of which I took angles, and then returned to the tent to observe the sun's meridian altitude for latitude. By this observation, I made the latitude 33 degrees 11 minutes 12 seconds S.; but an altitude of Altair at night only gave 33 degrees 10 minutes 6 seconds S.; probably the mean of the two, or 33 degrees 10 minutes 39 seconds S., will be very nearly the true position of the spring. From the summit of the hill I had been upon, many native fires were visible in the scrub, in almost every direction around. At one time I counted eleven different fires from the smokes that were ascending, and some of which were very near us. Judging from these facts, the natives appeared to be numerous in this part of the country, and it would be necessary to be very cautious and vigilant after the instance I had recently met with of their cunning and daring.

September 24.—I still kept my party in camp to refresh the horses, and occupied myself during the morning in preparing a sketch of my route to the north, to send to the Governor from Port Lincoln. In the afternoon, I searched for a line of road for our drays to pass, on the following day, through the scrubby and sandy country, which still appeared to continue in every direction.

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September 25.—Leaving Refuge Rocks, at a course of S. 37 degrees W., we passed over a wretched country, consisting principally of heavy sandy ridges, very densely covered with scrub, and giving our horses a severe and fagging day's work to get the dray along for only twelve miles. I then halted, as we were fortunate enough to find an opening in the scrub, with good grass. Searching about our encampment, I found in a small valley at one end of the little plain, a round hole, dug by the natives, to catch the drainage from the slope above it. There were two or three quarts of water in this hole when we discovered it; but by enlarging it, we managed to fill a bucket once every hour from the water which drained into it. This enabled us to save, to some extent, the water we had in our casks, at the same time that all the horses had as much as they could drink. I took angles from the camp to all the hills in sight, and at night made the latitude of the tent 33 degrees 18 minutes 34 seconds S. by an altitude of a Cygnus.

September 26.—After travelling for thirteen miles at S. 40 degrees W., I took a set of angles from a low scrubby hill, being the last opportunity I should have of setting many of the heights, of which I had obtained bearings from former camps. I then changed our course to S. 27 degrees W. for five miles, and halted for the night where there was good grass. We could find no water during the day; I had, consequently, to give the horses some out of the casks. The country we traversed had altered greatly in character, and though still heavy and sandy, it was a white coarse gritty sand, instead of a fine red; and instead of the dense eucalyptus scrub, we had now low heathy shrubs which did not present much impediment to the progress of the dray, and many of which bore very beautiful flowers. Granite was frequently met with during the day, but no water could be found. Our latitude by an altitude of a Aquilae was 33 degrees 30 minutes S.

September 27.—Continuing our last night's course for about seven miles, we passed through the densest scrub I had yet met with; fortunately, it was not growing upon a sandy soil, and we got tolerably well through it, but the horses suffered severely. Upon emerging from the brush, I noticed a little green looking valley, about a mile off our track, and sent Mr. Scott to see if there was water there. Upon his return, he reported that there was, and I at once moved down to it, to rest the horses after the toil of breaking through the scrub. The day was not far advanced when we halted, and I was enabled to obtain the sun's altitude at noon, making the latitude of the camp 33 degrees 34 minutes 25 seconds S. There was good grass for the horses, and abundance of water left by the rains in the hollows of a small watercourse, running between two scrubby ridges.

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September 28.—Making an early start, we crossed at four and a half miles, a low scrubby range, and there found, upon the left of our track, some very pretty grassy hills, and a valley lightly wooded with casuarinae. Whilst I went on with the party, I detached Mr. Scott to see if there was water at this little patch of good country, but he did not find any. I am still of opinion, however, that if more time for examination had been allowed, springs would have been discovered not far away; as every thing looked so green and luxuriant, and formed so strong a contrast to the country around.

Pushing on steadily, we crossed over many undulations, coated on the surface either with sand or breccia, and frequently having a good deal of the eucalyptus scrub upon them, at eleven miles we passed a long grassy plain in the scrub, and once or twice crossed small openings with a little grass. For one of these we directed our course, late in the evening, to encamp; upon reaching it, however, we were greatly disappointed to find it covered only by prickly grass. I was therefore obliged, after watering the horses from the casks, to send them a mile and half back to some grass we had seen, and where they fared tolerably well. Our day's journey had been long and fatiguing, through a barren, heavy country. One mile before encamping, we crossed the bed of a salt water channel, trending to the westward, which was probably connected with the Lagoon Harbour of Flinders, as it appeared to receive the flood tide. Our latitude was 33 degrees 50 minutes S. by observation of a *Aquilae*.

September 29.—Whilst the man was out looking for the horses, which had strayed a little during the night, I took a set of angles to several heights, visible from the camp; upon the man's return, he reported that he had found some fresh water, but upon riding to the place, I found it was only a very small hole in a sheet of limestone rock, near the salt watercourse, which did not contain above a pint or two. The natives, however, appeared to come to this occasionally for their supply; similar holes enabling them frequently to remain out in the low countries long after the rain has fallen. After seeing the party move on, with the native boy to act as guide through the scrub, I rode in advance to search for water at the hill marked by Flinders as Bluff Mount, and named by Colonel Gawler, Mount Hill. This isolated elevation rises abruptly from the field of scrub, in the midst of which it is situated and is of granite formation; nearly at its summit is an open grassy plain, which was visible long before we reached it, and which leads directly over the lowest or centre part of the range; water was found in the holes of rock in the granite, and the grass around was very tolerable. Having ascertained these particulars, I hurried back to the drays to conduct them to a place of encampment. The road was very long and over a heavy sandy country, for the most part densely covered

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with scrub, and it was late, therefore, when we reached the hill. The horses, however, had good feed and fair allowance of water, but of the latter they drank every drop we could find. During our route to-day, I noticed some little distance to the north-west of our track, a high scrubby range, having clear grassy-looking openings at intervals. In this direction, it is probable that a better line of road might be found than the one we had chosen.

September 30.—After breakfast, I ascended to the summit of Mount Hill, and took a set of angles; whilst the dray wound up the gap between it and another low summit, with which it is connected. Upon descending the hill on the opposite side, I was rejoiced to find two very large pools of water in some granite rocks, one of them appearing to be of a permanent character. Here I halted for an hour and a half, to give the horses a little more water, and fill our casks again before we faced the scrubby waste that was still seen ahead of us. I had been last night within fifty yards of the pools that we now found, but had not discovered them, as the evening was closing in at the time, and I was in great haste to return to my party before dark. Leaving Mount Hill at the course of S. 27 degrees W. we passed through a very dense scrub, the strongest, I think, we had yet experienced; the drays were tearing down the brush with loud crashes, at every step which the horses took, and I could only compare their progress to the effect produced by the efforts of a clearing party, the brush rapidly disappearing before the wheels, and leaving almost as open a road as if it had been cut away by axes; the unfortunate animals, however, had to bear the onus of all, and most severely were they harassed before our short stage was over. At twelve miles we came to a large rocky watercourse of brackish water, trending to the east-north-east, through a narrow valley bounded by dense scrub. In this we found pools of fresh water, and as there was good grass, I called a halt about three in the afternoon. We were now able, for the first time for several hundred miles, to enjoy the luxury of a swim, which we all fully appreciated. In the afternoon Mr. Scott shot six ducks in the pools, which furnished us with a most welcome addition to our very scanty fare. For two days previous to this, we had been subsisting solely upon a very limited allowance of dry bread, having only taken fourteen days provisions with us from Baxter's range, which was nearly all expended, whilst we were yet at least two days journey from Port Lincoln. At night I observed the latitude of our camp, by alpha Aquilae 34 degrees 12 minutes 52 seconds S. by beta Leonis 34 degrees 12 minutes 35 seconds S. and assumed the mean of the two, or 34 degrees 12 minutes 43 seconds as the correct one.

October 1.—Making an early start we passed at three miles the head of the watercourse we had been encamped upon, and then ascended some scrubby ranges, for about five miles further, when we entered into a narrow tract of good grassy country, which at five miles brought us to Mr. Driver's station; a Mr. Dutton was living at this place as Mr. Driver's manager, and by him we were very hospitably received, and furnished with such supplies as we required.

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[Note 11: In 1842, Mr. Dutton attempted to take some cattle overland, from this station to the head of Spencer's Gulf; both he and his whole party perished in the desert, (as supposed) from the want of water. In October of that year, I was sent by Government to search for their remains, but as it was the dry season, I could not follow up their tracks through the arid country they had advanced into. The cattle returned.]

It was a cattle station, and abounded with milk and butter, luxuries which we all fully enjoyed after our long ramble in the wilds. Having halted my party for the day, Mr. Scott and myself dined at Mr. Dutton's, and learnt the most recent news from Adelaide and Port Lincoln. We had much to hear and much to inquire about, for even in the few months of our absence, it was to be presumed, that many changes would have taken place in the fluctuating affairs of a new colony. Nor were our conjectures wrong.

That great reaction which was soon to convulse all the Australian Colonies generally, to annihilate all mercantile credit, and render real property comparatively valueless, had already commenced in South Australia; failures, and rumours of failures, were of daily occurrence in Adelaide, and even the little settlement of Port Lincoln had not escaped the troubles of the times. I learnt with regret that it was rapidly falling into decay, and its population diminishing. Many had already deserted it, and amongst them I was surprised to hear of the departure of Captain Porter and others, who were once the most enthusiastic admirers and the staunchest supporters of this embryo town. That which however affected me more particularly was the fear, that from the low and impoverished state to which the place was now reduced, I should not be able to obtain the supplies I required for my party, and should probably have to delay until I could send over to Adelaide for what I wanted, even supposing I was lucky enough to find a vessel to go across for me. In walking round Mr. Dutton's farm I found he was ploughing up some land in the valley for wheat, which appeared to be an excellent soil, and the garden he had already commenced was looking promising. At night I obtained the altitude of a Aquilae, by which I placed Mr. Driver's station in 34 degrees 21 minutes 20 seconds S. lat., or about 22 miles of lat. north of Kirton Point.

October 2.—Before leaving the station I purchased from Mr. Dutton a little Timor pony for 25 pounds for one of the native boys to ride, to replace in some measure the services of the animal I had been obliged to have shot up to the north. The only objection to my new purchase was that it was a little mare and already forward in foal. At Port Lincoln, however, I was not likely to meet with any horses for sale, and did not therefore deem it prudent to lose the only opportunity that might occur of getting an animal of some kind. After quitting Mr. Dutton's, I followed a dray road leading towards Port Lincoln.



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For the most part we passed through green valleys with rich soil and luxuriant pasturage, but occasionally intersected by poor sandy or gravelly soil of a saline nature; the water was abundant from recent heavy rains, and some of the pools fresh; others, however, were very brackish. The hills adjoining the valley were grassy, and lightly wooded on their slopes facing the valley; towards the summits they became scrubby, and beyond, the scrub almost invariably made its appearance. Altogether we passed this day through a considerable tract of country, containing much land that is well adapted for sheep or cattle, and with a fair proportion suitable for agriculture. It is by far the best portion of the available country in the Port Lincoln peninsula, and I could not help regretting it should be so limited in extent. I had now travelled all the three sides of the triangle, and had obtained extensive views from various heights along each of these lines of route; I had crossed from Port Lincoln to Streaky Bay, from Streaky Bay to the head of Spencer's Gulf, and from the head of Spencer's Gulf down to Port Lincoln again. In the course of these journeys, I had spared no toil nor exertion, to make my examination as complete and as useful as possible, though my labours were not rewarded by commensurate success. The great mass of the peninsula is barren, arid, and worthless; and although Port Lincoln possesses a beautiful, secure, and capacious harbour, with a convenient and pretty site for a town, and immediately contiguous to which there exists some extent of fine and fertile soil, with several good grassy patches of country beyond; yet it can never become a large or important place, in consequence of its complete isolation, except by water, from every other, and the limited nature of its own resources.

For one or two large stock-holders, who wish to secure good grazing ground, and be apart from others, it might answer well, but even they would ordinarily labour under difficulties and disadvantages which would make their situation not at all desirable. The uncertainty and expense of procuring their supplies—of obtaining labour, and of finding a market for their surplus stock [Note 12 at end of para.], and the almost total impossibility of their being able to effect sales in the event of their wishing to leave, would perhaps more than counterbalance the advantages of having the country to themselves. Purchased in the days of wild and foolish speculation, and when a rage existed for buying land and laying out townships, no place has been more misrepresented or misunderstood than Port Lincoln. Many gross and glaring misstatements have been put forth of its character and capabilities, by those who were actuated by interested motives, and many unintentional misrepresentations have been made and perpetuated by others, whose judgment or information has led them into error, so that the public generally, and especially the English public, have

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had no means of discriminating between the widely conflicting accounts that have been given. Amongst the persons from whom this small settlement has suffered disparagement there are none, perhaps, more blameable than those who have put forth statements which ascribe to it advantages and qualities that it does not possess; for just in proportion as the expectation of intending settlers have been raised by exaggeration or untruths has been their disappointment and disgust, when the facts themselves have stared them in the face.

[Note 12: Pastoral settlers have left Port Lincoln in consequence of these disadvantages—but it is possible that a comparatively large population may locate there, hereafter, should mineral resources be found out. Such discoveries are said to have been made, but I am not aware upon whose authority the report has become current.]

The day of hallucination has now passed away, but out of the reaction which has succeeded it, has arisen a disposition to deprive Port Lincoln of even the merits to which it really has a legitimate claim, and which would have been far more highly appreciated, if the previous misstatements and consequent disappointments had not induced a feeling of suspicion and distrust not easily effaced.

Our stage to-day was twenty-five miles, over a pretty good road, which brought us towards evening under the range contiguous to the township. In one of the valleys leading from these hills on their west side we found a small spring of good water, and as the grass around us was very abundant and of the most luxuriant growth, I at once decided upon making this our resting place, until I had completed my arrangements for procuring supplies, and was again ready to move onwards.

October 3.—Leaving our horses to enjoy the good quarters we had selected for them, and a respite from their labours, Mr. Scott and I walked across the range into Port Lincoln, not a little surprising the good people there, who had not heard of our coming, and who imagined us to be many hundreds of miles away to the north. Calling upon Dr. Harvey, the only Government officer then at the settlement, I learnt with regret that it was quite impossible for me to procure the supplies I required in the town, whilst there were no vessels in the port, except foreign whalers, who were neither likely to have, nor be willing to part with the things I should require. What to do under such circumstances was rather a difficult question, and my principal hope was that some small coasting vessel might arrive in the course of a few days, or if not, I might try to hire a whale boat from one of the whaling vessels, and send her on to Adelaide. Dr. Harvey had a small open boat of four or five tons, but he did not seem willing to let her go; and unless I could communicate with Adelaide, flour was the only article I could procure, and that not from the stores in the town, but from a small stock belonging to the Government, which had been sent over to meet any emergency that might arise in so isolated a place. This



was placed under the charge of Dr. Harvey, who, on behalf of the Government, kindly offered to let me have what I required, on condition that I would replace the same quantity, by the first opportunity.

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Having made arrangements for a supply of fresh meat and a few vegetables during my stay, I walked out to examine the settlement. I found many neat cottages and other improvements since I had been here in 1839; and there were also a few gardens commenced, some of which were in a state of cultivation and appeared to be doing well. The population, however, had decreased, and many of the cottages were now unoccupied. Those who remained were principally persons who had lost everything, and who could not well get away, or who, on the other hand, had invested their property in the place, and could not leave it except at the sacrifice of almost everything they possessed. No one seemed to be doing well but the inn-keeper, and he owed his success chiefly to the custom or traffic of the foreign whalers who occasionally resorted here for refreshments. The stockholders, living a few miles from town, who ought to have succeeded the best, were getting dissatisfied at the many disadvantages which they laboured under, and the smallness of the community around them, and every thing wore a gloomy aspect.

October 4.—After breakfast, accompanied by Mr. Scott, I went to Port Lincoln to attend divine service; prayers were read by Dr. Harvey. The congregation was small but respectable, and apparently devout. After church, we accompanied Dr. Harvey home to dinner, and met the Captain and Surgeon of one of the French whalers in port; both of whom appeared intelligent, and superior to the class usually met with in such employments. After dinner we all walked down to the lagoon, west of Port Lincoln, where the land is of a rich black alluvial character, and well adapted for cultivation. Returning by our tents, Dr. Harvey and the Frenchmen took tea with us, and then returned to the settlement. In the course of our walk this afternoon, Dr. Harvey offered to put a temporary hatch over his boat, and send her to Adelaide for me for ten pounds, which offer I at once accepted, and Mr. Scott volunteered to go in her as supercargo.

October 5.—To-day I employed myself in writing letters, whilst the dray went to Port Lincoln for supplies. The few things I could get there were very dear, meat 1s. per pound, potatoes 9d. per pound, salt butter 2s. 6d., a small bag, with a few old cabbage stumps, five or six shillings, and other things in proportion.

October 6.—Went to town, accompanied by Mr. Scott to inspect the preparations of the little cutter he was to go to Adelaide in;—ordered all our horses to be shod, and several spare sets of shoes to be made to take up to the party at Streaky Bay. On our return we were accompanied by Mr. Smith, who kindly went with Mr. Scott to the station of a Mr. Brown, [Note 13: Since murdered by the natives.] about ten miles away, to select sheep to take with us on our journey. Mr. Scott purchased twelve at 2 pounds each, and brought them to the station; they were not very large, but were in fine condition.

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## Chapter IX.

Boy speared by the natives—anomalous state of our relations with the aborigines—Mr. Scott sails for Adelaide—dog bought—Mr. Scott's return—cutter *Waterwitch* sent to co-operate—send her to streaky bay—leave port Lincoln with the dray—level sandy country clothed with brush and shrubs—salt lakes—mount hope—lake Hamilton—stony country—lose A dog—better country—wedge-hill—lake Newland—A boat harbour—mount Hall—rejoin party at streaky bay—singular spring—character of country—beds of oysters.

October 6.—In the course of the afternoon I learnt that a little boy about twelve years old, a son of Mr. Hawson's, had been speared on the previous day by the natives, at a station about a mile and a half from my tent. The poor little fellow had, it seems, been left alone at the station, and the natives had come to the hut and speared him. The wounds were of that fatal character, being from barbed spears which had remained in the flesh, that no hopes could be entertained of his surviving their removal. The following account of the occurrence is extracted from a report, on the subject, to the Government by Dr. Harvey, the Colonial Surgeon at Port Lincoln, who attended the boy in his last sufferings.

"The poor boy has borne this heavy affliction with the greatest fortitude, assuring us "that he is not afraid to die." He says that on Monday (5th), he was left in the station hut whilst his brother came into town, and that about ten or eleven natives surrounded his hut, and wished for something to eat. He gave them bread and rice—all he had, and as they endeavoured to force themselves into his hut, he went out and fastened the door, standing on the outside with his gun by his side and a sword in his hand, which he held for the purpose of fighting them. He did not make any signs of using them. One of the children gave him a spear to throw, and while in the act of throwing it, he received the two spears in his chest—he did not fall. He took up his gun and shot one of the natives, who fell, but got up again and ran away; they all fled, but returned and shewed signs of throwing another spear, when he lifted the gun a second time, upon which they all made off.

"He remained with the two spears, seven feet long, sticking in his breast; he tried to cut and saw them without effect; he also tried to walk home, but could not; he then sat upon the ground and put the ends of the spears in the fire to try to burn them off, and in this position he was found at ten o'clock at night, upon the return of his brother Edward (having been speared eleven hours.) He immediately sawed the ends of the spears off, and placed him on horseback, and brought him into town, when I saw him.

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“Mr. Smith (with the police force) has gone in search of the natives, one of whom can be identified as having thrown a spear at the boy, he having a piece of red flannel tied round his beard.

“This circumstance has thrown the settlement into great distress. The German missionary, Rev. Mr. Schurman, has gone with Mr. Smith. I am told that the natives have been fired at from some of the stations. I hope this is not the case. The Rev. Mr. Schurman says that Mr. Edward Hawson told him he shot after some a short time ago to frighten them, after they had stolen something from the same hut where they speared his brother. This is denied by the family, but I will ascertain the truth upon the return of the party, Mr. E. Hawson having accompanied them.”

The natives immediately disappeared from the vicinity of the settlement, and were not heard of again for a long time. Such is the account of this melancholy affair as given to Dr. Harvey by the boy, who, I believe, also made depositions before a magistrate to the same effect. Supposing this account to be true, and that the natives had not received any previous provocation either from him or from any other settlers in the neighbourhood, this would appear to be one of the most wanton, cold blooded, and treacherous murders upon record, and a murder seemingly as unprovoked as it was without object. Had the case been one in which the European had been seen for the first time by the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, it would have been neither surprising nor at variance with what more civilised nations would probably have done under circumstances of a similar nature. Could we imagine an extraordinary looking being, whose presence and attributes were alike unknown to us, and of a nature to excite our apprehensions, suddenly appearing in any part of our own country, what would be the reception he would meet with among ourselves, and especially if by locating himself in any particular part of the country he prevented us from approaching those haunts to which we had been accustomed from our infancy to resort, and which we looked upon as sacred to ourselves? It is not asserting too much to say that in such a case the country would be raised in a hue and cry, and the intruder would meet with the fate that has sometimes befallen the traveller or the colonist when trespassing upon the dominions of the savage.

In the present lamentable instance, however, the natives could not have acted under the influence of an impulse like this. Here the Europeans had been long located in the neighbourhood, they were known to, and had been frequently visited by the Aborigines, and the intercourse between them had in some instances at least been of a friendly character. What then could have been the inducement to commit so cold and ruthless an act? or what was the object to be attained by it? Without pausing to seek for answers to these questions which, in the present case, it must be difficult,

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if not impossible, to solve, it may be worth while to take a view of the conduct of the Aborigines of Australia, generally, towards the invaders and usurpers of their rights, setting aside altogether any acts of violence or injury which they may have committed under the influence of terror, naturally excited by the first presence of strangers among them, and which arise from an impulse that is only shared by them in common with mankind generally. I shall be borne out, I think, by facts when I state that the Aborigines of this country have seldom been guilty of wanton or unprovoked outrages, or committed acts of rapine or bloodshed, without some strongly exciting cause, or under the influence of feelings that would have weighed in the same degree with Europeans in similar circumstances. The mere fact of such incentives not being clearly apparent to us, or of our being unable to account for the sanguinary feelings of natives in particular cases, by no means argues that incentives do not exist, or that their feelings may not have been justly excited.

If we find the Aborigines of Australia ordinarily acting under the influence of no worse motives or passions than usually actuate man in a civilised state, we ought in fairness to suppose that sufficient provocative for retaliation has been given in those few instances of revenge, which, our imperfect knowledge of the circumstances attending them does not enable us satisfactorily to account for. In considering this question honestly, we must take into account many points that we too often lose sight of altogether when discussing the conduct of the natives, and more especially when we are doing so under the excitement and irritation arising from recent hostilities. We should remember:—

First, That our being in their country at all is, so far as their ideas of right and wrong are concerned, altogether an act of intrusion and aggression.

Secondly, That for a very long time they cannot comprehend our motives for coming amongst them, or our object in remaining, and may very naturally imagine that it can only be for the purpose of dispossessing them.

Thirdly, That our presence and settlement, in any particular locality, do, in point of fact, actually dispossess the aboriginal inhabitants. [Note 14: Vide, Notes on the Aborigines, chap. I.]

Fourthly, That the localities selected by Europeans, as best adapted for the purposes of cultivation, or of grazing, are those that would usually be equally valued above others, by the natives themselves, as places of resort, or districts in which they could most easily procure their food. This would especially be the case in those parts of the country where water was scarce, as the European always locates himself close to this grand necessary of life. The injustice, therefore, of the white man's intrusion upon the territory of the aboriginal inhabitant, is aggravated greatly by his always occupying the best and most valuable portion of it.

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Fifthly, That as we ourselves have laws, customs, or prejudices, to which we attach considerable importance, and the infringement of which we consider either criminal or offensive, so have the natives theirs, equally, perhaps, dear to them, but which, from our ignorance or heedlessness, we may be continually violating, and can we wonder that they should sometimes exact the penalty of infraction? do not we do the same? or is ignorance a more valid excuse for civilized man than the savage?

Sixthly, What are the relations usually subsisting between the Aborigines and settlers, locating in the more distant, and less populous parts of the country: those who have placed themselves upon the outskirts of civilization, and who, as they are in some measure beyond the protection of the laws, are also free from their restraints? A settler going to occupy a new station, removes, perhaps, beyond all other Europeans, taking with him his flocks, and his herds, and his men, and locates himself wherever he finds water, and a country adapted for his purposes. At the first, possibly, he may see none of the inhabitants of the country that he has thus unceremoniously taken possession of; naturally alarmed at the inexplicable appearance, and daring intrusion of strangers, they keep aloof, hoping, perhaps, but vainly, that the intruders may soon retire. Days, weeks, or months pass away, and they see them still remaining. Compelled at last, it may be by enemies without, by the want of water in the remoter districts, by the desire to procure certain kinds of food, which are peculiar to certain localities, and at particular seasons of the year, or perhaps by a wish to revisit their country and their homes, they return once more, cautiously and fearfully approaching what is their own—the spot perhaps where they were born, the patrimony that has descended to them through many generations;—and what is the reception that is given them upon their own lands? often they are met by repulsion, and sometimes by violence, and are compelled to retire again to strange and unsuitable localities. Passing over the fearful scenes of horror and bloodshed, that have but too frequently been perpetrated in all the Australian colonies upon the natives in the remoter districts, by the most desperate and abandoned of our countrymen; and overlooking, also, the recklessness that too generally pervades the shepherds and stock-keepers of the interior, with regard to the coloured races, a recklessness that leads them to think as little of firing at a black, as at a bird, and which makes the number they have killed, or the atrocities that have attended the deeds, a matter for a tale, a jest or boast at their pothouse revelries; overlooking these, let us suppose that the settler is actuated by no bad intentions, and that he is sincerely anxious to avoid any collision with the natives, or not to do them any injury, yet under these even comparatively favourable circumstances, what frequently is the result? The settler finds

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himself almost alone in the wilds, with but few men around him, and these, principally occupied in attending to stock, are dispersed over a considerable extent of country; he finds himself cut off from assistance, or resources of any kind, whilst he has heard fearful accounts of the ferocity, or the treachery of the savage; he therefore comes to the conclusion, that it will be less trouble, and annoyance, and risk, to keep the natives away from his station altogether; and as soon as they make their appearance, they are roughly waved away from their own possessions: should they hesitate, or appear unwilling to depart, threats are made use of, weapons perhaps produced, and a show, at least, is made of an offensive character, even if no stronger measures be resorted to. What must be the natural impression produced upon the mind of the natives by treatment like this? Can it engender feelings otherwise than of a hostile and vindictive kind; or can we wonder that he should take the first opportunity of venting those feelings upon his aggressor?

But let us go even a little further, and suppose the case of a settler, who, actuated by no selfish motives, and blinded by no fears, does not discourage or repel the natives upon their first approach; suppose that he treats them with kindness and consideration (and there are happily many such settlers in Australia), what recompense can he make them for the injury he has done, by dispossessing them of their lands, by occupying their waters, and by depriving them of their supply of food? He neither does nor can replace the loss. They are sometimes allowed, it is true, to frequent again the localities they once called their own, but these are now shorn of the attractions which they formerly possessed—they are no longer of any value to them—and where are they to procure the food that the wild animals once supplied them with so abundantly? In the place of the kangaroo, the emu, and the wallaby, they now see only the flocks and herds of the strangers, and nothing is left to them but the prospect of dreary banishment, or a life of misery and privation. Can it then be a matter of wonder, that under such circumstances as these, and whilst those who dispossessed them, are revelling in plenty near them, they should sometimes be tempted to appropriate a portion of the superabundance they see around them, and rob those who had first robbed them? The only wonder is, that such acts of reprisal are so seldom committed. Where is the European nation, that thus situated, and finding themselves, as is often the case with the natives, numerically and physically stronger than their oppressors, would be guilty of so little retaliation, of so few excesses? The eye of compassion, or of philanthropy, will easily discover the anomalous and unfavourable position of the Aborigines of our colonies, when brought into contact with the European settlers. They are strangers in their own land, and possess no longer the usual means of procuring their daily subsistence;



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hungry, and famished, they wander about begging among the scattered stations, where they are treated with a familiarity by the men living at them, which makes them become familiar in turn, until, at last, getting impatient and troublesome, they are roughly repulsed, and feelings of resentment and revenge are kindled. This, I am persuaded, is the cause and origin of many of the affrays with the natives, which are apparently inexplicable to us. Nor ought we to wonder, that a slight insult, or a trifling injury, should sometimes hurry them to an act apparently not warranted by the provocation. Who can tell how long their feelings had been rankling in their bosoms; how long, or how much they had borne; a single drop will make the cup run over, when filled up to the brim; a single spark will ignite the mine, that, by its explosion, will scatter destruction around it; and may not one foolish indiscretion, one thoughtless act of contumely or wrong, arouse to vengeance the passions that have long been burning, though concealed? With the same dispositions and tempers as ourselves, they are subject to the same impulses and infirmities. Little accustomed to restrain their feelings, it is natural, that when goaded beyond endurance, the effect should be violent, and fatal to those who roused them;—the smothered fire but bursts out the stronger from having been pent up; and the rankling passions are but fanned into wilder fury, from having been repressed.

Seventhly, There are also other considerations to be taken into the account, when we form our opinion of the character and conduct of the natives, to which we do not frequently allow their due weight and importance, but which will fully account for aggressions having been committed by natives upon unoffending individuals, and even sometimes upon those who have treated them kindly. First, that the native considers it a virtue to revenge an injury. Secondly, if he cannot revenge it upon the actual individual who injured him, he thinks that the offence is equally expiated if he can do so upon any other of the same race; he does not look upon it as the offence of an individual, but as an act of war on the part of the nation, and he takes the first opportunity of making a reprisal upon any one of the enemy who may happen to fall in his way; no matter whether that person injured him or not, or whether he knew of the offence having been committed, or the war declared. And is not the custom of civilized powers very similar to this? Admitting that civilization, and refinement, have modified the horrors of such a system, the principle is still the same. This is the principle that invariably guides the native in his relations with other native tribes around him, and it is generally the same that he acts upon in his intercourse with us. Shall we then arrogate to ourselves the sole power of acting unjustly, or of judging of what is expedient? And are we to make no allowance for the standard of right by which the native is guided



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in the system of policy he may adopt? Weighing candidly, then, the points to which reference has been made, can we wonder, that in the outskirts of the colony, where the intercourse between the native and the European has been but limited, and where that intercourse has, perhaps, only generated a mutual distrust; where the objects, the intentions, or the motives of the white man, can neither be known nor understood, and where the natural inference from his acts cannot be favourable, can we wonder, that under such circumstances, and acting from the impression of some wrong, real or imagined, or goaded on by hunger, which the white man's presence prevents him from appeasing, the native should sometimes be tempted to acts of violence or robbery? He is only doing what his habits and ideas have taught him to think commendable. He is doing what men in a more civilized state would have done under the same circumstances, what they daily do under the sanction of the law of nations—a law that provides not for the safety, privileges, and protection of the Aborigines, and owners of the soil, but which merely lays down rules for the direction of the privileged robber in the distribution of the booty of any newly discovered country. With reference to the particular case in question, the murder of Master Hawson, it appears from Dr. Harvey's report (already quoted), that in addition to any incentives, such as I have described, as likely to arise in the minds of the natives, there had been the still greater provocation of their having been fired at, but a short time previously, from the same station, and by the murdered boy's brother. We may well pause, therefore, ere we hastily condemn, or unjustly punish, in cases where the circumstances connected with their occurrence, can only be brought before us in a partial and imperfect manner.

The 7th was spent in preparing my despatches for Adelaide. On the 8th I sent in a dray to Port Lincoln, with Mr. Scott's luggage, and those things that were to be sent to Adelaide, comprising all the specimens of geology and botany we had collected, a rough chart of our route, and the despatches and letters which I had written. The boat was not ready at the time appointed, and Mr. Scott returned to the tents. In the evening, however, he again went to the settlement, and about ten, P.M., he, and the man who was to manage the boat, went on board to sail for Adelaide. I had been taken very ill during the day, and was unable to accompany him to the place of embarkation. The following is a copy of my despatch to the Governor, and to the Chairman of the Northern Expedition Committee, embodying my reasons for going to the westward.

"Port Lincoln, October, 1840.

"Sir,—Having fallen back upon Port Lincoln for supplies, an opportunity has occurred to me of writing a brief and hurried report of our proceedings. I have, therefore, the honour to acquaint you, for the information of His Excellency, the Governor, and the colonists interested in the Northern Expedition, with the result of my examination of the country north of Spencer's Gulf, and of the further steps I contemplate taking to endeavour to

carry out the wishes of the Committee, and accomplish the object for which the expedition was fitted out.

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“Upon leaving our depot, near Mount Arden, the low, arid, and sandy nature of the country between the hills and Lake Torrens, compelled us to follow close under the continuation of Flinders range. Here our progress was necessarily very slow, from the rugged nature of the country, the scarcity of water, and the great difficulty both of finding and obtaining access to it. As we advanced, the hills inclined considerably to the eastward, gradually becoming less elevated, until, in latitude 29 degrees 20 minutes S., they ceased altogether, and we found ourselves in a very low and level country, consisting of large stony plains, varied occasionally by sand; and the whole having evidently been subject to recent and extensive inundation. These plains are destitute of water, grass, and timber, and have only a few salsolaceous plants growing upon them; whilst their surface, whether stony or sandy, is quite smooth and even, as if washed so by the action of the water. Throughout this level tract of country were interspersed, in various directions, many small flat-topped elevations, varying in height from 50 to 300 feet, and almost invariably exhibiting precipitous banks. These elevations are composed almost wholly of a chalky substance, coated over on the upper surface by stones, or a sandy soil, and present the appearance of having formed a table land that has been washed to pieces by the violent action of water, and of which these fragments now only remain. Upon forcing a way through this dreary region, in three different directions, I found that the whole of the low country round the termination of Flinders range, was completely surrounded by Lake Torrens, which, commencing not far from the head of Spencer’s Gulf, takes a circuitous course of fully 400 miles, of an apparent breadth of from twenty to thirty miles, following the sweep of Flinders range, and almost encircling it in the form of a horse shoe.

“The greater part of the vast area contained in the bed of this immense lake, is certainly dry on the surface, and consists of a mixture of sand and mud, of so soft and yielding a character, as to render perfectly ineffective all attempts either to cross it, or reach the edge of the water, which appears to exist at a distance of some miles from the outer margin. On one occasion only was I able to taste of its waters; in a small arm of the lake near the most north-westerly part of it, which I visited, and here the water was as salt as the sea. The lake on its eastern and southern sides, is bounded by a high sandy ridge, with salsolae and some brushwood growing upon it, but without any other vegetation. The other shores presented, as far as I could judge, a very similar appearance; and when I ascended several of the heights in Flinders range—from which the views were very extensive, and the opposite shores of the lake seemed to be distinctly visible—no rise or hill of any kind could ever be perceived, either to the west, the north, on the east; the whole

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region around appeared to be one vast, low, and dreary waste. One very high and prominent summit in this range, I have named Mount Serle; it is situated in 30 degrees 30 minutes south latitude, and about 139 degrees 10 minutes east longitude, and is the first point from which I obtained a view of Lake Torrens to the eastward of Flinders range, and discovered that I was hemmed in on every side by a barrier it was impossible to pass. I had now no alternative left me, but to conduct my party back to Mount Arden, and then decide what steps I should adopt to carry out the objects of the expedition. It was evident, that to avoid Lake Torrens, and the low desert by which it is surrounded, I must go very far either to the east or to the west before again attempting to penetrate to the north.

“My party had already been upwards of three months absent from Adelaide, and our provisions were too much reduced to admit of our renewing the expedition in either direction, without first obtaining additional supplies. The two following were therefore the only plans which appeared feasible to me, or likely to promote the intentions of the colonists, and effect the examination of the northern interior:—

“First—To move my party to the southward, to endeavour to procure supplies from the nearest stations north of Adelaide, and then, by crossing to the Darling, to trace that river up until I found high land leading to the north-west.

“Secondly—To cross over to Streaky Bay, send from thence to Port Lincoln for supplies, and then follow the line of coast to the westward, until I met with a tract of country practicable to the north. To the first of these plans were many objections; amongst the principal ones, were, the very unfavourable accounts given both by Captain Sturt, and Major Mitchell, of the country to the west of the Darling River—the fact of Captain Sturt’s having found the waters of that river salt during a continued ride of many days—the numerous tribes of natives likely to be met with, and the very small party I should have with me; lastly, the course of the river itself, which trending so much to the eastward, would take us from, rather than towards the centre of this Continent. On the other hand, by crossing to the westward, I should have to encounter a country which I knew to be all but destitute of water, and to consist, for a very great distance, of barren sandy ridges and low lands, covered by an almost impenetrable scrub, at a season, too, when but little rain could be expected, and the heat would, in all probability, be intense; still, of the two, the latter appeared to me the least objectionable, as we should at least be going towards the point we wished to reach, and through a country as yet quite unknown.

“After mature and anxious consideration, therefore, I decided upon adopting it, hoping that my decision may meet with the approbation of the Committee.

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“Previous to our arrival at Mount Arden, we experienced very showery weather for some days, (otherwise we could not have attempted a passage to the westward); and as there were no longer any apprehensions of water being found on the route to Streaky Bay, I sent two of my teams across upon our old tracks, in charge of my overseer, whilst I conducted the third myself, in company with Mr. Scott, direct to Port Lincoln, to procure the supplies we required. In crossing from Mount Arden, towards Port Lincoln, we travelled generally through a low barren country, densely covered by brush, among which were scattered, at considerable intervals, a few small patches of grass, with here and there some rocky elevations; in the latter, we were usually able to procure water for ourselves and horses, until we arrived at the districts already explored, in traversing which we passed (to the N. E. of Port Lincoln) some rich, well watered valleys, bounded by a considerable extent of grassy hills, well adopted for sheep or cattle, arriving at Port Lincoln on the 3rd of October. As a line of route from Adelaide for the emigration of stock, the course we followed, though it cannot be called a good one, is perfectly practicable in the winter season; and I have no doubt, when the country becomes better known, the present track might be considerably improved upon, and both grass and water obtained in greater abundance.

“I regret extremely to acquaint you, that on the morning of the 9th September, one of the police horses (called “Grey Paddy”) kindly lent to the Expedition by His Excellency the Governor, was found with his leg broken, apparently from the kick of another horse during the night, and I was obliged to order him to be shot in consequence. With this exception, no serious accident has occurred, and the whole of the party are in the enjoyment of good health and spirits. As the Expedition will still be absent, in all probability, upwards of five months, I have availed myself of a kind offer from Dr. Harvey, to send his boat over to Adelaide, and have sent Mr. Scott to receive any instructions his Excellency the Governor, or the Committee, may wish to give relative to our future proceedings; and immediately Mr. S. returns, I shall hurry up to Streaky Bay with the supplies, and at once move on to the westward, my overseer being now engaged in preparing for our forcing a passage through the scrub, to the north-west of Streaky Bay, as soon as we arrive there with the remainder of the party.

“I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“EDW. *John Eyre.*”

“The Chairman of the Committee for promoting the Northern Expedition.”

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From the 9th to the 22nd of October, I was occupied a good deal at the camp, having only one man and a native boy to attend to the tent, the horses and the sheep, so that I was in a great measure confined at home, occasionally only making short excursions to the town to superintend the preparation of a large supply of horse-shoes, or visiting the stations of some of the nearest country settlers. I had lately bought a kangaroo dog, from the captain of an American whaler, and in these rambles had frequent opportunities of trying my new purchase, both after emus and kangaroos, but he was quite useless for hunting either, and did little credit to the honesty of the person who sold him to me, and who had asked and received a high price, in consideration of the animal being, as he assured me, of a better description than ordinary. Of the natives of the district I saw nothing whatever; the death of young Hawson, and the subsequent scouring of the country by police, had driven them away from the occupied parts, and forced them to the fastnesses of the hills, or to the scrubs; I was, however, enabled by the kindness of Mr. Schurman, a German Missionary, stationed at Port Lincoln, to obtain a limited collection of words and phrases in the dialect of the district, and which I hoped might be of some use to me hereafter. Mr. Schurman has since published a copious vocabulary and grammar, of the language in use in this part of Australia.

On the 22nd, upon going into the settlement, I found the Government cutter *Waterwitch* at anchor in the harbour, having Mr. Scott on board, and a most abundant supply of stores and provisions, liberally sent us by his Excellency the Governor, who had also most kindly placed the cutter at my disposal, to accompany and co-operate with me along the coast to the westward.

Mr. Scott had managed every thing confided to him most admirably; and I felt very greatly indebted to him for the ready and enterprising manner in which he had volunteered, to undertake a voyage from Port Lincoln to Adelaide in a small open boat, and the successful manner in which he had accomplished it. Among other commissions, I had requested him to bring me another man to accompany the expedition in the place of the one (R. M'Robert) who had driven the dray to Port Lincoln, and with whom I was going to part; as also to bring for me a native, named Wylie, an aborigine, from King George's Sound, whom I had taken with me to Adelaide on my return in May last, but who had been too ill to accompany me at the time the expedition started; the latter he had not been able to accomplish, as the boy was in the country when he reached Adelaide, and there was not time to get him down before the *Waterwitch* sailed. The man, however, he had procured, and I was glad to recognize in him an old servant, who had been with me in several of my former expeditions, and who was a most excellent carter and tent servant. His name was Thomas Costelow.

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Having received large packets of papers and many letters, both from relations in England, and from many warm-hearted friends in Adelaide, I returned with Mr. Scott and Costelow to the tent, to make immediate preparations for our departure. The delay, occasioned by my having been obliged to send to Adelaide for our supplies, had so greatly protracted the period of my absence from the rest of my party, beyond what I had anticipated, that I became most anxious to rejoin them: the summer weather too, was rapidly approaching, and I dreaded the task of forcing a way through the low level scrubby waste, around Streaky and Smoky Bays, under a tropical sun.

From the despatches received, I was glad to find that the Governor and the Colonists had approved of the step I had taken, in moving to the westward, which was gratifying and satisfactory, notwithstanding the disappointments I had experienced. In the course of the day, I sent in a dray to Port Lincoln, with our heavy baggage to put on board the cutter, with orders to Mr. Germain the master, to sail immediately for Streaky Bay, and lose no time in communicating with the party there. Before the cutter sailed, I purchased an excellent little boat to be sent with her for use in our coast or inland explorations, should it be found necessary.

October 23.—The blacksmith not having finished all the shoes, I was compelled to remain another day in camp; the man too, who had been left in charge of the sheep had lost them all; whilst the one, therefore, was finishing his work and the other looking for his sheep, I employed myself in writing letters for Adelaide, and in arranging my business in Port Lincoln, *etc.*

October 24.—Having struck the tent, and loaded the dray, Mr. Scott and I rode into town to breakfast with Dr. Harvey, and take leave of our Port Lincoln friends. After transacting business matters, I settled with the man who was going to leave me, deducting the price of the sheep which by his carelessness he had lost, and which had not been recovered; I then paid Dr. Harvey for the hire of his boat, *etc.* and in arranging for it, he generously refused to receive more than 5 pounds as his boat had not been used in the return voyage from Adelaide. He also most kindly supplied us with some few small things, which we yet required, and was altogether most attentive and courteous.

Upon returning to our camp, I moved on the party, delighted once more with the prospect of being actively employed. Whilst I conducted the dray, I sent Mr. Scott round by Mr. Brown's station, to buy eleven more sheep in the place of those M'Robert had lost, and at night he rejoined us with them near Mr. White's station, about ten miles from Port Lincoln; it was late before the sheep came, and the yard to put them in was made, and as there were so few of them, they were a good deal alarmed and would not go into the yard, rushing about violently, breaking away every time we drove them near it; at last we got ten safely housed, and were obliged to put up with the loss of the eleventh, the night being quite dark.



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Mr. White and Mr. Poole visited us from their station, and I tried to purchase from the former a noble dog that he possessed, of the mastiff breed, but could not prevail upon him to part with it.

On the 25th I detained the party in camp, that I might get our sheep shorn, and send to Port Lincoln to inquire if there were any more letters for me by Dr. Harvey's little boat, which was expected to arrive to-day. Mr. Scott, who rode into the settlement, returned in the afternoon.

October 26.—Sending the dray on under the guidance of the native boy, I rode with Mr. Scott up to Mr. White's station to wish him good bye, and to make another effort to secure an additional dog or two; finding that he would not sell the noble mastiff I so much wished to have, I bought from him two good kangaroo dogs, at rather a high price, with which I hastened on after the drays, and soon overtook them, but not before my new dogs had secured two fine kangaroos. For the first few miles we crossed a low flat country, which afterwards became undulating and covered with dwarf scrub, after this we passed over barren ridges for about three miles, with quartz lying exposed on the surface and timbered by the bastard gum or forest casuarinae. We then descended to a level sandy region, clothed with small brush, and having very many salt lakes scattered over its surface; around the hollows in which these waters were collected, and occasionally around basins that were now dry, we found large trees of the gum, together with a few casuarinae. A very similar kind of low country appeared to extend far to the eastward and north-west.

Kangaroos were very numerous, especially near those hollows, that were surrounded by gum-trees, to which they retired for shelter during the heat of the day. We encamped at night in the midst of many of these salt lakes, without any water, but the grass was good. Our stage had been 25 miles upon a course of N. 25 degrees W. After watching the horses for a few hours, we tied them up for the night, not daring to trust them loose without water. A few natives had been seen during the day, but they ran away.

A singular feature attending the salt lakes, or the hollows where water had formerly lodged, was the existence of innumerable small stones, resembling biscuits or cakes in shape, perfectly circular and flat, but a little convexed in the upper surface, they were of various sizes, and appeared to consist of lime, being formed into their present shape by the action of water. Very similar ones have since been found in the volcanic region near Mount Gambier, on the southern coast of New Holland. From our present camp were seen before us to the north-west some low green looking ranges, lightly timbered, and promising a better country than we had hitherto met with.

October 27.—Having arrived at the hills, in about three miles, we found them abundantly grassed, but very rugged and rocky, of an oolitic limestone formation, with occasionally a light reddish soil covering the rock in the flats and valleys. Between these ranges and the sea, which was about a mile beyond them, were rather high sand



hills, having a few stunted trees growing upon them, but otherwise destitute of vegetation. No water could be found, nor were there any watercourses from the hills, where we examined them.

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Keeping under the east side of the ranges for a few miles, we crossed the main ridge to the westward, and after a stage of about thirteen miles, halted under a high hill, which I named Mount Hope, in my former journey. In a gorge of the range where the granite cropped out among the limestone, we found a spring of beautiful water, and encamped for the day. Mr. Scott and one of the native boys shot several pigeons, which came to the spring to drink in the evening in great numbers. In the meantime I had ascended the hill for a view, and to take angles. At a bearing of W. S. W. I set Point Drummond only a few miles distant from the camp, and between it and a bearing of S. W. was a considerable salt water lagoon on the eastern side of the sand hills of the coast; the surrounding country was low, level and scrubby. To the westward a great extent of dense scrub was visible, amid which were one or two elevations; and a salt lake, at a bearing of S. 60 degrees E. I made the latitude of this camp 34 degrees 7 minutes 16 seconds S. and the variation of the compass 4 degrees 10 minutes E.

October 28.—Travelling onwards for four miles, we passed a fine spring, situated in a swamp to our left, and at two more we came to a sheet of water, named Lake Hamilton, [Note 15: After my friend George Hamilton, Esq.] a large and apparently deep lake, with but a few hundred yards of a steep high bank, intervening between it and the sea; the latter was rapidly encroaching upon this barrier, and would probably in the course of a few years more force a way through, and lay under water a considerable extent of low country in that vicinity. Around the margin of the lake was abundance of good grass, but the bank between it and the sea was high and very rocky.

After leaving the lake we entered upon a succession of low grassy hills but most dreadfully stony, and at night encamped upon a swamp, after a stage of about sixteen miles. Here we procured abundance of good water by digging through the limestone crust, near the surface. The country around was still of the same character as before, but amidst the never-ceasing strata of limestone which everywhere protruded, were innumerable large wombat holes—yet strange to say not one of these was tenanted. The whole fraternity of these animals appeared to have been cut off altogether in some unaccountable manner, or to have migrated simultaneously to some other part. No emus or kangaroos were to be seen anywhere, and the whole region around wore a singularly wild and deserted aspect.

October 29.—Our route was again over low stony hills, but with rather better valleys between them; this kind of country appeared to extend from five to twelve miles inland from the coast, and then commenced the low level waste of barren scrubby land, which we so constantly saw to the eastward of us.

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I had intended to make a short stage to-day to a spring, situated in the midst of a swamp, in latitude 33 degrees 46 minutes 35 seconds S., but having kept rather too far away from the coast, I missed it, and had to push on for twenty-three miles to a rich and very pretty valley, under a grassy range, lightly wooded with casuarinae. The soil was somewhat sandy, but clothed with vegetation; in holes in the rocks we procured abundance of water from a little valley near our camp, and in a swamp about a mile and a half north-east was a spring. Our stage was a long one, and the day being excessively hot, our horses, sheep, and dogs were nearly all knocked up. Of the latter two were unfortunately missing when we arrived at our halting ground; one came up afterwards, but the other could nowhere be found, though both had been seen not two miles away. The missing dog [Note 16 at end of para.], was the best of the two which I had purchased of Mr. White, and I felt sorry for a loss which it would be impossible for me to replace. Many native fires were seen to-day, and especially in the direction of a high bare-looking detached range to the north-east, named by me from its shape, Mount Wedge; none of these people were, however, seen, but a fire still burning was found where we encamped for the night.

[Note 16: Upon returning to Adelaide in 1841, I learnt that the dog had gone back all the way to Mr. White's station, and as Mr. White wished to keep the animal, he returned the money he had received at his sale.]

On the 30th we remained stationary to rest the horses, and to try and recover the lost dog, but after a long and fruitless search, we were obliged to give up the attempt.

On the 31st, after crossing a ridge under which we were encamped, we passed through a very pretty grassy and park-like country, and what was very unusual, not stony on the surface. There were in places a great many wombat holes, but these were now all occupied by their tenants, and the whole aspect of the country was more encouraging and cheerful; the extent of good country was, however, very limited. Towards the coast was a low scrubby-looking region with salt lakes, and to the east it was bounded by a dense brush, beyond which were extensive plains of a barren and scrubby appearance. In the midst of these plains were large fields of a coarse wiry-kind of grass, growing in enormous tufts, five or six feet high, and indicating the places where swamps exist in wet seasons; these were now quite dry, but we had always found the same coarse-tufted grass growing around the margins of the salt lakes, and in those places also where we had found water. This description of country seemed to extend to the base of Wedge Hill, which I intended to have ascended, but the weather was too cloudy to obtain a view from it. The character of the country to the north and north-east was equally low and unpromising, with the exception of two peaks seen at considerable distances apart.

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Our stage to-day was sixteen miles to Lake Newland, [Note 17: Named after my friend R. F. Newland, Esq.] a large salt-water lake, with numerous fine and strong springs of excellent water, bubbling up almost in the midst of the salt. In one place one of these springs was surrounded by a narrow strip of soil, and the stream emanating from it took its winding course through the skirts of the salt-water lake itself, inclosed by a very narrow bank of earth, on either side; this slight barrier being the only division between the salt and the fresh water. From the abundance of fresh water at Lake Newland, and the many patches of tolerably grassy country around, a very fair station might be formed, either for sheep or cattle.

November 1.—Leaving Lake Newland we passed through a scrubby country, which extended close under the coast hummocks for five miles, and then ascended a high barren range. The view from this was extensive, but only over a mass of low and desolate scrub, with the exception of one or two elevations to the north and north-east. Towards the coast, amidst the waste around, was a large sheet of salt water, with here and there a few openings near it, studded with casuarinae, to this we bent our steps, and at twelve miles from our last night's camp took up our position in lat. 33 degrees 14 minutes 36 seconds S. upon the lagoon seen by Flinders from the masthead.

The traces of natives and their beaten pathways were here very numerous (of the latter of which there could not be less than thirty) all leading to a large deep hole, sunk about eight feet, principally through a soft limestone rock. This was carefully blocked up with large stones and mud, but upon clearing it out the water came bubbling up rapidly, and we got an abundant supply. The entrance from seawards to the sheet of water, or lagoon, is between two heads, (one of them being a high bluff) little more than a mile apart. There appeared to be a reef off the entrance outside, but our being without a boat prevented us from ascertaining how far this inlet was adapted for a harbour. Inside, the water is shallow towards the south, but deeper in the northern half of the inlet.

November 2.—Tracing round the shores, we passed several other holes dug by the natives in the sand, to procure water; these, however, did not appear of so permanent a character as the first, for many had fallen in, and others contained but very little water. The huts of the natives were numerous, and of a large and substantial description; but we saw none of their owners.

After leaving the inlet we pushed on through the scrub to a high bluff of granitic formation, distant about sixteen miles N. 35 degrees W., and named by me Mount Hall. [Note 18: After G. Hall, Esq. the Governor's Private Secretary.] The road being very heavy, it was late when we arrived there, and both our horses and sheep were much fatigued. We got a little water from holes in the sheets of granite, and had very good grass in an opening under the hill.

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From the summit of Mount Hall the view was extensive, and I obtained many angles. The surrounding country was low, level, and barren, and densely covered with scrub, among which, to the north-west were seen many salt-water lakes. At intervals a few elevations were seen amidst this low waste, apparently similar to the hill we were upon, among them were one or two very distant at a little N. of E., and nearer, one at E. 16 degrees N.; the latter I named Mount Cooper. [Note 19: After Charles Cooper, Esq. the Judge of the colony.] At a bearing of S. 35 degrees W. another saltwater inlet was seen apparently communicating with the sea; but this we could not satisfactorily ascertain from its great distance. The latitude of Mount Hall, deduced from observations of a *Lyrae* and a *Aquillae*, was 33 degrees 2 minutes 40 seconds S. Several native fires were seen to the east and south-east in the scrub.

November 3.—After seeing the party ready to move on, I left Mr. Scott to conduct the dray, whilst I rode forward in advance to the depot near Streaky Bay, where I arrived early in the afternoon, and was delighted to find the party all well, and everything going on prosperously. They had expected me some time before and were looking out very anxiously for my arrival. The *Waterwitch* had arrived on the 29th of October, but the master did not communicate with my party before the 31st; so that until the last three days they had been quite ignorant of our movements, and uneasy at our so greatly exceeding the time originally fixed for rejoining them. Having sent back a man, and two fresh and strong horses to assist the dray, I reconnoitred once more our depot of 1839. Situated in the middle of some extensive grassy openings among the scrub, is a solid sheet of limestone of a very hard texture: in the centre of this rock is a small oblong opening, a foot deep and only just large enough to admit of a pint pot being dipped in it. This curious little hole contained water from five to seven inches in depth, the level of which was maintained as rapidly as a person could bale it out; this was our sole supply for ourselves and horses, but it was a never-failing one.

[Note 20: The water had not a pleasant flavour, as it was of a chalybeate nature; but in a country where water was scarce, it was invaluable. When I was here in 1839, it had even then this disagreeable taste, but now it was much worse, in consequence, probably, of the contaminating substance being washed off more abundantly than formerly from the rocks enclosing the reservoir by the rapid flow of water necessary to replace the large consumption of my party.]

The spring is situated in latitude 32 degrees 49 minutes 0 seconds S. and about three miles south-east from the most southerly bight of Streaky Bay. About one mile and a half to the west is another small hole of better flavoured water, but not so abundant in its supply.

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I found all the horses in excellent condition, and one, a very fine mare of my own, had foaled about six weeks before. Around the camp were immense piles of oyster shells, pretty plainly indicating the feasting my men had enjoyed during my absence, whilst their strong and healthy appearance shewed how well such fare had agreed with them. The oysters were procured from the most southerly bight of Streaky Bay, on some mud banks about two or three hundred yards below low water mark, where they are found in immense numbers and of different sizes. The flavour of these oysters was excellent, and the smaller ones were of great delicacy. The men were in the habit of taking a cart down to the beach frequently, where, by wading up to their knees in the sea at low water, they were enabled to fill it. This supply lasted for two or three days.

Many drays might easily be loaded, one after the other, from these oyster beds. The natives of the district do not appear to eat them, for I never could find a single shell at any of their encampments. It is difficult to account for the taste or prejudice of the native, which guides him in his selection or rejection of particular kinds of food. What is eaten readily by the natives in one part of Australia is left untouched by them in another, thus the oyster is eaten at Sydney, and I believe King George's Sound, but not at Streaky Bay. The unio or freshwater muscle is eaten in great numbers by all the natives of New South Wales and South Australia; but Captain Grey found that a Perth native, who accompanied him on one of his expeditions, would not touch this kind of food even when almost starving. Snakes are eaten by some tribes, but not by others; and so with many other kinds of food which they make use of.

About three o'clock, Mr. Scott arrived with the dray, after a long and harassing stage of twenty miles over a low, stony, and scrubby tract of country, between Mount Hall and Streaky Bay, and which extended beyond our track to the coast hummocks to the west. These latter appeared somewhat high, and under them we had seen many salt-water lakes from the summit of Mount Hall.

My party were now once more all assembled together, after having been separated for nearly seven weeks; during which, neither division knew what had befallen the other, and both were necessarily anxious to be reunited again, since, in the event of any mischance occurring to either, the other would have been placed in circumstances of much difficulty, if not of danger; and the whole object of the undertaking would have been frustrated.

The great delay caused by my having been obliged to send over from Port Lincoln to Adelaide for supplies, had thrown us very late in the season; the summer was rapidly advancing, the weather even now, being frequently intensely hot, whilst the grass was gradually drying up and losing its nourishment. Our sending to Adelaide had, however, obtained for us the valuable services of the *Waterwitch* to assist us in tracing round the desert line of coast to the north-west, and had enabled us to procure a larger and more varied supply of stores, than we could possibly have brought up from Port Lincoln in a

single dray. We were now amply furnished with conveniences of every kind; and both men and horses were in good plight and ready to enter upon the task before them.



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## Chapter X.

Country between streaky bay and Baxter's range—its scrubby character—Gawler range—mount sturt—ascend A peak—salt lakes—beautiful flower—ascend another hill—mount brown seen—extensive view to the north—lake Gilles—Baxter's range.

During the time that I had been occupied in conducting my division of the party from Baxter's Range to Port Lincoln, the overseer had been engaged in guiding the other portion across to Streaky Bay, upon my former track from thence to Mount Arden, in September 1839. The following brief extracts from my Journal of that period, whilst crossing from Streaky Bay to Mount Arden, will convey an idea of the character of the country extending between these two points; and of the great difficulty, indeed almost the impossibility of forcing a passage, except immediately after the occurrence of heavy rains.

1839, Sept. 18.—We left the depot near Streaky Bay, at a course nearly due east, and passing through alternations of brush and of open grassy plains, upon the skirts of which grew a few casuarinae; halted after a stage of eighteen miles, at an opening in the brush, where we had good grass, but no water; we were consequently obliged to watch the horses during the night, to prevent their straying. From this camp Mount Hall bore S. 2 degrees E. and Mount Cooper S. E. the variation of the compass being 2 degrees 22 minutes E.

September 19.—Travelling east through the same kind of country for fifteen miles, we halted upon a high scrubby ridge; having a few grassy openings at intervals, and with large sheets of granite exposed in some parts of its surface. In the holes among these rocks we procured a supply of water that had been deposited by the late rains; but which a few warm days would have dried up. The latitude of the water was 32 degrees 48 minutes S. and from it Mount Hall bore S. 38 degrees W., Mount Cooper S. 15 degrees W. Before us to the north-east were visible many peaks of a range, with a high and broken outline, which I named the Gawler range, after His Excellency Colonel Gawler, the Governor of South Australia. One very high peak in this range I named Mount Sturt, after my friend Captain Sturt; it bore from our present camp E. 10 degrees N. and had been previously seen from the summit of Mount Hall.

September 20.—Our route to-day was through a perfect desert, very scrubby and stony, with much prickly grass growing upon the sand ridges, which alternated with the hard limestone flats; there were very few clear intervals of country upon our whole course; and for the last five miles the heavy sand and dense scrub made it very difficult to get on at all. After a long stage of twenty-five miles nearly due east, we halted at a high ridge similar



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to that upon which we encamped last night, with sheets of granite exposed on its surface, and rain water lodged in the hollows. The horses were all completely knocked up with the severe labour of this day's stage; I ascertained the latitude of the camp to be 32 degrees 47 minutes 40 seconds S. and the variation of the compass which increased as we advanced to the eastward, was now 4 degrees 12 minutes E. The Gawler range was now distinctly visible, extending from N. 15 degrees W. to N. 65 degrees E. and presenting the broken and picturesque outline of a vast mountain mass rising abruptly out of the low scrubby country around. The principal elevations in this extensive range, could not be less than two thousand feet; and they appeared to increase in height as the range trended to the north-west. To the eastward the ranges decreased somewhat in elevation, but were still very lofty.

September 21.—We had another long stage to-day of twenty miles, over, if possible, a worse road than yesterday, no intermission whatever of the heavy steep sandy ridges and dense eucalyptus scrub; the horses were dreadfully jaded, and we were obliged to relieve them by yoking up all the riding horses that would draw. Even with this aid we did not get the journey over until an hour and a half after dark. During the day our course had been more to the northward of east, and brought us close under the Gawler range. At fourteen miles after starting, we passed a salt lake on our right, and several salt ponds on our left; but we could find no permanent fresh water anywhere. In the rocks of the range we had encamped under, we procured a small quantity left by the rains, but this supply was rapidly disappearing under the rays of a very hot sun, and had we been a few days later, we could not have crossed at all. The latitude of our camp was 32 degrees 41 minutes 40 seconds S.

September 22.—This morning I ascended one of the heights in the Gawler range, from which the view is extensive to the southward, over a generally low level country, with occasional elevations at intervals; to the north the view is obstructed by the Gawler range, consisting apparently of a succession of detached ridges high and rocky, and entirely of a porphoritic granite lying in huge bare masses upon the surface. The hills [Note 21 at end of para.] were without either timber or shrubs, and very barren, with their front slopes exceedingly steep, and covered by small loose stones; several salt lakes were seen in various directions, but no indications of fresh water or springs.

[Note 21: Peron's description of the mountains on the South-western coast, is singularly applicable to the Gawler range—He says, Tom. III. p. 233. "Sur ces montagnes peles on ne voit pas un arbre, pas un arbriseau, pas un arbuste; rien, en un mot, qui puisse faire soupçonner l'existence de queque terre vegetale. La durete du roc paroît braver ici tous les efforts de la nature, et resister a ces memes moyens de decomposition qu' elle emploie ailleurs avec tant de succes."]

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It was late before the party moved on to-day, but the road was somewhat better, and there were many intervals of open grassy plains under the hills along which we travelled, at a course of E. 17 degrees N. for twenty-five miles. Encamping at night with tolerable grass, but without water. There had been a considerable pool of rain water here a few days ago, but it was now nearly dried up by the sun, and I was obliged to order the horses to be watched during the night.

To-day I found a most splendid creeping plant in flower, growing in between the ranges, it was quite new to me, and very beautiful; the leaf was like that of the vetch but larger, the flower bright scarlet, with a rich purple centre, shaped like a half globe with the convex side outwards; it was winged, and something like a sweet pea in shape, the flowers hung pendent upon long slender stalks, very similar to those of sweet peas, and in the greatest profusion; altogether it was one of the prettiest and richest looking flowers I have seen in Australia.

September 23.—Moving on over a firm road, but with much scrub and prickly grass, we travelled for fifteen miles under the hills at a course of E. 20 degrees N., encamping early in the afternoon close under them, and procuring a little water left in the hollows by the rains. I ascended another of the heights in the Gawler range to-day, but could obtain no clear view from it, the weather being hazy. Ridge behind ridge still appeared to rise to the north, beyond the front one under which we were travelling; and several salt lakes were seen among the hills at intervals. The rock of which the hills were composed was now changed from a porphoritic granite to a reddish quartz, which was scattered all over the front hills in loose small fragments. The latitude of our camp was 32 degrees 30 minutes 35 seconds S.

September 24.—Our road was firmer to-day, over a red gritty soil of sandy loam and gravel. The hills were still covered with quartz, but decreasing perceptibly in elevation as we advanced to the east. At about eight miles we were lucky enough to find a puddle of rain water, and at once halted for the day to rest and refresh the horses. Having ascended a high peak near the camp, I found I was surrounded by a mass of hills on every side; they gradually increased in elevation as they stretched to the northwest, becoming lower at a bearing of north, and quite detached to the north-east; resembling so many islands in the level waste around them.

September 25.—Moving from our camp early we had an excellent road, and travelled rapidly for about twenty miles, nearly due east, halting for the night under a high red hill, where we found some rain water for our horses; but the grass was very scarce. After dinner I ascended the hill near the camp and obtained a distant view of Mount Brown, and the range on the east side of Spencer's Gulf. To the north was one vast sea of level scrub, and in the midst of it a lake; but seemingly of no very great size. A few elevations were seen to the south-east, of all of which I took bearings, and then descended to the camp again. The bearing of Mount Brown, from this hill, was E. 10

degrees S.; and the latitude of the camp, under the hill, was 30 degrees 27 minutes 55 seconds S.

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September 26.—Passing up a barren valley between low hills, we had at first a good road, but afterwards it became very stony. We encamped early, after a short stage of fifteen miles, having gradually left most of the hills to the north of us. One that we were encamped under I ascended, and had a very extensive view, and took many angles. A large lake (named Lake Gilles) [Note 22: After the first Colonial Treasurer of the province.] bore nearly due south, and was the same that had been seen from Baxter's range; the latter was now distinctly visible at a bearing of E. 20 degrees S. The latitude of our camp was 32 degrees 35 minutes 58 seconds S. There was barely enough rain water found to supply our horses, but the feed was tolerably good.

September 27.—We had a very bad stony road to-day, consisting principally of quartz and iron-stone, of which the ranges had latterly been entirely composed. Our stage was sixteen miles, passing round the south end of Baxter's range, and encamping under it, on the eastern front, upon a gorge, in which was plenty of water and good grass. We had thus, by taking advantage of the rains that had fallen, been enabled to force a passage from Streaky Bay to Spencer's Gulf; but we had done so with much difficulty, and had we been but a few days later, we should have failed altogether, for though travelling for a great part of the distance under very high rocky ranges, we never found a drop of permanent fresh-water nor a single spring near them. There are no watercourses, and no timber; all is barren rocky and naked in the extreme. The waters that collected after rains, lodged in the basins of small lakes; but such was the nature of the soil that these were invariably salt.

It was through this dreary region I had left my overseer to take his division of the party when we separated at Baxter's range; but I confided the task to him with confidence. Rain had at that time fallen very abundantly; he had already been over the road with me before, and knew all the places where water or grass was likely to be found; and our former dray tracks of 1839, which were still distinctly visible, would be a sufficient guide to prevent his getting off the line of route. The skill, judgment, and success with which the overseer conducted the task assigned to him, fully justified the confidence I reposed in him; and upon my rejoining the party at Streaky Bay, after an absence of seven weeks, I was much gratified to find that neither the men, animals, or equipment, were in the least degree the worse for their passage through the desert.

## Chapter XI.

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Embark stores—party leave streaky bay—dense SCRUE—point brown—singular well—process of change in appearance of country—dig for water—friendly natives—extraordinary rite—native guides—LEIPOA'S nest—denial bay—Beelimah gaippe—kangaroo killed—more natives—Berinyana gaippe—salt lakes—Wademar gaippe—sandy and scrubby country—Mobeela gaippe—difficulty of getting water—more natives—genuine hospitality—singular marks on the abdomen—natives leave the party—Fowler's bay—excellent whaling station.

November 4.—To-day the party were occupied in sorting and packing stores, which I intended to send on board the *Waterwitch* to Fowler's Bay, that by lightening the loads upon the drays, we might the more easily force a passage through the dense scrub which I knew we had to pass before we reached that point. In the afternoon the men were engaged in shearing the remainder of our sheep, washing their own clothes and preparing everything for breaking up the camp, whilst I rode down to Streaky Bay, and went on board the cutter to give orders relative to the reception of our stores tomorrow.

The harbour of Streaky Bay is extensive, but generally open to the westward. In its most southerly bight, however, is a secure well sheltered bay, for vessels of moderate draught of water; being protected by a long sandy shoal which must be rounded before a vessel can enter.

[Note 23: A plan of this harbour was made by Mr. Cannan, one of the Government assistant surveyors of South Australia, when sent by the Government in a cutter to meet my party with provisions in 1839.]

November 5.—To-day we were engaged in carting down the stores and a supply of water to the cutter, which we got safely on board, when I gave written instructions to the master to sail at once, and land a cask of water, a little higher up the bay, for the use of the horses. In the evening the drays were loaded and all got ready for our departure tomorrow.

November 6.—Having had the horses watched last night we were enabled to move away early, and about noon arrived at the place I had appointed Mr. Germain to land the cask of water: it was all ready, and we watered the horses, took luncheon and moved on again, directing Mr. Germain to proceed to Smoky Bay, and land water for us again there. The country we passed through to-day was low, level, and sandy, and covered with prickly grass, with a few tea-tree swamps, but no fresh water. The shore of Streaky Bay on its western side was bounded by

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high steep sandy hummocks, behind which we travelled, and at night halted on the borders of a dense scrub, nearly opposite the middle of the bay, after a stage of about eighteen miles. Our vicinity to the sea enabled Mr. Scott, myself, and the native boys to enjoy a swim, a luxury highly appreciated by a traveller after a day's hard work, amidst heat and dust, and one which I anticipated we should frequently obtain in our course to the westward.

November 7.—Breakfasted before daylight, and moved on with the earliest dawn to encounter a scrub which I knew to be of heavier timber, and growing more closely together than any we had yet attempted. It consisted of *Eucalyptus dumosa* and the salt-water tea-tree, (the latter of a very large growth and very dense,) in a heavy sandy soil.

By keeping the axes constantly at work in advance of the drays, we succeeded in slowly forcing a passage through this dreadful country, emerging in about seventeen miles at an open plain behind Point Brown, and in the midst of which was a well of water. The entrance to this well was by a circular opening, through a solid sheet of limestone, about fifteen inches in diameter, but enlarging a little about a foot below the surface. The water was at a depth of ten feet, and so choked up with sand and dirt that we were obliged to clear the hole out effectually before we could get any for the horses. This was both a difficult and an unpleasant occupation, as the man engaged in it had to lower himself through the very narrow aperture at the top and work in a very cramped position amongst the dirt and wet below, with the mud dripping upon him; it was drawn up in a bag, for a bucket could not be used in so contracted a space. As a spade could not be employed a large shell left by the natives was used for scooping up the dirt, which made the operation both slow and tiresome. Our horses were dreadfully fagged and very thirsty after the severe toil they had endured in dragging the drays through so heavy a scrub, but with all our exertions we could only obtain from the spring about two buckets of water apiece for them. As this was not nearly enough to satisfy them, I was obliged to have them watched for the night to prevent their straying. The men had been kept incessantly at work from five in the morning until nearly ten at night, and the additional duty of watching the horses bore very hard upon them; but they knew it to be necessary, and did it cheerfully.

We had passed during our route through one or two of the small grassy openings so constantly met with even in the densest scrubs, and, as usual, I noticed upon these plains the remains of former scrub, where the trees were apparently of a larger growth than those now existing around. The soil too, from a loose sand, had become firmer and more united, and wherever the scrub had disappeared its place had been supplied by grass. This strongly confirmed my opinion, long ago formed, that those vast level wastes in Australia, now covered with low scrub, (and formerly, I imagine, the bed of the ocean,) are gradually undergoing a process of amelioration which may one day fit them

for the purposes of pasture or agriculture. The smoke of many native fires was seen during the day behind and around us, but we did not fall in with any of the natives.

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November 8.—Having given each of the horses a bucket of water from the well, we moved on again through the same dense scrub we had encountered yesterday, but, if possible, more harassing, from the increased steepness of the sandy ridges and the quantity of dead timber lying on the surface, and causing a great impediment to our progress. We forced our way through this worse than desert region, for about fourteen miles, and arrived early in the afternoon, with our horses quite exhausted, upon the shores of Smoky Bay, at a point where the natives had dug a hole in the sand hills near the beach to procure water, and from which the south end of the island of St. Peter bore W. 15 degrees S.

The *Waterwitch* was already here, and supplied us with a cask of water, until the men had dined and rested a little, before entering upon the task of digging for water, which proved to be a most arduous undertaking, and occupied us all the afternoon. We had to sink through a loose sand for fifteen feet, which from its nature, added to the effect of a strong wind that was blowing at the time, drifted in almost as fast as it was thrown out. We were consequently obliged to make a very large opening before we could get at the water at all; it was then very abundant, but dreadfully salt, being little better than the sea water itself; the horses and sheep however drank it greedily, as we had been able to give them but little of that received from the vessel.

November 9.—Upon mustering the horses this morning I found they were looking so exhausted and jaded after the hard toil they had gone through in the last three days, that I could not venture to put them to work again to-day. I was consequently obliged to remain in camp, to rest both them and the men, all of whom were much fatigued. The well in the sand was even saltier to-day than we had found it yesterday, and was quite unserviceable; the men had sunk the hole rather too deep, that they might get the water in greater abundance; but when the tide rose it flowed in under the sand and spoiled the whole. As the water, even at the best, had been so salt that we could not use it ourselves, and as it was far from being wholesome for the horses, I did not think it worth while to give the men the fatigue of digging another hole. I therefore put both horses and men upon a limited allowance, and got a cask containing sixty gallons from the cutter for our day's supply. I also took the opportunity of again lightening our loads by sending on board some more of the baggage and the light cart. This, by decreasing the number of our teams, would, I thought, enable me to change the horses occasionally in the others, and give me an extra man to assist in clearing a road through the scrub. Having completed my arrangements, I sent on the *Waterwitch* to the north-east part of Denial Bay, to land water there, as I did not expect to get any until our arrival at Point Peter. Mr. Scott accompanied the cutter, having expressed a wish to take a trip in her for a few days.



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During the forenoon we were visited by a party of natives, who came to get water at the hole in the sand. They were not much alarmed, and soon became very friendly, remaining near us all night; from them I learned that there was no water inland, and none along the coast for two days' journey, after which we should come to plenty, at a place called by them "Beelimah Gaip-pe;." Their language was nearly the same as that of Port Lincoln, intermixed with a few words in use at King George's Sound, and I now regretted greatly that I had not the Western Australian native with me.

I found a most singular custom prevailing among the natives of this part of the country, which I had never found to exist anywhere else (except at Port Lincoln), and the origin of which it would be most difficult to account for. In various parts of Australia some of the tribes practise the rite of circumcision, whilst others do not; but in the Port Lincoln peninsula, and along the coast to the westward, the natives not only are circumcised, but have in addition another most extraordinary ceremonial. [Note 24: Finditus usque ad urethram a parte infera penis.] Among the party of natives at the camp I examined many, and all had been operated upon. The ceremony with them seemed to have taken place between the ages of twelve and fourteen years, for several of the boys of that age had recently undergone the operation, the wounds being still fresh and inflamed. This extraordinary and inexplicable custom must have a great tendency to prevent the rapid increase of the population; and its adoption may perhaps be a wise ordination of Providence, for that purpose, in a country of so desert and arid a character as that which these people occupy.

November 10.—Getting the party away about five o'clock this morning, I persuaded one of the natives, named "Wilguld," an intelligent cheerful old man, to accompany us as a guide, and as an inducement, had him mounted on a horse, to the great admiration and envy of his fellows, all of whom followed us on foot, keeping up in a line with the dray through the scrub, and procuring their food as they went along, which consisted of snakes, lizards, guanas, bandicoots, rats, wallabies, *etc. etc.* and it was surprising to see the apparent ease with which, in merely walking across the country, they each procured an abundant supply for the day.

In one place in the scrub we came to a large circular mound of sand, about two feet high, and several yards in circumference; this they immediately began to explore, carefully throwing away the sand with their hands from the centre, until they had worked down to a deep narrow hole, round the sides of which, and embedded in the sand, were four fine large eggs of a delicate pink colour, and fully the size of a goose egg. I had often seen these hills before, but did not know that they were nests, and that they contained so valuable a prize to a traveller in the desert. The eggs

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were presented to me by the natives, and when cooked were of a very rich and delicate flavour. The nest was that of a wild pheasant, (*Leipoa*), a bird of the size of a hen pheasant of England, and greatly resembling it in appearance and plumage; these birds are very cautious and shy, and run rapidly through the underwood, rarely flying unless when closely pursued. The shell of the egg is thin and fragile, and the young are hatched entirely by the heat of the sun, scratching their way out as soon as they are born, at which time they are able to shift for themselves. [Note 25: For a further account of the *leipoa*, vide *chapter iii.* of Notes on the Aborigines.]

Our road to-day was through a heavy sandy country, covered for the most part densely with the eucalyptus and tea-tree. About eleven we struck the south-east corner of Denial Bay, and proceeded on to the north-east, where I had appointed the cutter to meet me. To my surprise she was not to be seen anywhere, and I began to get anxious about our supply of water for the horses, as we were entirely dependant upon her for it. In the afternoon I observed the vessel rounding into the south-east bight of the bay, and was obliged to send my overseer on horseback a long ride round the bay, to tell the master to send us water to the place of our encampment. He had been to the island of St. Peter yesterday looking for birds' eggs, and having neglected to take advantage of a fair wind, was not now able to get the cutter up to us. The water had consequently to be brought in the boat a distance of eight miles through a heavy sea, and at considerable risk. Mr. Scott, who came with the master in the boat, returned on board again in the evening. Our stage to-day had been eighteen miles, and the horses were both tired and thirsty. The small supply of water brought us in the boat being insufficient for them, we again were obliged to watch them at night.

November 11.—Guided by our friend "Wilguldry," we cut off all the corners and bends of the coast, and steering straight for "Beelimah Gaippe," arrived there about noon, after a stage of twelve miles; the road was harder and more open, but still in places we had to pass through a very dense brush. The water to which the native took us was procured by digging about four feet deep, in a swamp behind the coast hummocks, which were here high and bare, and composed of white sand. The water was abundant and good, and the grass tolerable, so that I determined to remain a day to rest and recruit the horses; it was so rarely that we had the opportunity of procuring both grass and water. The dogs killed a kangaroo, which enabled us to give our guide an abundant feast of food, to which he had been accustomed; but to do the old man justice, I must say he was not very scrupulous about his diet, for he ate readily of any thing that we offered him.

After we had encamped some more natives came up and joined us from the vicinity of Point Peter, which lay a few miles to the east of us; they were known to those who had accompanied us, and were very friendly and well conducted. To many inquiries about water inland, they all assured me that there was none to be found in that direction; but

said that there was water further along the coast called “Berinyana gaippe,” and only one day’s journey from our present encampment.

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November 12.—I sent the overseer this morning to communicate with the cutter, and to request the master to fill up as much water as he could, preparatory to our moving onwards to Fowler's Bay. In the evening the overseer returned, accompanied by Mr. Scott, to acquaint me that the water near Point Peter was a considerable distance from the vessel; and that it would be impracticable to fill up all the casks, with no other means than they had at command.

I took the sun's altitude, at noon, for latitude; but the day was windy, and the mercury shook so much that I could not depend upon the observation within three or four miles. It gave nearly 32 degrees 10 seconds S. which I thought too much to the northward. The sun set by compass W. 24 1/2 degrees S.

November 13.—Guided by the natives, we moved onward through a densely scrubby country, and were again obliged to keep the men with axes constantly at work, in advance of the drays to clear the road. Our progress was necessarily slow, and the work very harassing to the horses; fortunately the stage was not a very long one, and in fourteen miles we reached "Berinyana gaippe," a small hole dug by the natives, amongst the sand hummocks of the coast, a little north of Point Bell. By enlarging this a little, we procured water in great abundance and of excellent quality. Our course had been generally west by south; and from our camp, the eastern extreme of Point Bell, bore S. 28 degrees W., and the centre of the "Purdies Islands" E. 49 degrees S.

November 14.—Upon moving on this morning, we were obliged to keep more to the north to avoid some salt lakes and low swamps near the coast. The natives still accompanied us through a very sandy and scrubby country to a watering place among some sand hills, which they called "Wademar gaippe." Here we encamped early, after a stage of ten miles, and were enabled to procure abundance of good water, at a depth of about four feet below the surface.

There was a large sheet of salt water near our camp which seemed to be an inlet of the sea, and after a hasty dinner I walked down to examine it. The water generally appeared shallow, but in some places it was very deep; after tracing it for five miles, and going round one end of it, I found no junction with the sea, though the fragments of shells and other marine remains, clearly shewed that there must have been a junction at no very remote period. The sand hummocks between the lake and the sea being very high, I ascended them to take bearings, and then returning to the lake halted, with the black boy who had accompanied me, to bathe, and rest ourselves. The weather was most intensely hot, and our walk had been long and fatiguing, amongst sand hills under a noonday sun. We fully appreciated the luxury of a swim, and especially as we were lucky enough to find a hole of fresh water on the edge of the lake, to slake our parching thirst. Ducks, teal, and pigeons were numerous, and the recent traces of natives apparent everywhere. It was after sunset when we returned, tired and weary, to our camp.

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November 15.—In the morning we started as early as possible to get the stage over before the great heat of the day came on, still accompanied and guided by the friendly natives, who took us through the best and most open line of country. At six miles we entered a very dense scrub, leaving to the north of us, several patches of open plains; to the north-east were seen the smokes of several fires. The natives had told us that there was water out in that direction, at a short day's journey; but, as they did not wish us to go to it, I inferred that they thought there was not enough to satisfy our party, having now frequently seen how great was the supply we required at each encampment. I was myself of the opinion that a hole probably existed to the north-east similar to the one we had found in the plains behind Point Brown, where the access is difficult, and the quantity procurable at any one time not very great. The scrub we had traversed to-day was principally of salt-water tea-tree, growing upon a succession of steep sandy ridges, which presented a formidable barrier to the progress of the drays; the distance to be accomplished was not above fourteen miles; but so difficult was the nature of the country, and so oppressive the heat, that, notwithstanding our very early start, it was four o'clock in the afternoon before we arrived at the place of destination, which was called by the natives, "Mobeela gaippe." The horses and men were greatly fatigued, but for the latter, the labours of the day were far from being over, for, upon arriving at the place where the water was to be procured, I found that the holes, sunk by the natives, were through ridges of a loose sand to a depth of fourteen or fifteen feet, at the bottom of which, water was obtained in very small quantities. There were several of these holes still open, and the traces of many others in every direction around, which had either fallen in or been filled up by the drifting of the sand. These singular wells, although sunk through a loose sand to a depth of fourteen or fifteen feet, were only about two feet in diameter at the bore, quite circular, carried straight down, and the work beautifully executed. To get at the water, the natives placed a long pole against one side of the well, ascending and descending by it to avoid friction against the sides, which would have inevitably sent the sand tumbling in upon them. We, however, who were so much clumsier in all our movements, could not make use of the same expedient, nor indeed, would the size of the wells, made by the natives, have enabled us even with their assistance, to get out a moderate supply for the horses. It became necessary, therefore, to open a new well, of much larger dimensions, a task of no easy kind in so loose a sand.

Having put the overseer and men to their arduous employment, I ascended the highest of the sand hills, and took a set of angles, among which Point Fowler bore W. 16 degrees S. and Point Bell, E. 40 degrees S.



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A small lake was visible at W. 40 degrees N. The country still looked very cheerless in every direction, and no signs of improvement appeared to relieve the dreary scene around, or to lead me to hope for better country beyond.

Upon rejoining the well diggers, I found after great exertions they had thrown out an immense quantity of sand, and made a large and commodious well, and were just going to commence watering the horses; at this juncture and before a single bucket of water could be taken out, the sand slipped, and the sides of the well tumbled in, nearly burving alive the man who was at the bottom. The labour of two hours was lost, and tired as they were, the men had to begin their work afresh. It was eight at night before the well was cleared out again sufficiently to enable us to water the horses, for almost as fast as the sand was thrown out other sand fell in; by nine the whole of them had received two buckets of water each, when the sides of the well again shot in, and we were obliged to give up our digging operations altogether, as the men were completely exhausted; to relieve them Mr. Scott and I watched the horses during the night.

November 16.—Intending to remain in camp to-day, I set the men to clear out the well once more. It was a tedious and laborious task, in consequence of the banks of sand falling in so repeatedly, and frustrating all their efforts, but at last by sinking a large cask bored full of auger holes we contrived about one o'clock, to get all the horses and sheep watered; in the evening, however, the whole again fell in, and we gave up, in despair, the hopeless attempt to procure any further supply of water, under such discouraging circumstances.

For some days past, we had been travelling through a country in which the *Mesembryanthemum* grows in the greatest abundance, it was in full fruit, and constituted a favourite and important article of food among the native population; all our party partook of it freely, and found it both a wholesome and an agreeable addition to their fare; when ripe, the fruit is rich, juicy, and sweet, of about the size of a gooseberry. In hot weather it is most grateful and refreshing. I had often tasted this fruit before, but never until now liked it; in fact, I never in any other part of Australia, saw it growing in such abundance, or in so great perfection, as along the western coast. During our stay in camp a native had been sent out to call some of the other natives, and towards evening a good many came up, and were all regularly introduced to us by 'Wilguldly' and the others, who had been with us so long; I gave them a feast of rice which they appeared to enjoy greatly. Our more immediate friends and guides had learnt to drink tea, and eat meat and damper, with which we supplied them liberally, in return for the valuable services they rendered us.

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November 17.—Moving on early, we were guided by the natives for about twelve miles, round the head of Fowler's Bay, crossing through a very sandy, scrubby, and hilly country, and encamping at a water hole, dug between the sandy ridges, about two o'clock in the day. I had ridden a little in advance of the party, and arriving at the water first, surprised some women and children encamped there, and very busily engaged in roasting snakes and lizards over a fire. They were much afraid and ran away on seeing me, leaving their food upon the embers, this our friendly guides unceremoniously seized upon and devoured, as soon as they came up with the drays. These few women were the first we had seen for some time, as the men appeared to keep them studiously out of our way, and it struck me that this might be in consequence of the conduct of the whalers or sealers with whom they might have come in contact on the coast. Old Wilguldly, however, appeared to be less scrupulous on this point, and frequently made very significant offers on the subject.

Soon after we had encamped several natives came up and joined those with us. They were exceedingly polite and orderly—indeed the best conducted, most obliging natives I ever met with—never troubling or importuning for any thing, and not crowding around in that unmannerly disagreeable manner, which savages frequently adopt—nor did I ever find any of them guilty of theft; on the contrary, several times when we had left some article behind, they called to us, and pointed it out. To them we were indebted for the facilities we had enjoyed in obtaining water; for without their guidance, we could never have removed from any encampment without previously ascertaining where the next water could be procured; and to have done this would have caused us great delay, and much additional toil. By having them with us we were enabled to move with confidence and celerity; and in following their guidance we knew that we were taking that line of route which was the shortest, and the best practicable under the circumstances. Upon arriving at any of the watering places to which they had conducted us, they always pointed out the water, and gave it up to us entirely, no longer looking upon it as their own, and literally not taking a drink from it themselves when thirsty, without first asking permission from us. Surely this true politeness—this genuine hospitality of the untutored savage, may well put to the blush, for their exclusiveness and illiberality, his more civilised brethren. In how strong a light does such simple kindness of the inhabitant of the wilds to Europeans travelling through his country (when his fears are not excited or his prejudices violated,) stand contrasted with the treatment he experiences from them when they occupy his country, and dispossess him of his all.



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There were now a considerable number of natives with us, all of whom had been subjected to the singular ceremony before described. Those we had recently met with, had, in addition, a curious brand, or mark on the stomach, extending above and below the navel, and produced by the application of fire. I had previously noticed a similar mark in use among one or two tribes high up on the Murray River, (South Australia,) and which is there called "Renditch." At the latter place, however, the brand was on the breast, here it was on the stomach. I have never been able to account in any way for the origin or meaning of this mark; but it is doubtless used as a feature of distinction, or else why should it only be found in one or two tribes and so far apart, had it been accidental or arisen from lying near or upon the fires in cold weather, every individual of certain tribes would not have been affected, and some individuals of every tribe would: now, the first, as far as my experience enabled me to judge, is the case; but the latter most assuredly is not. Both at the Murray, and near Fowler's Bay, the natives always told me, that the marks were made by fire, though how, or for what purpose, I could never learn at either place.

November 18.—Our horses being all knocked up, and many of them having their shoulders severely galled by the racking motion of the drays winding up and down the heavy sandy ridges, or in and out of the dense scrubs, I determined to remain for some time in depot to recover them, whilst I reconnoitred the country to the west, as far as the head of the great Australian Bight. To leave my party in the best position I could, I sent the overseer round Point Fowler to see if there was any better place for the horses in that direction, and to communicate with the master of the *Waterwitch* on the subject of landing our stores. Upon the overseer's return, he reported that there was fresh water under Point Fowler, but very little grass; that he had not been able to communicate with the cutter, the wind being unfavourable and violent, and the cutter's boat on board, but they had noticed him, and shewn their colours; he said, moreover, that the vessel was lying in a very exposed situation, and did not appear at all protected by Point Fowler, which, as she was not well found in ground-tackle, might possibly occasion her being driven ashore, if a gale came on from the south-east. This news was by no means satisfactory, and I became anxious to get our things all landed that the cutter might go to a place of greater safety.

November 19.—The wind still being unfavourable, the day was spent in removing the drays, tents, *etc.* to a more elevated situation. Our camp had been on the low ground, near the water, in the midst of many scrubby hills, all of which commanded our position. There were now a great many well armed natives around us, and though they were very kind and friendly, I did not like the idea of their occupying the acclivities



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immediately above us—at all events, not during my contemplated absence from the party. I therefore had every thing removed to the hill next above them, and was a good deal amused at the result of this manoeuvre, for they seemed equally as uneasy as we had been at the heights above them being occupied. In a very short time they also broke up camp, and took possession of the next hill beyond us. This defeated the object I had in view in our former removal, and I now determined not to be out-manoevred any more, but take up our position on the highest hill we could find. This was a very scrubby one, but by a vigorous application of the axes for an hour or two, we completely cleared its summit; and then taking up the drays, tent, baggage, *etc.* we occupied the best and most commanding station in the neighbourhood. The result of this movement was, that during the day the natives all left, and went in the direction of where the cutter was. I was not sorry for their departure; for although they had been very friendly and useful to us, yet now that I contemplated keeping the party for a long time in camp, and should myself probably be a considerable time absent, I was more satisfied at the idea of the natives being away, than otherwise; not that I thought there was the least danger to be apprehended from them if they were properly treated; but the time of my men would be much occupied in attending to the horses and sheep; and they were too few in number, to admit of much of that time being taken up in watching the camp or the natives who might be near it; for I always deemed it necessary, as a mere matter of prudence, to keep a strict look out when any natives were near us, however friendly they might profess to be.

Upon walking round the shores of Fowler's Bay, I found them literally strewed in all directions with the bones and carcasses of whales, which had been taken here by the American ship I saw at Port Lincoln, and had been washed on shore by the waves. To judge from the great number of these remains, of which very many were easily recognisable as being those of distinct animals, the American must have had a most fortunate and successful season.

It has often surprised me, that the English having so many colonies and settlements on the shores of Australia, should never think it worth their while to send whalers to fish off its coasts, where the whales are in such great numbers, and where the bays and harbours are so numerous and convenient, for carrying on this lucrative employment. I believe scarcely a single vessel fishes any where off these coasts, which are entirely monopolised by the French and Americans, who come in great numbers; there cannot, I think, be less than three hundred foreign vessels annually whaling off the coasts, and in the seas contiguous to our possessions in the Southern Ocean. I have generally met with a great many French and American vessels in the few ports or bays that I have occasionally been at on the southern coast of Australia; and I have no doubt that they all reap a rich harvest.



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Among the many relics strewed around Fowler's Bay, I found the shell of a very large turtle laying on the beach; it had been taken by the crew of the vessel that I met at Port Lincoln, and could not have weighed less than three to four hundred weight. I was not previously aware that turtle was ever found so far to the southward, and had never seen the least trace of them before.

### Chapter XII.

*Land the stores and send the cutter to Denial Bay—party remove to point Fowler—leave the party—beds of lakes—dense scrub—coast sand drifts—fruitless search for water—distress of the horses—turn back—leave a horse—find water—rejoin party—send for the horse—country around depot—take a dray to the westward—wretched country—EALL in with natives—misunderstand their signs—they leave us—vain search for water—turn back—horse knocked up—go back for water—rejoin the dray—commence return—search for water—dray surrounded by natives—embarrassing situation—bury baggage—three horses abandoned—reach the sand drifts—unsuccessful attempts to save the horses—send for fresh horses—search for water to N. E.—Recover the dray and stores—rejoin the party at depot near point Fowler—return of the cutter.*

November 20.—*The* wind being favourable for the boats landing to-day, I sent the overseer with pack-horses to the west side of Fowler's Bay, to bring up some flour and other stores for the use of the party; at the same time I wrote to the master of the cutter, to know whether he considered his anchorage, at Fowler's Bay, perfectly safe. His reply was, that the anchorage was good and secure if he had been provided with a proper cable; but that as he was not, he could not depend upon the vessel being safe; should a heavy swell set in from the southeast. Upon this report, I decided upon landing all the stores from the cutter; and sending her to lay at a secure place on the west side of Denial Bay, until I returned from exploring the country, near the head of the Great Bight. On the 22nd, I gave orders to this effect, at the same time directing the captain to return to Fowler's Bay by the 11th December, at which time I hoped to have accomplished the journey I contemplated.

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On the same day I gave my overseer instructions for his guidance during my absence; and after sending the drays on to the water behind Point Fowler, that they might be nearer to the vessel, I set off on horseback to the westward, accompanied by a native; and taking with us a pack-horse to carry provisions. Crossing for about six miles through scrub, at a west by south course, we entered open grassy plains, among which were many beds of small dried up salt lakes. This description of country continued for about six miles, when we again entered a very dense scrub, and continued in it for eight miles, until we struck the coast. Not finding any indications of water or grass, I pushed up along the beach for three miles further, and was then obliged to encamp without either, as it had become too dark to proceed.

November 23.—Moving along the coast for ten miles, we came to large high drifts of pure white sand, from which some red-winged cockatoos and pigeons flew out, and near which were several native encampments. I now fully hoped to find water; but after a long and anxious examination, was obliged to give up the search. I knew that our only hope of finding water lay in these drifts of sand; but as it was frequently very difficult to find, and never could be procured without digging, (sometimes to a great depth,) I began to fear that our attempt to reach the head of the Bight was almost hopeless. We had no means of digging in the sand to any depth; whilst, from the constant drift, caused by the winds among these bare hills, it was exceedingly disagreeable to remain even for a short time to examine them. The wind was blowing strong, and whirlwinds of sand were circling around us, with a violence which we could scarcely struggle against, and during which we could hardly venture either to open our eyes, or to draw our breath.

Leaving the sand-drifts we travelled behind the coast ridge through a more open but still sandy country, making a long stage to some more high bare sand-drifts, amidst which we again made a long but unsuccessful search for water; at night we encamped near them, and our unfortunate horses were again obliged to be tied up for the second time without either grass or water.

November 24.—Finding that there was little prospect of procuring water a-head, and that our horses were scarcely able to move at all, I felt it necessary to retrace our steps as speedily as possible, to try to save the lives of the animals we had with us. In order that we might effect this and be encumbered by no unnecessary articles, I concealed, and left among some bushes, all our baggage, pack-saddles, *etc.* After passing about five miles beyond the sand-drifts where I had seen the cockatoos and pigeons, one of the horses became completely exhausted and could not proceed any further; I was necessitated therefore to tie him to a bush and push on with the other two to save them.

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When I left my party on the 22nd, I had directed them to remove to some water-holes behind Point Fowler, but, as I had not seen this place myself, I was obliged to steer in the dark in some measure at random, not knowing exactly where they were. The greatest part of our route being through a dense brush, we received many scratches and bruises from the boughs as we led our horses along, to say nothing of the danger we were constantly in of having our eyes put out by branches we could not see, and which frequently brought us to a stand still by painful blows across the face. At last we arrived at the open plains I had crossed on my outward track, and following them down came to two deep holes in the limestone rock, similar to the one behind Point Brown. By descending into these holes we found a little water, and were enabled to give each of the horses three pints; we then pushed on again, hoping to reach the camp, but getting entangled among the scrub, were obliged at midnight to halt until daylight appeared, being almost as much exhausted as the horses, and quite as much in want of water, for we had not tasted the little that had been procured from the hole found in the plains.

November 25.—At the first streak of daylight we moved on, and in one mile and a half reached the camp near Point Fowler, before any of the party were up. We had guessed our course well in the dark last night, and could not have gone more direct had it been daylight. Having called up the party and made them get a hasty breakfast, I hurried off a dray loaded with water, and accompanied by the overseer, one man, and the black boy, to follow up our tracks to where the tired horse had been tied. During my absence I found that every thing but the cart had been landed from the cutter, and safely brought up to the camp, and that as soon as that was on shore she would be ready to go and lie at anchor at Denial Bay.

About noon I was greatly surprised and vexed to see my overseer return driving the loose horses before him. It seemed that whilst feeding around the camp they had observed the dray and other horses going away and had followed upon the tracks, so that the overseer had no alternative but to drive them back to the camp. This was very unfortunate, as it would occasion great delay in reaching the one we had left tied in the scrub. I directed the overseer to hurry back as rapidly as possible, and by travelling all night to endeavour to make up for lost time, for I greatly feared that if not relieved before another day passed away, it would be quite impossible to save the animal alive.

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After resting myself a little I walked about to reconnoitre the neighbourhood of our camp, not having seen it before. The situation was at the west side of the upper extreme of Point Fowler, immediately behind the sand-drifts of the coast, which there were high, bare, and of white sand. The water was on the inland side, immediately under the sand-hills, and procured in the greatest abundance and of good quality, by sinking from one to three feet. It was found in a bed of white pipe-clay. To the north-west of us were some open grassy plains, among which our horses and sheep obtained their food, whilst here and there were scattered a few salt swamps or beds of lakes, generally, however, dry. The whole country was of fossil formation, and the borders of the lakes and swamps exhibited indurated masses of marine shells, apparently but a very recent deposit. Further inland the country was crusted on the surface with an oolitic limestone, and for the most part covered by brush; a few open plains being interspersed here and there among the scrubs, as is generally the case in that description of country.

The natives still appeared to be in our neighbourhood, but none had been near us since they first left on the 19th. I would now gladly have got one of them to accompany me to look for water, but none could be found. On the 26th and 27th I was occupied in getting up the cart, some casks, *etc.* from the cutter, and preparing for another attempt to round the head of the Great Bight. The vessel then sailed for Denial Bay, where she could lie in greater safety, until I required her again.

Early on the 27th the man and black boy returned with the dray from the westward, they had found the horse very weak and much exhausted, but by care and attention he was got a little round, and the overseer had remained to bring him slowly on: he had been four entire days and nights without food or water, and for the first two days and a half of this time had been severely worked. In the evening the overseer came up, driving the jaded animal, somewhat recovered indeed—but miserably reduced in condition.

The party with the dray had taken spades with them to dig for water at the sand hills, where I had seen the pigeons and cockatoos on the 23rd, and at ten feet they had been lucky enough to procure abundance, which although of a brackish quality was usable; from the great depth, however, at which it was obtained, and the precarious nature of the soil, it was very troublesome to get at it.

November 28.—This morning I sent away a dray with three horses, carrying seventy gallons of water to assist me in again endeavouring to get round the Bight. As the road was very scrubby, and much impeded by fallen timber, I had previously sent on a man to clear it a little; and about ten o'clock I followed with the native boy. We got tolerably well through the scrub, and encamped in a plain about sixteen miles from the depot, where there was good grass. The weather being cool and showery, our horses would not drink more than a bucket each from the casks.

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November 29.—Having moved on the dray early over rather a heavy road, we took up our quarters under the white sand-drifts, after a stage of nine miles. I then left the boy in charge of the camp, and proceeded myself with the two men, and provided with spades and buckets, to where the overseer had obtained water by digging; the place was about two miles from our camp, between the sand-drifts and the sea, and immediately behind the front ridges of the coast. By enlarging the hole, and sinking a tub bored full of holes, we managed to water the horses, and get a supply for ourselves. In the afternoon an attempt was made to dig a well nearer the camp, but a stratum of rock put an end to our labours.

November 30.—Sending back one of the men to the depot, I left the native boy to guide the dray, whilst I diverged towards the coast to look for water among the sand-drifts, that were seen occasionally in that direction; in none of them, however, could I obtain a drop. The country travelled over consisted of very heavy sand ridges, covered for the most part with low scrub, and as the stage was a long one (twenty-two miles), I found upon overtaking the dray that the horses were knocked up, and a party of fourteen natives surrounding it, who were making vehement gesticulations to the man not to proceed, and he being only accompanied by a single black boy was greatly alarmed, and did not know what to do; indeed, had I not arrived opportunely, I have no doubt that he would have turned the horses round, and driven back again. Upon coming up with the natives, I saw at once that none of them had been with us before, but at the same time they appeared friendly and well-behaved, making signs for us not to proceed, and pointing to some sand-drifts at the coast which we had passed, implying, as I understood them, that there was water there. We were now in an opening among the scrub, consisting of small grassy undulating plains, and at these I determined to halt for the night, hoping the natives would remain near us, and guide us to water to-morrow. To induce them to do this, after giving the horses each two buckets of water, I gave two gallons among them also, besides some bread. They at once took possession of an elevation a little above our position, and formed their camp for the night. As we were so few in number compared to the natives, we were obliged to keep a watch upon them during the whole night, and they did the same upon us—but at a much less individual inconvenience from their number; they appeared to take the duty in turn—two always being upon guard at once.

December 1.—After giving the natives some water, and taking breakfast ourselves, we moved on in the direction they wished us to go, followed by the whole party; at two miles they brought us to the sea over a dreadful heavy road, but upon then asking them where the water was, they now told us to our horror, that there was “mukka gaip-pe,” or, no water. The truth was now evident, we had mutually misunderstood one another; they seeing strangers suddenly appear, had taken it for granted they came from the sea, and pointed there, whilst we, intent only upon procuring water, had fancied they had told us we should find it where they pointed; upon reaching the coast both were disappointed—they at not seeing a ship, and we at not finding water.



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It was now a difficult matter to decide what to do: our horses were greatly jaded, owing to the hilly and sandy character of the country; our water was reduced to a low ebb in the casks, for relying upon the natives guiding us to more, we had used it improvidently; whilst the very least distance we could be away from the water, at the sand-drifts, was twenty-five miles; if we went back we lost all our previous labour, and could not do so without leaving the dray behind, and if we went forward, it was very problematical whether water could be procured within any distance attainable by our tired horses.

The natives now asserted there was water to the north-west, but that it was a long way off. As they still seemed willing to accompany us, I determined to proceed, and pushed on parallel with the coast behind the front ridges; at nine miles the horses were quite exhausted, and could get no further, so that I was obliged to halt for the night, where a few tufts of withered grass were found under the hummocks.

Our sable friends had gradually dropped off, one or two at a time, until only three remained. These I endeavoured to make friends with, by giving them plenty of water and bread, and after taking a hasty meal, I got them to go with me and the native boy along the coast, to search for water. After going about a mile, they would proceed no further, making signs that they should be very thirsty, and enabling me clearly to comprehend, that there was no water until the head of the Great Bight was rounded. As I did not know exactly, what the actual distance might be, I still hoped I should be able to reach it, and leaving the natives to return, I and the boy pushed on beyond all the sandy hills and cliffs, to the low sandy tract bordering upon the head of the Bight, from which we were about twelve miles distant. The day was hazy, or the cliffs of the Great Bight would have been distinctly visible.

We lost a good deal of time in tracking the foot-steps of a party of native women and children, among some bare sand-drifts, hoping the track would lead to water; but the party seemed to have been rambling about without any fixed object, and all our efforts to find water were in vain; the whole surface of the country, (except where it was hidden by the sand-drifts) was one sheet of limestone crust, and wherever we attempted to dig among the sand-drifts, the rock invariably stopped us.

As it was getting on towards evening, I returned to where I had left the dray, and giving each of the horses one bucket of water and five pints of oats, was obliged to have them tied for the night, myself and the man being too much fatigued to watch them.

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December 2.—We had not moved far upon our return, when one of our most valuable dray-horses became completely overdone with fatigue, and I was obliged to take it out of the team and put in a riding horse, to try, if possible, to reach the plains where the grass was. We just got to the borders of this open patch of country, when the poor animal (a mare) could not be got a yard farther, and we were compelled to halt and decide upon what was best to be done. The water in the cask was nearly all consumed, the mare could not stir, and the other horses were very weak, so that no time was to be lost; I immediately decided upon leaving the man to take care of the mare and the dray, whilst I and the native boy took the other horses back for more water; having measured out to the man, water amounting to a quart per day, during our contemplated absence, I gave all that was left, consisting of about half a bucket full, to the mare, and then accompanied by the boy, pushed steadily back towards the water at the sand hills, distant about twenty-five miles. At dark we arrived there, but the sand had fallen in, and we had to labour hard to clear out the hole again; it was eleven o'clock at night before we could get the horses watered, and we then had to take them a mile and a half before we could get any grass for them. Returning from this duty, we had to collect and carry on our backs for more than a mile, a few bundles of sticks and bushes, to make a little fire for ourselves, near the water, the night being intensely cold. It was past two o'clock in the morning before we could lay down, and then, tired and harassed as we were, it was too cold and damp for us to rest.

December 3.—The scorching rays of the morning sun awoke us early, weary and unrefreshed, we had no trees to shade us, and were obliged to get up. After looking at the well, and congratulating ourselves upon its not having fallen in, we set off to look for the horses, they had wandered away in search of food, causing us a long and tiresome walk over the sand-hills in the sun, before we could find them; having at last got them and driven them to where the water was, we were chagrined to find that during our absence the well had again fallen in, and we had the labour of clearing it out to go through again.

The day was excessively oppressive, with a hot parching wind, and both we and the horses drank incessantly. Towards night we took the horses away to the grass, and remained near them ourselves for the sake of the firewood, which was there more abundant.

We had thunder towards evening, and a few dops of rain fell, but not sufficient to moderate the temperature, the heat continuing as oppressive as before.

December 4.—After watering the horses, we took ten gallons upon a pack-horse, and proceeded on our return to the man we had left; the state in which our own horses were, having made it absolutely necessary to give them the day's rest they had yesterday enjoyed. We arrived about five in the afternoon, at the little plain where we had left the man; he was anxiously looking out for us, having just finished his last quart of water. The poor mare looked very weak and wretched, but after giving her at intervals, eight



gallons of water, she fed a little, and I fully hoped we should succeed in saving her life. No natives had been seen during our absence.

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The night set in very dark and lowering, and I expected a heavy fall of rain; to catch which we spread our oilskins and tarpaulin, and placed out the buckets and pannekins, or whatever else would hold water: a few drops, however, only fell, and the storm passed away, leaving us as much under a feeling of disappointment, as we had been previously of hope: one little shower would have relieved us at once from all our difficulties.

December 5.—Upon getting up early, I thought the horses looked so much refreshed, that we might attempt to take back the dray, and had some of the strongest of them yoked up. We proceeded well for two miles and a half to our encampment of the 30th November; and as there was then a well defined track, I left the man to proceed alone, whilst I myself went once more to the coast to make a last effort to procure water among some of the sand-drifts. In this I was unsuccessful. There were not the slightest indications of water existing any where. In returning to rejoin the dray, I struck into our outward track, about three miles below, where I had left it, and was surprised to find that the dray had not yet passed, though I had been three hours absent. Hastily riding up the track, I found the man not half a mile from where I had left him, and surrounded by natives. They had come up shortly after my departure; and the man, getting alarmed, was not able to manage his team properly, but by harassing them had quite knocked up all the horses; the sun was getting hot, and I saw at once it would be useless to try and take the dray any further.

Having turned out the horses to rest a little, I went to the natives to try to find out, if possible, where they procured water, but in vain. They insisted that there was none near us, and pointed in the direction of the head of the Bight to the north-west, and of the sand hills to the south-east, as being the only places where it could be procured; when I considered, however, that I had seen these same natives on the 30th November, and that I found them within half a mile of the same place, five days afterwards, I could not help thinking that there must be water not very far away. It is true, the natives require but little water generally, but they cannot do without it altogether. If there was a small hole any where near us, why they should refuse to point it out, I could not imagine. I had never before found the least unwillingness on their part to give us information of this kind; but on the contrary, they were ever anxious and ready to conduct us to the waters that they were acquainted with. I could only conclude, therefore, that what they stated was true—that there was no water near us, and that they had probably come out upon a hunting excursion, and carried their own supplies with them in skins, occasionally, perhaps, renewing this from the small quantities found in the hollows of the gum scrub, and which is deposited there by the rains, or procuring a drink, as they required

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it, from the long lateral roots of the same tree. [Note 26: Vide Chapter XVI., towards the close.] I have myself seen water obtained in both these ways. The principal inducement to the natives to frequent the small plains where we were encamped, appeared to be, to get the fruit of the *Mesembryanthemum*, which grew there in immense quantities, and was now just ripe; whilst the scrub, by which these plains were surrounded, seemed to be alive with wallabie, adding variety to abundance in the article of food.

We were now on the horns of a very serious dilemma: our horses were completely fagged out, and could take the dray no further. We were surrounded by natives, and could not leave it, and the things upon it, whilst they were present (for many of these things we could not afford to lose); and on the other hand, we were twenty-two miles from any water, and our horses were suffering so much from the want of it, that unless we got them there shortly, we could not hope to save the lives of any one of them.

Had the natives been away, we could have buried the baggage, and left the dray; but as it was, we had only to wait patiently, hoping they would soon depart. Such, however, was not their intention; there they sat coolly and calmly, facing and watching us, as if determined to sit us out. It was most provoking to see the careless indifference with which they did this, sheltering themselves under the shade of a few shrubs, or lounging about the slopes near us, to gather the berries of the *Mesembryanthemum*. I was vexed and irritated beyond measure, as hour after hour passed away, and our unconscious tormentors still remained. Every moment, as it flew, lessened the chance of saving the lives of our horses; and yet I could not bring myself to abandon so many things that we could not do without, and which we could not in any way replace. What made the circumstances, too, so much worse, was, that we had last night given to our horses every drop of water, except the small quantity put apart for our breakfasts.

We had now none, and were suffering greatly from the heat, and from thirst, the day being calm and clear, and intolerably hot. When we had first unyoked the horses, I made the man and native boy lay down in the shade, to sleep, whilst I attended to the animals, and kept an eye on the natives. About noon I called them up again, and we all made our dinner off a little bread, and some of the fruit that grew around us, the moisture of which alone enabled us to eat at all, our mouths were so thoroughly dry and parched.

A movement was now observed among the natives; and gathering up their spears, they all went off. Having placed the native boy upon an eminence to watch them, the man and I at once set to work to carry our baggage to the top of a sand-hill, that it might be buried at some distance from the dray. We had hardly commenced our labours, however, before the boy called out that the natives were returning, and in

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a little time they all occupied their former position; either they had only gone as a ruse to see what we intended to do, or they had been noticing us, and had seen us removing our baggage, or else they had observed the boy watching them, and wished to disappoint him. Whatever the inducement was, there they were again, and we had as little prospect of being able to accomplish our object as ever. If any thing could have palliated aggressive measures towards the aborigines, it would surely be such circumstances as we were now in; our own safety, and the lives of our horses, depended entirely upon our getting rid of them. Yet with the full power to compel them (for we were all armed), I could not admit the necessity of the case as any excuse for our acting offensively towards those who had been friendly to us, and who knew not the embarrassment and danger which their presence caused us.

Strongly as our patience had been exercised in the morning, it was still more severely tested in the afternoon—for eight long hours had those natives sat opposite to us watching. From eight in the morning until four in the afternoon, we had been doomed to disappointment. About this time, however, a general movement again took place; once more they collected their spears, shouldered their wallets, and moved off rapidly and steadily towards the south-east. It was evident they had many miles to go to their encampment, and I now knew we should be troubled with them no more. Leaving the boy to keep guard again upon the hill, the man and I dug a large hole, and buried all our provisions, harness, pack-saddles, water-casks, *etc.* leaving the dray alone exposed in the plains. After smoothing the surface of the ground, we made a large fire over the place where the things were concealed, and no trace remained of the earth having been disturbed.

We had now no time to lose, and moving away slowly, drove the horses before us towards the water. The delay, however, had been fatal; the strength of the poor animals was too far exhausted, and before we had gone seven miles, one of them could not proceed, and we were obliged to leave him; at three miles further two more were unable to go on, and they, too, were abandoned, though within twelve miles of the water. We had still two left, just able to crawl along, and these, by dint of great perseverance and care, we at last got to the water about four o'clock in the morning of the 6th. They were completely exhausted, and it was quite impossible they could go back the same day, to take water to those we had left behind. The man, myself, and the boy were in but little better plight; the anxiety we had gone through, the great heat of the weather, and the harassing task of travelling over the heavy sandy hills, covered with scrub, in the dark, and driving jaded animals before us, added to the want of water we were suffering under, had made us exceedingly weak, and rendered us almost incapable of further exertion. In the evening I sent the man, who had been resting all day, to try and bring the two horses nearest to us a few miles on the road, whilst I was to meet him with water in the morning. Native fires were seen to the north-east of us at night, but the

people did not seem to have been at the water at the sand-hills for their supply, no traces of their having recently visited it being found.

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December 7.—After giving the horses water we put ten gallons upon one of them, and hurried off to the animals we had left. The state of those with us necessarily made our progress slow, and it was four o'clock before we arrived at the place where they were, about eleven miles from the water. The man had gone on to the furthest of the three, and had brought them all nearly together; upon joining him we received the melancholy intelligence, that our best draught mare had just breathed her last—another lay rolling on the ground in agony—and the third appeared but little better. After moistening their mouths with water, we made gruel for them with flour and water, and gave it to them warm: this they drank readily, and appeared much revived by it, so that I fully hoped we should save both of them. After a little time we gave each about four gallons of water, and fed them with all the bread we had. We then let them rest and crop the withered grass until nine o'clock, hoping, that in the cool of the evening, we should succeed in getting them to the water, now so few miles away. At first moving on, both horses travelled very well for two miles, but at the end of the third, one of them was unable to go any further, and I left the man to remain, and bring him on again when rested; the other I took on myself to within six miles of the water, when he, too, became worn out, and I had to leave him, and go for a fresh supply of water.

About four in the morning of the 8th, I arrived with the boy at the water, just as day was breaking, and quite exhausted. We managed to water the two horses with us, but were too tired either to make a fire or get anything to eat ourselves; and lay down for an hour or two on the sand. At six we got up, watered the horses again, and had breakfast; after which, I filled the kegs and proceeded once more with ten gallons of water to the unfortunate animals we had left behind. The black boy was too tired to accompany me, and I left him to enjoy his rest, after giving him my rifle for his protection, in the event of natives coming during my absence.

Upon arriving at the place where I had left the horse, I found him in a sad condition, but still alive. The other, left further away, in charge of the man, had also been brought up to the same place, but died just as I got up to him; there was but one left now out of the three, and to save him, all our care and attention were directed. By making gruel, and giving it to him constantly, we got him round a little, and moved him on to a grassy plain, about a mile further; here we gave him a hearty drink of water, and left him to feed and rest for several hours. Towards evening we again moved on slowly, and as he appeared to travel well, I left the man to bring him on quietly for the last five miles, whilst I took back to the water the two noble animals that had gone through so much and such severe toil in the attempt made to save the others. In the evening I reached the camp

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near the water, and found the native boy quite safe and recruited. For the first time for many nights, I had the prospect of an undisturbed rest; but about the middle of the night I was awoke by the return of the man with the woful news, that the last of the three horses was also dead, after travelling to within four miles of the water. All our efforts, all our exertions had been in vain; the dreadful nature of the country, and our unlucky meeting with the natives, had defeated the incessant toil and anxiety of seven days' unremitting endeavours to save them; and the expedition had sustained a loss of three of its best horses, an injury as severe as it was irreparable.

December 9.—At day-break, this morning, I sent off the man to the depot at Fowler's Bay, with orders to the overseer to send five fresh horses, two men, and a supply of provisions; requesting Mr. Scott to accompany them, for the purpose of taking back the two tired horses we still had with us at the sand-hills. Upon the man's departure, we took the two horses to water, and brought up ten gallons to the camp, where the grass was; after which, whilst the horses were feeding and resting, we tried to pass away the day in the same manner; the heat, however, was too great, and the troubles and anxieties of the last few days had created such an irritation of mind that I could not rest: my slumbers were broken and unrefreshing; but the boy managed better, he had no unpleasant anticipations for the future, and already had forgotten the annoyance of the past.

December 10.—After an early breakfast, we took the horses to water and cleared the hole out thoroughly, as I expected five more horses in the evening. Upon returning to the plain, fires of the natives were again seen to the north-east; but they did not approach us. Our provisions were now quite exhausted, and having already lived for many days upon a very low diet, we looked out anxiously for the expected relay. About four o'clock, Mr. Scott, two men, and five horses arrived, bringing us supplies; so that no time had been lost after the arrival of my messenger. The hole having been previously enlarged and cleared out, no difficulty was experienced in watering the horses, and about sunset all encamped together under the sand-hills at the grassy plain.

December 11.—Leaving directions with Mr. Scott to take back to the depot, to-morrow, the two horses we had been working so severely, and which were now recruiting a little; and giving orders to the two men to follow the dray track to the north-west tomorrow, with the three fresh horses, I once more set off with the native boy to revisit the scene of our late disasters; and recover the dray and other things we had abandoned. We passed by the three dead horses on our route, now lying stiff and cold; in our situation a melancholy spectacle, and which awakened gloomy and cheerless anticipations for the future, by reminding us of the crippled state of our resources, and of the dreadful character of the inhospitable region we had to penetrate. At dark we came to the little plain where the dray was, and found both it and our baggage undisturbed; nor was it apparent that any natives had visited the place since we left it. During the evening a

few slight showers fell, which, with a heavy dew, moistened the withered grass, and enabled our horses to feed tolerably well.



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December 12.—I had proceeded a day in advance of the men and horses coming to recover the dray, in order that I might satisfy myself whether there was water or not near the plains to the east or north-east, as there were some grounds for supposing that such might be the case, from the fact of so many natives having been twice seen there, and the probability that they had remained for five days in the neighbourhood. To-day I devoted to a thorough examination of the country around; and, accompanied by the boy, proceeded early away to the north-east, returning southerly, and then crossing back westerly to the camp. We travelled over a great extent of ground, consisting principally of very dense scrub, with here and there occasional grassy openings; but no where could we observe the slightest indications of the existence of water, although the traces of natives were numerous and recent; and we tracked them for several miles, often seeing places where they had broken down the shrubs to get a grub, which is generally found there, out of the root; and observing the fragments of the long lateral roots of the gum-scrub, which they had dug up to get water from. And this, I am inclined to think, is what they depend upon principally in these arid regions for the little water they require. The general direction taken by these wanderers of the desert, was to the north-east. About four o'clock the men with the dray-horses arrived, bringing ten gallons of water, which we divided among the horses, and then took it in turn to watch them during the night.

December 13.—Having buried a few things that I might require when I should come out here again, (for I determined not to give up the attempt to round the Great Bight,) I had all the rest of our luggage taken up, and the horses being harnessed, we returned with the dray to the water at the sand-hills, arriving there early in the afternoon. We had yoked up three strong fresh horses, that had done no work for some time previously; and yet, such was the nature of the country, that with an almost empty dray, they had hardly been able to reach the water, at the furthest only twenty-two miles distant, and in accomplishing this, they had been upwards of ten hours in the collar. How then could we expect to get through such a region with drays heavily loaded, as ours must be, when we moved on finally.

On the 14th we remained in camp to refresh the horses, and early on the following day proceeded through the scrub, on our return to the depot; first burying our pack-saddle, and a few other things, in the plain near the sand-hills. Notwithstanding the care we had taken of the horses, and the little work we had given them, they got fagged in going through the scrub, and I was obliged to halt the dray at the rocky well in the plains, five miles short of the depot. I myself went on with the boy to the camp at Point Fowler, where I found the party feasting upon emus, four of which they had shot during my absence.

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December 16.—About ten to-day the dray and men arrived safely at the depot, being the last detachment of the party engaged in this most unfortunate expedition, which had occupied so much time and caused such severe and fatal loss, independently of its not accomplishing the object for which it was undertaken. In the evening I sent Mr. Scott to see if the cutter had returned, and upon his coming back he reported that she had just arrived, but that he had not been able to communicate with her.

### Chapter XIII.

Future plans—reduce the number of the party—send the cutter to *Adelaide*—report to the Governor—monotonous life at camp—remove to another locality—geological character of the country—flint found—again attempt to reach the head of the bight—reach the sand hills, and bury flour—friendly natives—exhausted state of the horses—get the dray to the plain—bury water—send back dray—proceed with pack-horse—oppressive heat—send back pack-horse—reach the head of the bight—surprise some natives—their kind behaviour—Yeer-kumban KAUEE—their account of the interior.

December 17.—*Having* now maturely considered the serious position I was in, the difficult nature of the country, the reduced condition and diminished number of my horses, and the very unfavourable season of the year, I decided upon taking advantage of a considerate clause in the Governor's letter, authorizing me "to send back the *Waterwitch* to Adelaide for assistance, if required."

From the experience I had already had, and from the knowledge I had thus acquired of the character of the country to the westward and to the north, it was evident that I could never hope to take my whole party, small as it was, with me in either direction. I had already lost three horses in an attempt to get round the head of the Bight, and I had also found that my three best horses now remaining, when strong and fresh after a long period of rest at the depot, had with difficulty been able to move along with an empty dray in the heavy sandy country to the north-west; how could I expect, then, to take drays when loaded with provisions and other stores? Hitherto we had enjoyed the assistance of the cutter in passing up the coast—by putting all our heavy baggage on board of her, the drays were comparatively empty,

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and we had got on tolerably well. We could no longer, however, avail ourselves of this valuable aid, for we were now past all harbours. Fowler's Bay being the last place of refuge where a vessel could take shelter for many hundred miles, whilst the fearful nature of the coast and the strong current setting into the Bight, made it very dangerous for a vessel to approach the land at all. Upon leaving Fowler's Bay, therefore, it was evident that we must be dependent entirely upon our own resources; and it became necessary for me to weigh well and maturely how I might best arrange my plans so as to meet the necessity of the case. It appeared to me that if I sent two of my men back to Adelaide in the *Waterwitch*, a single dray would carry every necessary for the reduced party remaining, and that by obtaining a supply of oats and bran for the horses, and giving them a long rest, they might so far recover strength and spirits as to afford me reasonable grounds of hope that we might succeed in forcing a passage through the country to the westward, bad as it evidently was. Acting upon the opinion I had arrived at, I sent for the master of the cutter and requested him to get ready at once for sea, and then communicated my decision to the two men who were to leave us, Corporal Coles, R.S. and M. and John Houston, requesting them to get ready to embark tomorrow. They did not appear to experience much surprise, and were I think on the whole rather pleased than otherwise at the prospect of a return to Adelaide. Both these men had conducted themselves remarkably well during the whole time they were in the party, and one of them, John Houston, had been with me in my late disastrous expedition, during which his obedience and good conduct had been beyond all praise. We had, however, now been absent for six months, had traversed a great extent of country, and undergone many hardships; the country we had met with had unfortunately always been of the most barren and disheartening character, and that which was yet before us appeared to be if possible still worse, so that I could not wonder that my men should appear gratified in the prospect of a termination to their labours. With so little to cheer and encourage, they might well perhaps doubt of our final success.

December 18.—Having once decided upon my plans, I lost no time in putting them in execution. A dray, three sets of horses' harness, and some other things were sent on board the *Waterwitch*, together with half a sheep and sixty pounds of biscuit for the crew, who were now running short of provisions. Several casks were brought on shore for us to bury stores in, and the boat I had purchased at Port Lincoln was left, at Mr. Scott's request, for him to fish in during the absence of the cutter. After I had settled with the two men for their services, both of whom had large sums to receive, they took leave of us, and went on board.

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My own time had been fully occupied for the last two days, in writing letters and preparing despatches; by great exertions I got all ready this evening, and upon Mr. Germain's coming up at night, I delivered them to him, and directed him to sail as soon as possible. The following copy of my despatch to his Excellency the Governor, will convey a brief summary of the result of the expedition; from the time of our leaving Port Lincoln up to the sailing of the *Waterwitch* from Fowler's Bay, and of the future plans I intended to adopt, to carry out the object of the undertaking.

*"Point Fowler, 17th December, 1840.*

*"Sir,—By the return of the Waterwitch, I have the honour to furnish you, for the information of His Excellency the Governor, with a brief account of our proceedings up to the present date.*

*"Upon the return of Mr. Scott from Adelaide to Port Lincoln, I left the latter place on the 24th October, following my former line of route along the coast to Streaky Bay, and rejoining my party there on the 3rd November.*

*"The Waterwitch had already arrived with the stores sent for the use of the expedition, and I have since detained her to co-operate with my party, in accordance with the kind permission of his Excellency the Governor.*

*"From previous experience, I was aware, that after leaving Streaky Bay, we should have obstacles of no ordinary kind to contend with; and as I advanced, I found the difficulties of the undertaking even greater than I had anticipated; the heavy sandy nature of the country, its arid character, the scarcity of grass, and the very dense brushes through which we had frequently to clear a road with our axes, formed impediments of no trifling description, and such as, when combined with the very unfavourable season of the year, we could hardly have overcome without the assistance of the *Waterwitch*. By putting on board the cutter the greater part of our dead weight, we relieved our jaded horses from loads they could no longer draw; and by obtaining from her occasional supplies of water at such points of the coast as we could procure none on shore, we were enabled to reach Fowler's Bay on the 22nd November.*

*"From this point I could no longer avail myself of the valuable services of the cutter, the wild unprotected character of the coast extending around the Great Australian Bight, rendering it too dangerous for a vessel to attempt to approach so fearful a shore, and where there is no harbour or shelter of any kind to make for in case of need.*

*"Under these circumstances, I left my party in camp behind Point Fowler, whilst I proceeded myself, accompanied by a native boy, to examine the country a-head, and I now only detained the *Waterwitch*, in the hopes that by penetrating on horseback beyond the head of the Great Bight, I might be able to give his Excellency some idea of our future prospects.*

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“For the last twenty-four days I have been engaged in attempting to round the head of the Bight; but so difficult is the country, that I have not as yet been able to accomplish it. In my first essay I was driven back by the want of water and obliged to abandon one of my horses. This animal I subsequently recovered.

“In my second attempt, I went, accompanied by one of my native boys, and a man driving a dray loaded solely with water and our provisions; but such was the dreadful nature of the country, that after penetrating to within twelve miles of the head of the Bight, I was again obliged to abandon three of our horses, a dray, and our provisions. The poor horses were so exhausted by previous fatigue and privation, that they could not return, and I was most reluctantly obliged to leave them to obtain relief for ourselves, and the two remaining horses we had with us. After reaching the nearest water, we made every effort to save the unfortunate animals we had left behind; and for seven days, myself, the man, and a boy, were incessantly and laboriously engaged almost day and night in carrying water backwards and forwards to them—feeding them with bread, gruel, *etc.* I regret to say that all our efforts were in vain, and that the expedition has sustained a fatal and irreparable injury in the loss of three of its best draught horses. The dray and the provisions I subsequently recovered, and on the evening of the 15th December, I rejoined my party behind Point Fowler, to prepare despatches for the *Waterwitch*, since the weak and unserviceable condition of nearly the whole of our remaining horses rendered any further attempt to penetrate so inhospitable a region quite impracticable for the present. In traversing the country along the coast from Streaky Bay to the limits of our present exploration, within twelve miles of the head of the Great Bight, we have found the country of a very uniform description—low flat lands, or a succession of sandy ridges, densely covered with a brush of *eucalyptus dumosa*, salt water tea-tree, and other shrubs—whilst here and there appear a few isolated patches of open grassy plains, scattered at intervals among the scrub. The surface rock is invariably an oolitic limestone, mixed with an imperfect freestone, and in some places exhibits fossil banks, which bear evident marks of being of a very recent formation.

“The whole of this extent of country is totally destitute of surface water—we have never met with a watercourse, or pool of any description, and all the water we have obtained since we left Streaky Bay has been by digging, generally in the large drifts of pure white sand close to the coast. This is a work frequently of much time and labour, as from the depth we have had to sink, and the looseness of the sand, the hole has often filled nearly as fast as we could clear it out; the water too thus obtained has almost always been brackish, occasionally salt.

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Latterly even this resource has failed us; after digging a few feet we have been impeded by rock, which gradually approaching nearer the surface towards the head of the Great Bight, at last occupies its whole extent, unless where partially concealed by sand-drifts, or low sandy ridges covered with brush. We have seen no trees or timber of any kind of larger growth than the scrub, nor have we met with the *Casuarinae* since we left Streaky Bay.

“The natives along this coast are not very numerous; those we have met with have been timid, but friendly, and in some instances have rendered us important assistance in guiding us through the brush, and shewing us where to dig for water—their language appears to be a good deal similar to that at King George’s Sound. When questioned about the interior towards the north, they invariably assert that there is no fresh water inland; nor could we discover that they are acquainted with the existence of a large body of water of any kind in that direction.

“Hitherto the reduced condition of my horses, the nature of the country, and the season of the year, have effectually prevented my examining the interior beyond a very few miles from the coast. When we have once rounded the Bight (and I confidently hope to accomplish this), the country may perhaps alter its character so far as to enable me to prosecute the main object of the expedition, that of examining the Northern Interior. Should such unfortunately not be the case, I shall endeavour to examine the line of coast as far as practicable towards King George’s Sound, occasionally radiating inland whenever circumstances may admit of it.

“The very severe loss the expedition has sustained in the death of four of its best horses since leaving Adelaide in June last, added to the unfavourable season of the year, and the embarrassing nature of the country, have rendered it impossible for me to carry provisions for the whole party for a length of time sufficient to enable me to prosecute the undertaking I am engaged in with any prospect of success; whilst the wild and fearful nature of this breaker-beaten coast wholly precludes me from making use of the assistance and co-operation of the *Waterwitch*. I have consequently been under the necessity of reducing the strength of my already small party, and have sent two men back in the cutter; retaining only my overseer and one man, exclusive of Mr. Scott and two native boys. Upon leaving the depot at Fowler’s Bay, it is my intention to proceed with only a single dray to carry our provisions, instead of (as formerly) with two drays and a cart.



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"From the reduced state of our horses, it will be absolutely necessary for us to remain in depot five or six weeks to rest them. Such, however, is the dry and withered state of the little grass we have, and so destitute is it of all nutritive qualities, that I much fear that even at the expiration of this long respite from their labours, our horses will not have improved much in strength or condition. I have therefore unhesitatingly taken advantage of the very kind permission of his Excellency the Governor, to request that a supply of oats and bran may be sent to us, should his Excellency not require the services of the *Waterwitch* for more important employment. For ourselves we require no additional provisions, the most liberal and abundant supply we formerly received being fully sufficient to last us for six months longer.

"I have much pleasure in recording the continued steadiness and good conduct of my men, and I regret extremely the necessity which has compelled me to dispense with the services of two of them before the termination of the expedition, and after they have taken so considerable a share in its labours.

"I have the honor to be, Sir,  
"Your very obedient servant,  
"EDW. *John Eyre*.

*"To GEO. Hall, Esq., Private secretary, etc."*

After the departure of the cutter, our mode of life was for some time very monotonous, and our camp bore a gloomy and melancholy aspect; the loss of two men from our little band, made a sad alteration in its former cheerful character. Mr. Scott usually employed himself in shooting or fishing; one of the native boys was always out shepherding the sheep, and the only remaining man I had was occupied in attending to the horses, so that there were generally left only myself, the overseer, and one native boy at the camp, which was desolate and gloomy, as a deserted village. The overseer was pretty well employed, in making boots for the party, in shoeing the horses, repairing the harness, and in doing other little odd jobs of a similar kind; the black boys took their turns in shepherding the sheep; but I was without active employment, and felt more strongly than any of them that relaxation of body and depression of spirits, which inactivity ever produces.

For a time indeed, the writing up of my journals, the filling up my charts, and superintending the arranging, packing, and burying of our surplus stores, amused and occupied me, but as these were soon over, I began to repine and fret at the life of indolence and inactivity. I was doomed to suffer. Frequently required at the camp, to give directions about, or to assist in the daily routine of duty, I did not like to absent myself long away at once; there were no objects of interest near me, within the limits of a day's excursion on foot, and the weak state of the horses, prevented me from making any examinations of the country at a greater distance on horseback; I felt like a

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prisoner condemned to drag out a dull and useless existence through a given number of days or weeks, and like him too, I sighed for freedom, and looked forward with impatience, to the time when I might again enter upon more active and congenial pursuits. Fatigue, privation, disappointment, disasters, and all the various vicissitudes, incidental to a life of active exploration had occasionally, it is true, been the source of great anxiety or annoyance, but all were preferable to that oppressive feeling of listless apathy, of discontent and dissatisfaction, which resulted from the life I was now obliged to lead.

Christmas day came, and made a slight though temporary break in the daily monotony of our life. The kindness of our friends had supplied us with many luxuries; and we were enabled even in the wilds, to participate in the fare of the season: whilst the season itself, and the circumstances under which it was ushered in to us, called forth feelings and associations connected with other scenes and with friends, who were far away; awakening, for a time at least, a train of happier thoughts and kindlier feelings than we had for a long time experienced.

On the 26th, I found that our horses and sheep were falling off so much in condition, from the scarcity of grass, and its dry and sapless quality, that it became absolutely necessary for us to remove elsewhere; I had already had all our surplus stores and baggage headed up in casks, or packed in cases, and carefully buried (previously covered over with a tarpaulin and with bushes to keep them from damp), near the sand-hills, and to-day I moved on the party for five miles to the well in the plains; the grass here was very abundant, but still dry, and without much nourishment; the water was plentiful, but brackish and awkward to get at, being through a hole in a solid sheet of limestone, similar to that behind Point Brown. Upon cleaning it out and deepening it a little, it tasted even worse than before, but still we were thankful for it.

The geological character of the country was exactly similar to that we had been in so long, entirely of fossil formation, with a calcareous oolitic limestone forming the upper crusts, and though this was occasionally concealed by sand on the surface, we always were stopped by it in digging; it was seemingly a very recent deposit, full of marine shells, in every stage of petrification. Granite we had not seen for some time, though I have no doubt that it occasionally protrudes; a small piece, found near an encampment of the natives, and evidently brought there by them, clearly proved the existence of this rock at no very great distance, probably small elevations of granite may occasionally be found among the scrubs, similar to those we had so frequently met with in the same character of country. Another substance found at one of the native encampments, and more interesting to us, not having been before met with, was a piece of pure flint, of exactly the same character as the best gun flint. This probably had been brought from the neighbourhood of the Great Bight, in the cliffs of which Captain Flinders imagined he



saw chalk, and where I hoped that some change in the geological formation of the country would lead to an improvement in its general appearance and character.

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The weather had been (with the exception of one or two hot days) unusually cold and favourable for the time of year. Our horses had enjoyed a long rest, and though the dry state of the grass had prevented them from recovering their condition, I hoped they were stronger and in better spirits, and determined to make one more effort to get round the head of the Bight;—if unsuccessful this time, I knew it would be final, as I should no longer have the means of making any future trial, for I fully made up my mind to take all our best and strongest animals, and either succeed in the attempt or lose all.

On the 29th, I commenced making preparations, and on the following day left the camp, the sheep, and four horses in charge of Mr. Scott and the youngest of the native boys, whilst I proceeded myself, accompanied by the overseer and eldest native boy on horseback, and a man driving a dray with three horses, to cross once more through the scrub to the westward. We took with us three bags of flour, a number of empty casks and kegs, and two pack-saddles, besides spades and buckets, and such other minor articles as were likely to be required. It was late in the day when we arrived at the plains under the sand hills; and though we had brought our six best and strongest horses, they were greatly fagged with their day's work. We had still to take them some distance to the water, and back again to the grass. At the water we found traces of a great many natives who appeared to have left only in the morning, and who could not be very far away; none were however seen.

December 31.—We remained in camp to rest the horses, and took the opportunity of carrying up all the water we could, every time the animals went backwards and forwards, to a large cask which had been fixed on the dray. The taste of the water was much worse than when we had been here before, being both saltier and more bitter; this, probably, might arise from the well having been dug too deep, or from the tide having been higher than usual, though I did not notice that such had been the case. In the afternoon we buried the three bags of flour we had brought headed up in a cask.

January 1, 1841.—This morning I went down with the men to assist in watering the horses, and upon returning to the camp, found my black boy familiarly seated among a party of natives who had come up during our absence. Two of them were natives I had seen to the north-west, and had been among the party whose presence at the plains, on the 5th of December, when I was surrounded by so many difficulties, had proved so annoying to us at the time, and so fatal in its consequences to our horses. They recognised me at once, and apparently described to the other natives, the circumstances under which they had met me, lamenting most pathetically the death of the horses; the dead bodies of which they had probably seen in their route to the water. Upon examining their weapons they shewed us several that were headed with flint, telling

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us that they procured it to the north-west, thus confirming my previous conjectures as to the existence of flint in that direction. To our inquiries about water, they still persisted that there was none inland, and that it took them five days, from where we were, to travel to that at the head of the Bight. No other, they said, existed in any direction near us, except a small hole to the north-west, among some sand hills, about two miles off; these they pointed out, and offered to go with me and shew me the place where the water was. I accepted the offer, and proceeded to the sand-drifts, accompanied by one of them. On our arrival he shewed me the remains of a large deep hole that had been dug in one of the sandy flats; but in which the water was now inaccessible, from the great quantity of sand that had drifted in and choked it up. By forcing a spear down to a considerable depth, the native brought it out moist, and shewed it me to prove that he had not been deceiving me. I now returned to the camp, more than ever disposed to credit what I had been told relative to the interior. I had never found the natives attempt to hide from us any waters that they knew of, on the contrary, they had always been eager and ready to point them out, frequently accompanying us for miles, through the heat and amongst scrub, to shew us where they were. I had, therefore, no reason to doubt the accuracy of their statements when they informed me that there was none inland! Many different natives, and at considerable intervals of country apart, had all united in the same statement, and as far as I had yet been able to examine so arid a country personally, my own observations tended to confirm the truth of what they had told me.

In the evening several of the natives went down with the men to water the horses, and when there drank a quantity of water that was absolutely incredible, each man taking from three to four quarts, and this in addition to what they got at the camp during the earlier part of the day. Strange that a people who appear to do with so little water, when traversing the deserts, should use it in such excess when the opportunity of indulgence occurs to them, yet such have I frequently observed to be the case, and especially on those occasions where they have least food. It would seem that, accustomed generally to have the stomach distended after meals, they endeavour to produce this effect with water, when deprived of the opportunity of doing so with more solid substances. At night the natives all encamped with us in the plain.

January 2.—Having watered the horses early, we left the encampment, accompanied by some of the natives, to push once more to the north-west. On the dray we had eighty-five gallons of water; but as we had left all our flour, and some other articles, I hoped we should get on well. The heavy nature of the road, however, again told severely upon the horses: twice we had to unload the dray, and at last, after travelling only fourteen miles, the

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horses could go no further; I was obliged, therefore, to come to a halt, and decide what was best to be done. There appeared to be a disastrous fatality attending all our movements in this wretched region, which was quite inexplicable. Every time that we had attempted to force a passage through it, we had been baffled and driven back. Twice I had been obliged to abandon our horses before; and on the last of these occasions had incurred a loss of the three best of them; now, after giving them a long period of rest, and respite from labour, and after taking every precaution which prudence or experience could suggest, I had the mortification of finding that we were in the same predicament we had been in before, and with as little prospect of accomplishing our object. Having but little time for deliberation, I at once ordered the overseer and man to take the horses back to the water, and give them two days rest there, and then to rejoin us again on the third, whilst I and the native boy would remain with the dray, until their return. The natives also remained with us for the first night; but finding we still continued in camp, they left on the following morning, which I was sorry for, as I hoped one would have been induced to go with us to the Great Bight.

On the fifth of January, the overseer and man returned with the horses; but so little had they benefited by their two days rest, that upon being yoked up, and put to the dray, they would not move it. We were obliged, therefore, to unload once more, and lighten the load by burying a cask of water, and giving another to the horses. After this, we succeeded in getting them along, with the remainder, to the undulating plains; and here we halted for the night, after a stage of only seven miles, but one, which, short as it was, had nearly worn out the draught horses. Here we dug a large hole, and buried twenty-two gallons of water, for my own horse, and that of the black boy, on our return; and as I determined to take a man with me, with a pack-horse, nine gallons more were buried apart from the other, for them, so that when the man got his cask of water, he might not disturb ours, or leave traces by which the natives could discover it.

January 6.—Sending back the dray with the overseer, at the first dawn of day, I and the native boy proceeded to the north-west, accompanied by the man leading a pack-horse with twelve gallons of water. The day turned out hot, and the road was over a very heavy sandy country; but by eleven o'clock we had accomplished a distance of seventeen miles, and had reached the furthest point from which I turned back on the 1st December. I walked alternately with the boy, so as not to oppress the riding horses, but the man walked all the way.

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The weather was most intensely hot, a strong wind blowing from the north-east, throwing upon us an oppressive and scorching current of heated air, like the hot blast of a furnace. There was no misunderstanding the nature of the country from which such a wind came; often as I had been annoyed by the heat, I had never experienced any thing like it before. Had anything been wanting to confirm my previous opinion of the arid and desert character of the great mass of the interior of Australia, this wind would have been quite sufficient for that purpose. From those who differ from me in opinion (and some there are who do so whose intelligence and judgment entitle their opinion to great respect), I would ask, could such a wind be wafted over an inland sea? or could it have passed over the supposed high, and perhaps snowcapped mountains of the interior.

We were all now suffering greatly from the heat; the man who was with me was quite exhausted: under the annoyances of the moment, his spirits failed him, and giving way to his feelings of fatigue and thirst, he lay rolling on the ground, and groaning in despair; all my efforts to rouse him were for a long time in vain, and I could not even induce him to get up to boil a little tea for himself. We had halted about eleven in the midst of a low sandy flat, not far from the sea, thinking, that by a careful examination, we might find a place where water could be procured by digging. There were, however, no trees or bushes near us; and the heat of the sun, and the glare of the sand, were so intolerable, that I was obliged to get up the horses, and compel the man to go on a little further to seek for shelter.

Proceeding one mile towards the sea, we came to a projecting rock upon its shores; and as there was no hope of a better place being found, I tied up my horses near it; the rock was not large enough to protect them entirely from the sun, but by standing close under it, their heads and necks were tolerably shaded. For ourselves, a recess of the rock afforded a delightful retreat, whilst the immediate vicinity of the sea enabled us every now and then to take a run, and plunge amidst its breakers, and again return to the shelter of the cavern. For two or three hours we remained in, under the protection of the rock, without clothes, and occasionally bathing to cool ourselves. The native boy and I derived great advantage from thus dipping in the sea, but it was a long time before I could induce the man to follow our example, either by persuasion or threats; his courage had failed him, and he lay moaning like a child. At last I succeeded in getting him to strip and bathe, and he at once found the benefit of it, becoming in a short time comparatively cool and comfortable. We then each had a little more tea, and afterwards attempted to dig for water among the sand-hills. The sand, however, was so loose, that it ran in faster than we could throw it out, and we were obliged to give up the attempt.

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As the afternoon was far advanced, we saddled the horses, and pushed on again for five miles, hoping, but in vain, to find a little grass. At night we halted among the sandy ridges behind the seashore, and after giving the horses four quarts of oats and a bucket of water a-piece, we were obliged to tie them up, there not being a blade of grass anywhere about. The wind at night changed to the south-west, and was very cold, chilling us almost as much as the previous heat had oppressed us. These sudden and excessive changes in temperature induce great susceptibility in the system, and expose the traveller to frequent heats and chills that cannot be otherwise than injurious to the constitution.

January 7.—Having concealed some water, provisions, and the pack-saddle at the camp, I sent the man back with the pack-horse to encamp at the undulating plains, where nine gallons of water had been left for him and his horse, and the following day he was to rejoin the overseer at the sand hills.

To the latter I sent a note, requesting him to send two fresh horses to meet me at the plains on the 15th of January, for, from the weak condition of the animals we had with us, and from the almost total absence of grass for them, I could not but dread lest we might be obliged to abandon them too, and in this case, if we did not succeed in finding water, we should perhaps have great difficulty in returning ourselves.

As soon as the man was gone, we once more moved on to the north-west, through the same barren region of heavy sandy ridges, entirely destitute of grass or timber. After travelling through this for ten miles, we came upon a native pathway, and following it under the hummocks of the coast for eight miles, lost it at some bare sand-drifts, close to the head of the Great Bight, where we had at last arrived, after our many former ineffectual attempts.

Following the general direction the native pathway had taken, we ascended the sand-drifts, and finding the recent tracks of natives, we followed them from one sand-hill to another, until we suddenly came upon four persons encamped by a hole dug for water in the sand. We had so completely taken them by surprise, that they were a good deal alarmed, and seizing their spears, assumed an offensive attitude. Finding that we did not wish to injure them, they became friendly in their manner, and offered us some fruit, of which they had a few quarts on a piece of bark. This fruit grows upon a low brambly-looking bush, upon the sand-hills or in the flats, where the soil is of a saline nature. It is found also in the plains bordering upon the lower parts of the Murrumbidgee, but in much greater abundance along the whole line of coast to the westward. The berry is oblong, about the shape and size of an English sloe, is very pulpy and juicy, and has a small pyramidal stone in the centre, which is very hard and somewhat indented. When ripe it is a dark purple, a clear red, or a bright

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yellow, for there are varieties. The purple is the best flavoured, but all are somewhat saline in taste. To the natives these berries are an important article of food at this season of the year, and to obtain them and the fruit of the mesembryanthemum, they go to a great distance, and far away from water. In eating the berries, the natives make use of them whole, never taking the trouble to get rid of the stones, nor do they seem to experience any ill results from so doing.

Having unsaddled the horses, we set to work to dig holes to water them; the sand, however, was very loose, and hindered us greatly. The natives, who were sitting at no great distance, observed the difficulty under which we were labouring, and one of them who appeared the most influential among them, said something to two of the others, upon which they got up and came towards us, making signs to us to get out of the hole, and let them in; having done so, one of them jumped in, and dug, in an incredibly short time, a deep narrow hole with his hands; then sitting so as to prevent the sand running in, he ladled out the water with a pint pot, emptying it into our bucket, which was held by the other native. As our horses drank a great deal, and the position of the man in the hole was a very cramped one, the two natives kept changing places with each other, until we had got all the water we required.

In this instance we were indebted solely to the good nature and kindness of these children of the wilds for the means of watering our horses: unsolicited they had offered us their aid, without which we never could have accomplished our purpose. Having given the principal native a knife as a reward for the assistance afforded us, we offered the others a portion of our food, being the only way in which we could shew our gratitude to them; they seemed pleased with this attention, and though they could not value the gift, they appeared to appreciate the motives which induced it.

Having rested for a time, and enjoyed a little tea, we inquired of the natives for grass for our horses, as there was none to be seen anywhere. They told us that there was none at all where we were, but they would take us to some further along the coast, where we could also procure water, without difficulty, as the sand was firm and hard, and the water at no great depth. Guided by our new friends, we crossed the sand-hills to the beach, and following round the head of the Great Bight for five miles, we arrived at some more high drifts of white sand; turning in among these, they took us to a flat where some small holes were dug in the sand, which was hard and firm; none of them were two feet deep, and the water was excellent and abundant: the name of the place was Yeer-kumban-kauwe.



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Whilst I was employed in digging a large square hole, to enable us to dip the bucket when watering the horses, the native boy went, accompanied by one of the natives as a guide, to look for grass. Upon his return, he said he had been taken to a small plain about a mile away, behind the sand hills, where there was plenty of grass, though of a dry character; to this we sent the horses for the night. In returning, a few sea fowl were shot as a present for our friends, with whom we encamped, gratified that we had at last surmounted the difficulty of rounding the Great Bight, and that once more we had a point where grass and water could be procured, and from which we might again make another push still further to the westward.

In the evening, we made many inquiries of the natives, as to the nature of the country inland, the existence of timber, rocks, water, *etc.* and though we were far from being able to understand all that they said, or to acquire half the information that they wished to convey to us, we still comprehended them sufficiently to gather many useful and important particulars. In the interior, they assured us, most positively, there was no water, either fresh or salt, nor anything like a sea or lake of any description.

They did not misunderstand us, nor did we misapprehend them upon this point, for to our repeated inquiries for salt water, they invariably pointed to a salt lake, some distance behind the sand-hills, as the only one they knew of, and which at this time we had not seen.

With respect to hills or timber, they said, that neither existed inland, but that further along the coast to the westward, we should find trees of a larger growth, and among the branches of which lived a large animal, which by their description, I readily recognized as being the Sloth of New South Wales; an animal whose habits exactly agreed with their description, and which I knew to be an inhabitant of a barren country, where the scrub was of a larger growth than ordinary. One of the natives had a belt round his waist, made of the fur of the animal they described, and on inspecting it, the colour and length of the hair bore out my previous impression.

The next water along the coast we were informed, was ten days journey from Yeerkumban kauwe, and was situated among sand-drifts, similar to those we were at, but beyond the termination of the line of cliffs, extending westward from the head of the Bight, and which were distinctly visible from the shore near our camp. These cliffs they called, "Bundah," and at two days' journey from their commencement, they told us were procured the specimens of flints (Jula) we had seen upon their weapons, and of which one or two small pieces had been picked up by us among the sand-drifts, having probably been dropped there by the natives.



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January 8.—To-day we remained in camp to recruit the horses, and the natives remained with us; soon after breakfast one of them lit a signal fire upon a sand-hill, and not long afterwards we were joined by three more of the tribe, but the women kept out of sight. I now sent the native boy out with one to shoot birds for them, but he came back with only a single crow, and I was obliged to go myself, to try whether I could not succeed better. Being lucky enough to procure four, I gave them to the natives, and returning to the camp we all dined, and afterwards lay down to rest for an hour.

Upon getting up, I missed a knife I had been using, and which had been lying beside me. One of the strange natives who had come to the camp this morning, had been sitting near me, and I at once suspected him to be the thief, but he was now gone, and I had no prospect of recovering the lost article. In the afternoon, the stranger came up to the camp again, and I at once taxed him with the theft; this he vehemently denied, telling me it was lost in the sand, and pretending to look anxiously for it; he appeared, however, restless and uneasy, and soon after taking up his spears went away with two others. My own native boy happened to be coming over the sand-hills at the time, but unobserved by them, and as they crossed the ridge he saw the man I had accused stop to pick something up, and immediately called out to me; upon this I took my gun, and ascending the hill, saw the native throw down the knife, which my own boy then picked up; the other natives had now come up, and seemed very anxious to prevent any hostilities, and to the chief of those who had been so friendly with us, I explained as well as I could the nature of the misunderstanding, and requested him to order the dishonest native away, upon which he spoke to them in his own language, and all took up their spears and went away, except himself and one other. These two men remained with us until dark, but as the evening appeared likely to be wet, they left us also, when we lay down for the night.

January 9.—The morning set in cold, dark and rainy, and as much wet had fallen during the night, we had been thoroughly drenched through, our fire had been extinguished, and it was long before we could get it lit again, and even then we could hardly keep it in; the few bushes among the sand hills were generally small, and being for the most part green as well as wet, it required our utmost efforts to prevent the fire from going out; so far indeed were we from being either cheered or warmed by the few sparks we were able to keep together, that the chill and comfortless aspect of its feeble rays, made us only shiver the more, as the rain fell coldly and heavily upon our already saturated garments. About noon the weather cleared up a little, and after getting up and watering the horses, we collected a large quantity of firewood and made waterproof huts for ourselves. The rain, however, was over, and we no longer required them.



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### Chapter XIV.

*Proceed to the westward—cliffs of the great bight—level nature of the interior—flints abound—return to Yeer-kumban-kauwe—natives come to the camp—their generous conduct—meet the overseer—return to depot—bad water—move back to Fowler's bay—arrival of the Gutter Hero—joined by the king George's sound native—instructions relative to the Hero—difficulty of fixing upon any future plan—break up the expedition and divide the party—Mr. Scott embarks—final report—the Hero sails—overseer and natives remain—excursion to the north—A native joins us—sudden illness in the party—final preparations for leaving the depot.*

January 10.—We left Yeer-kumban-kauwe early, and proceeding to the westward, passed through an open level tract of country, of from three to four hundred feet in elevation, and terminating seawards abruptly, in bold and overhanging cliffs, which had been remarked by Captain Flinders, but which upon our nearer approach, presented nothing very remarkable in appearance, being only the sudden termination of a perfectly level country, with its outer face washed, steep and precipitous, by the unceasing lash of the southern ocean. The upper surface of this country, like that of all we had passed through lately, consisted of a calcareous oolitic limestone, below which was a hard concrete substance of sand or of reddish soil, mixed with shells and pebbles; below this again, the principal portion of the cliff consisted of a very hard and coarse grey limestone, and under this a narrow belt of a whitish or cream-coloured substance, lying in horizontal strata; but what this was we could not yet determine, being unable to get down to it any where. The cliffs were frightfully undermined in many places, enormous masses lay dissevered from the main land by deep fissures, and appearing to require but a touch to plunge them headlong into the abyss below. Back from the sea, the country was level, tolerably open, and covered with salsolae, or low, prickly shrubs, with here and there belts of the eucalyptus dumosa. In places two or three miles back from the coast there was a great deal of grass, that at a better season of the year would have been valuable; now it was dry and sapless. No timber was visible any where, nor the slightest rise of any kind. The whole of this level region, elevated as it was above the sea, was completely coated over with small fresh water spiral shells, of two different kinds.

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After travelling about twenty-five miles along the cliffs, we came all at once to innumerable pieces of beautiful flint, lying on the surface, about two hundred yards inland. This was the place at which the natives had told us they procured the flint; but how it attained so elevated a position, or by what means it became scattered over the surface in such great quantities in that particular place, could only be a matter of conjecture. There was no change whatever in the character or appearance of the country, or of the cliffs, and the latter were as steep and impracticable as ever.

Five miles beyond the flint district we turned a little inland and halted for the night upon a patch of withered grass. During the day we had been fortunate enough to find a puddle of water in a hollow of the rock left by yesterday's rain, at which we watered the horses, and then lading out the remainder into our bucket carefully covered it up with a stone slab until our return, as I well knew, if exposed to the sun and wind, there would not be a drop left in a very few hours. Kangaroos had been seen in great numbers during the day, but we had not been able to get a shot at one. Our provisions were now nearly exhausted, and for some days we had been upon very reduced allowances, so that it was not without some degree of chagrin that we saw so many fine animals bounding unscathed around us.

January 11.—Having travelled fifteen miles further along the cliffs, I found them still continue unchanged, with the same level uninteresting country behind. I had now accomplished all that I expected to do on this excursion, by ascertaining the character of the country around the Great Bight; and as our horses were too weak to attempt to push beyond the cliffs to the next water, and as we ourselves were without provisions, I turned homewards, and by making a late and forced march, arrived at the place where we had left the bucket of water, after a day's ride of forty-five miles. Our precaution as we had gone out proved of inestimable value to us now. The bucket of water was full and uninjured, and we were enabled thus to give our horses a gallon and a half each, and allow them to feed upon the withered grass instead of tying them up to bushes, which we must have done if we had had no water.

January 12.—In our route back to "Yeer-kumban-kauwe" we were lucky enough to add to our fare a rat and a bandicoot, we might also have had a large brown snake, but neither the boy nor I felt inclined to experimentalise upon so uninviting an article of food; after all it was probably mere prejudice, and the animal might have been as good eating as an eel. We arrived at the water about noon, and the remainder of the day afforded a grateful rest both to ourselves and to the horses.

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January 13.—Our fire had gone out during the night, and all our matches being wet, we could not relight it until noon, when the rays of a hot sun had dried them again. Having eaten our slender dinner, I walked out to water the horses, leaving the boy in charge of the camp. Upon my return I found him comfortably seated between two of our friends the natives, who had just returned from a hunting excursion, bringing with them the half roasted carcass of a very fine kangaroo. They had already bestowed upon the boy two very large pieces, and as soon as I made my appearance they were equally liberal to me, getting up the moment I arrived at the camp, and bringing it over to me of their own accord. The supply was a most acceptable one, and we felt very grateful for it. Having received as much of the kangaroo as would fully last for two days, I gave a knife in return to the eldest of the men, with which he seemed highly delighted. I would gladly have given one to the other also, but I had only one left, and could not spare it. The natives remained in camp with us for the night, and seemed a good deal surprised when they saw us re-roasting the kangaroo; frequently intimating to us that it had already been cooked, and evidently pitying the want of taste which prevented us from appreciating their skill in the culinary art.

January 14.—Upon our leaving this morning the natives buried in the sand the remains of their kangaroo, and accompanied us a mile or two on our road, then turning in among the sand-hills they returned to renew their feast. They had been eating almost incessantly ever since they arrived at the water yesterday, and during the night they had repeatedly got up for the same purpose. The appetites of these people know no restraint when they have the means of gratifying them; they have no idea of temperance or prudence, and are equally regardless of the evil resulting from excess as they are improvident in preparing for the necessities of the morrow—"sufficient (literally so to them) for the day is the evil thereof."

In our route to-day instead of following round the sea-shore, we struck across behind the sand-hills, from "Yeerkumban-kauwe" to the water we had first found on the 7th of January, and in doing so we passed along a large but shallow salt-water lake, which the natives had pointed to on the evening of the 7th, when I made inquiries relative to the existence of salt water inland. The margin of this lake was soft and boggy, and we were nearly losing one of our horses which sank unexpectedly in the mud. About noon we arrived at the camp, from which I had sent the man back on the 6th, and having picked up the water and other things left there, proceeded to the sand-hills near which we had halted during the intense heat of that day. We now rested for several hours, and again moved onwards about eleven at night to avoid the great heat of the day whilst crossing the sandy country before us.

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January 15.—At sunrise we arrived at the undulating plains, where twenty gallons of water had been left buried for us. Here I found the overseer with two fresh horses, according to the instructions I had sent him on the 6th, by the man who returned. After resting for an hour or two, I set off with the native boy upon the fresh horses, and rode to the water at the sand-drifts, leaving the overseer to bring on the tired animals the next day. It was nearly dark when we arrived at the plain under the sand-hills, and very late before we had watered the horses and brought them back to the grass.

January 16.—After breakfast, in returning from the water, we had a feast upon some berries, growing on the briary bushes behind the sand-hills; they were similar to those the natives had offered to us, at the head of the Bight, on the 7th, were very abundant, and just becoming ripe. About eight o'clock we set off for the depot, and arrived there at two, glad to reach our temporary home once more, after eighteen days absence, and heartily welcomed by Mr. Scott, who complained bitterly of having been left alone so long. Under the circumstances of the case, however, it had been quite unavoidable. Upon tasting the water at the well, I found, that from so much having been taken out, it had now become so very brackish, that it was scarcely usable, and I decided upon returning again to Fowler's Bay, where the water was good, as soon as the overseer came back.

January 17.—Spent the day in writing, and in meditating upon my future plans and prospects. I had now been forty-five miles beyond the head of the Great Bight, that point to which I had looked with interest and hope; now, I had ascertained that no improvement took place there, in the appearance or character of the country, but, if any thing, that it became less inviting, and more arid. The account of the natives fully satisfied me that there was no possibility of getting inland, and my own experience told me that I could never hope to take a loaded dray through the dreadful country I had already traversed on horseback. What then was I to do? or how proceed for the future? The following brief abstract of the labours of the party, and the work performed by the horses in the three attempts made to get round the head of the Great Bight, may perhaps seem incredible to those who know nothing of the difficulty of forcing a passage through such a country as we were in, and amidst all the disadvantages we were under, from the season of the year and other causes.

### **ABSTRACT OF LABOURS OF THE PARTY IN ROUNDING THE GREAT BIGHT.**

Names. Distances ridden. No. of days employed.  
Mr Eyre 643 miles 40  
Mr. Scott 50 miles 4  
The Overseer 230 miles 22  
Costelow 22

Houston 12  
Corporal Coles 8  
Eldest native boy 270 miles 19  
Youngest native boy 395 miles 23

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A dray loaded with water was drawn backwards and forwards 238 miles; many of the horses, in addition to the distances they were ridden, or worked in the dray, were driven loose, in going or returning, for about eighty miles. Most of the party walked considerable distances in addition to those ridden. All the party were engaged, more or less, in connection with the three attempts to round the Bight, as were also all the horses, and of the latter, three perished from over fatigue and want of water. Yet, after all, the distance examined did not exceed 135 miles, and might have been done easily in ten days, and without any loss, had the situation of the watering places, or the nature of the country, been previously known.

None but a person who has been similarly circumstanced, can at all conceive the incessant toil and harassing anxiety of the explorer; when baffled and defeated, he has to traverse over and over again the same dreary wastes, gaining but a few miles of ground at each fresh attempt, whilst each renewal of the effort but exhausts still more the strength and condition of his animals, or the energy and spirits of his men.

Upon maturely considering our circumstances and position, I decided to attempt to force a passage round the Great Bight, with pack-horses only, sending, upon the return of the cutter, all our heavy stores and drays in her to Cape Arid, if I found, upon her arrival, the instructions I might receive, would justify me in taking her so far beyond the boundaries of South Australia. This was the only plan that appeared to me at all feasible, and I determined to adopt it as soon as our horses were sufficiently recruited to commence their labours again.

On the 18th, the overseer returned with the two jaded horses we had used on our last excursion, looking very wretched and weak. The day was intensely hot, with the wind due north: the thermometer in the shade, in a well lined tent, being 105 degrees at 11 A.M.—a strong corroboration, if such were required, of the statement of the natives, that there was no large body of inland water. At 2, P.M. the wind changed to west, and the thermometer suddenly fell to 95 degrees; a little afterwards, it veered to south-west, and again fell to 80 degrees; the afternoon then became comparatively cool and pleasant.

The quality of the water at the well, was now beginning to affect the health of the whole party; and on the 19th and 20th I put into execution my resolution of removing to Fowler's Bay, where we again enjoyed the luxury of good water. Upon digging up the things we had left buried, we found them perfectly dry. On the 21st, I sent Mr. Scott down to the bay, to see if the cutter had come back, but she had not. On his return, he brought up a few fish he had caught, which, added to ten pigeons, shot by himself and the native boys, at the sand-hills, gave a little variety to our fare; indeed, for several days, after taking up our old position at Point Fowler, we were well supplied both with fish and pigeons.



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Time passed gradually away until the evening of the 25th, when a party of natives once more came up, and took up their abode near us—three were of those who had accompanied us all the way from Denial Bay, and some others had also been with us before. On the 26th, I went down myself to Fowler's Bay to look out for the cutter, which we now daily expected. Just as I arrived at the beach she came rounding into the bay, and Mr. Scott and myself got into our little boat, and pulled off to her, though with great difficulty, the wind blowing very fresh and dead against us, with the sea running high. We had three miles to go, and for a long time it was very doubtful whether we should succeed in reaching the vessel; our utmost efforts appearing barely to enable us to keep our ground. I was myself, at the best, not very skilful in using an oar, and neither of us had had much practice in pulling in a heavy sea. However, we got on board after a good deal of fatigue, and were rewarded by receiving many letters, both English and Colonial. I found that in returning to Adelaide the *Water-witch* had proved so leaky as to be deemed unsafe for further service on so wild a coast, and that the Governor had, in consequence, with the promptness and consideration which so eminently distinguished him, chartered the "*Hero*," a fine cutter, a little larger than the *Waterwitch*, and placing her under the command of Mr. Germain, had sent him to our assistance. On board the *Hero* I was pleased to find the native from King George's Sound, named Wylie, whom I had sent for, and who was almost wild with delight at meeting us, having been much disappointed at being out of the way when I sent for him from Port Lincoln.

After receiving our despatches, and taking Wylie with us, we set sail for the shore, and then walked up in the evening to our depot; my other two native boys were greatly rejoiced to find their old friend once more with them; they had much to tell to, and much to hear from each other, and all sat up to a late hour. For myself, the many letters I had received, gave me ample enjoyment and occupation for the night, whilst the large pile of newspapers from Adelaide, Swan River, and Sydney, promised a fund of interest for some time to come. Nothing could exceed the kindness and attention of our friends in Adelaide, who had literally inundated us with presents of every kind, each appearing to vie with the other in their endeavours to console us under our disappointments, to cheer us in our future efforts, and if possible, to make us almost forget that we were in the wilds. Among other presents I received a fine and valuable kangaroo-dog from my friend, Captain Sturt, and which had fortunately arrived safely, and in excellent condition.



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The bran and oats which I had applied for had been most liberally provided, so that by remaining in depot for a few weeks longer, we might again hope to get our horses into good condition. From his Excellency the Governor I received a kind and friendly letter, acquainting me that the *Hero* was entirely at my disposal within the limits of South Australia, but that being under charter I could not take her to Cape Arid, or beyond the boundaries of the province, and requesting, that if I desired further aid, or to be met any where, at a future time, that I would communicate with the Government to that effect by the *hero's* return. The whole tenor of his Excellency's letter evinced a degree of consideration and kindness that I could hardly have expected amidst the many anxious duties and onerous responsibilities devolving upon him at this time; and if any thing could have added to the feelings of gratitude and respect I entertained towards him, it would be the knowledge, that with the disinterested generosity of a noble mind, he was giving up a portion of his valuable time and attention to our plans, our wants, and our safety, at a time when the circumstances of the colony over which he presided had beset his own path with many difficulties, and when every day but added to the annoyances and embarrassments which a sudden reaction in the progress and prospects of the province necessarily produced.

In the instructions I received relative to the cutter, I have mentioned that I was restricted to employing her within the limits of the colony of South Australia, and thus, the plan I had formed of sending our drays and heavy stores in her to Cape Arid, whilst we proceeded overland ourselves with pack-horses, was completely overturned, and it became now a matter of very serious consideration to decide what I should do under the circumstances. It was impossible for me to take my whole party and the drays overland through the dreadful country verging upon the Great Bight; whilst if I took the party, and left the drays, it was equally hopeless that I could carry upon pack-horses a sufficiency of provisions to last us to King George's Sound. There remained, then, but two alternatives, either to break through the instructions I had received with regard to the *Hero*, or to reduce my party still further, and attempt to force a passage almost alone. The first I did not, for many reasons, think myself justified in doing—the second, therefore, became my *Dernier resort*, and I reluctantly decided upon adopting it.

It now became my duty to determine without delay who were to be my companions in the perilous attempt before me. The first and most painful necessity impressed upon me by the step I contemplated, was that of parting with my young friend, Mr. Scott, who had been with me from the commencement of the undertaking, and who had always been zealous and active in promoting its interests as far as lay in his power. I knew

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that, on an occasion like this, the spirit and enterprise of his character would prompt in him a wish to remain and share the difficulties and dangers to which I might be exposed: but I felt that I ought not to allow him to do so; I had no right to lead a young enthusiastic friend into a peril from which escape seemed to be all but hopeless; and painful as it would be to us both to separate under such circumstances, there was now no other alternative; the path of duty was plain and imperative, and I was bound to follow it.

On the 28th, I took the opportunity, whilst walking down to the beach with Mr. Scott, of explaining the circumstances in which I was placed, and the decision to which I had been forced. He was much affected at the intelligence, and would fain have remained to share with me the result of the expedition, whatever that might be; but I dared not consent to it.

The only man left, belonging to the party, was the one who had accompanied me towards the head of the Great Bight, and suffered so much from the heat on the 6th January. His experience on that occasion of the nature of the country, and the climate we were advancing into, had, in a great measure, damped his ardour for exploring; so that when told that the expedition, as far as he was concerned, had terminated, and that he would have to go back to Adelaide with Mr. Scott, he did not express any regret. I had ever found him a useful and obedient man, and with the exception of his losing courage under the heat, upon the occasion alluded to, he had been a hardy and industrious man, and capable of enduring much fatigue.

The native boys I intended to accompany me in my journey, as they would be better able to put up with the fatigues and privations we should have to go through, than Europeans; whilst their quickness of sight, habit of observation, and skill in tracking, might occasionally be of essential service to me. The native who had lately joined me from Adelaide, and whose country was around King George's Sound, would, I hoped, be able to interpret to any tribes we might meet with, as it appeared to me that some of the words we had heard in use among the natives of this part of the coast were very similar to some I had heard among the natives of King George's Sound. Three natives, however, were more than I required, and I would gladly have sent the youngest of them back to Adelaide, but he had been with me several years, and I did not like to send him away whilst he was willing to remain; besides, he was so young and so light in weight, that if we were able to get on at all, his presence could cause but little extra difficulty. I therefore decided upon taking him also.

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There remained now only the overseer; a man who had been in my service for many years, and whose energy, activity, and many useful qualities, had made him an invaluable servant to me at all times; whilst his courage, prudence, good conduct, and fidelity, made me very desirous to have him with me in this last effort to cross to the westward. Having sent for him, I explained to him most fully the circumstances in which I was placed, the utter impossibility of taking on the whole party through so inhospitable a region as that before us, my own firm determination never to return unsuccessful, but either to accomplish the object I had in view, or perish in the attempt. I pointed out to him that there were still eight hundred and fifty miles of an unknown country yet to be traversed and explored; that, in all probability, this would consist principally, if not wholly, of an all but impracticable desert. I reminded him of the fatigues, difficulties, and losses we had already experienced in attempting to reconnoitre the country only as far as the head of the Great Bight; and stated to him my own conviction, that from the knowledge and experience we had already acquired of the nature of the country; the journey before us must of necessity be a long and harassing one—one of unceasing toil, privation, and anxiety, whilst, from the smallness of our party, the probable want of water, and other causes, it would be one, also, of more than ordinary risk and danger. I then left him to determine whether he would return to Adelaide, in the cutter, or remain and accompany me. His reply was, that although he had become tired of remaining so long away in the wilds, and should be glad when the expedition had terminated, yet he would willingly remain with me to the last; and would accompany me to the westward at every hazard.

Our future movements being now arranged, and the division of the party decided upon, it remained only for me to put my plans into execution. The prospect of the approaching separation, had cast a gloom over the whole party, and now that all was finally determined, I felt that the sooner it was over the better. I lost no time, therefore, in getting up all the bran and oats from the cutter, and in putting on board of her our drays, and such stores as we did not require, directing the master to hold himself in readiness to return to Adelaide immediately.

By the 31st January, every thing was ready; my farewell letters were written to the kind friends in Adelaide, to whom I owed so much; and my final report to the Chairman of the Committee, for promoting the expedition—that expedition being now brought to a close, and its members disbanded.

In the evening the man and Mr. Scott went on board the cutter, taking with them our three kangaroo dogs, which the arid nature of the country rendered it impossible for me to keep. I regretted exceedingly being compelled to part with the dogs, but it would have been certain destruction to them to have attempted to take them with me.

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The following is a copy of my final report to the Chairman of the Northern Expedition Committee:—

“Fowler’s Bay, 30th Jan., 1841.

“Sir,—By the return of the *Hero* from Fowler’s Bay, I have the honour to acquaint you, for the information of his Excellency the Governor, and the colonists interested, with the unsuccessful termination of the expedition placed under my command, for the purpose of exploring the northern interior. Since my last report to his Excellency the Governor, containing an account of two most disastrous attempts to head the Great Australian Bight, I have, accompanied by one of my native boys, made a third and more successful one. On this occasion, I with some difficulty advanced about fifty miles beyond the head of the Great Bight, along the line of high cliffs described by Flinders, and which have hitherto been supposed to be composed principally of chalk. I found the country between the head of Fowler’s Bay and the head of the Great Bight to consist of a succession of sandy ridges, all of which were more or less covered by a low scrub, and without either grass or water for the last sixty miles. This tract is of so uneven and heavy a nature that it would be quite impossible for me to take a loaded dray across it at this very unfavourable season of the year, and with horses so spiritless and jaded as ours have become, from the incessant and laborious work they have gone through during the last seven months. Upon rounding the head of the Bight, I met with a few friendly natives, who shewed me where both grass and water was to be procured, at the same time assuring me that there was no more along the coast for ten of their days’ journeys, (probably 100 miles) or where the first break takes place in the long and continuous line of cliffs which extend so far to the westward of the head of the Great Bight. Upon reaching these cliffs I felt much disappointed, as I had long looked forward to some considerable and important change in the character of the country. There was, however, nothing very remarkable in their appearance, nor did the features of the country around undergo any material change. The cliffs themselves struck me as merely exhibiting the precipitous banks of an almost level country of moderate elevation (three or four hundred feet) which the violent lash of the whole of the Southern Ocean was always acting upon and undermining. Their rock formation consisted of various strata, the upper crust or surface being an oolitic limestone; below this is an indented concrete mixture of sand, soil, small pebbles, and shells; beneath this appear immense masses of a coarse greyish limestone, of which by far the greater portion of the cliffs are composed; and immediately below these again is a narrow stripe of a whitish, or rather a cream-coloured substance, lying in horizontal strata, but which the impracticable nature of the cliffs did not permit me to examine. After riding for forty-five miles along their summits,

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I was in no instance able to descend; their brinks were perfectly steep and overhanging, and in many places enormous masses appeared severed by deep cracks from the main land, and requiring but a slight touch to plunge them into the abyss below. As far as I have yet been along these cliffs, I have seen nothing in their appearance to lead me to suppose that any portion of them is composed of chalk. Immediately along their summits, and for a few hundred yards back, very numerous pieces of pure flint are lying loosely scattered upon the surface of the limestone. How they obtained so elevated a position, or whence they are from, may admit, perhaps, of some speculation. Back from the sea, and as far as the eye could reach, the country was level and generally open, with some low prickly bushes and salsolaceous plants growing upon it; here and there patches of the gum scrub shewed themselves, and among which a few small grassy openings were interspersed. The whole of this tract was thickly covered by small land shells, about the size of snail shells—and some of them somewhat resembling those in shape. There were no sudden depressions or abrupt elevations anywhere; neither hills, trees, or water were to be observed; nor was there the least indication of improvement or change in the general character of this desolate and forbidding region. The natives we met with at the head of the Bight were very friendly, and readily afforded us every information we required—as far as we could make them comprehend our wishes.

“We most distinctly understood from them, that there was no water along the coast, westerly, for ten of their days’ journeys; and that inland, there was neither fresh nor salt water, hills or timber, as far as they had ever been; an account which but too well agreed with the opinion I had myself formed, upon ascertaining that the same dreary, barren region I had been traversing so long, still continued at a point where I had ever looked forward to some great and important change taking place in the features of the country, and from which I had hoped I might eventually have accomplished the object for which the expedition was fitted out. Such, however, was not the case; there was not any improvement in the appearance of the country, or the least indication that there might be a change for the better, within any practicable distance. I had already examined the tract of country from the longitude of Adelaide, to the parallel of almost 130 degrees E. longitude; an extent comprising nearly 8 1/2 degrees of longitude; without my having found a single point from which it was possible to penetrate for into the interior; and I now find myself in circumstances of so embarrassing and hopeless a character, that I have most reluctantly been compelled to give up all further idea of contending with obstacles which there is no reasonable hope of ever overcoming. I have now, therefore, with much regret completely broken up my small but devoted party. Two of my men returned to Adelaide in the *Waterwitch*, five weeks ago.

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“Mr. Scott and another of my men proceed on Monday in the *Hero*; whilst myself, my native boys, and the overseer (who has chosen to accompany me) proceed hence overland to King George’s Sound, as soon as our horses are a little recruited by the abundant supply of forage we received by the *Hero*.

“In this undertaking, my young friend Mr. Scott—with his usual spirit and perseverance—was most anxious to have joined me; but painful as it has been to refuse, I have felt it my duty, from the nature of the service, not to comply with his request. It now only remains for me to return my most sincere thanks to the many friends to whose kindness I have been so much indebted during the continuance of this long and anxious undertaking. To his Excellency the Governor I feel that I can never be sufficiently grateful for the very kind, prompt, and liberal support and encouragement which I have invariably experienced, and to which I have been mainly indebted for the means of accomplishing even the little I have done. To yourself, as chairman, the committee, and the colonists, by whom the expedition was fitted out, I return my most sincere acknowledgments for the very great honour done me in appointing me to the command of an undertaking at once so interesting and important—for the liberal and kind way in which I have been supported, and my wishes complied with; and, above all, for the flattering and encouraging confidence expressed in my abilities and perseverance. To a conviction of the existence of this confidence in the minds of those by whom I was appointed, I feel that I owe much of the stimulus that has sustained and encouraged me under difficulties and disappointments of no ordinary kind. Deeply as I lament the unsuccessful and unsatisfactory result of an undertaking from which so much was expected, I have the cheering consciousness of having endeavoured faithfully to discharge the trust confided to me; and although from a concurrence of most unfortunate circumstances which no human prudence could foresee or guard against, and which the most untiring perseverance has been unable to surmount, I have not succeeded in effecting the great objects for which this expedition was fitted out, I would fain hope that our labours have not been altogether in vain, but that hereafter, some future and more fortunate traveller, judging from the considerable extent of country we have examined, and the features it has developed, may, by knowing where the interior is not practicable, be directed to where it is.

“In concluding my report of our endeavours to penetrate the northern interior, I beg to express to all who have been connected with the expedition, my sincere thanks for their zeal and good conduct. In my young friend, Mr. Scott, I have had a cheerful companion and useful assistant; whilst in my overseer and men, I have met with a most praiseworthy readiness and steadiness of conduct, under circumstances and disappointments that have at once been trying and disheartening.



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"I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

*"Edward John Eyre.*

"The Chairman of the Committee for promoting the Northern Expedition."

We were now alone, myself, my overseer, and three native boys, with a fearful task before us, the bridge was broken down behind us, and we must succeed in reaching King George's Sound, or perish; no middle course remained. It was impossible for us to be insensible to the isolated and hazardous position we were in; but this very feeling only nerved and stimulated us the more in our exertions, to accomplish the duty we had engaged in; the result we humbly left to that Almighty Being who had guided and guarded us hitherto, amidst all our difficulties, and in all our wanderings, and who, whatever he might ordain, would undoubtedly order every thing for the best.

Our time was now entirely taken up, in the daily routine of the camp, attending to the sheep and horses, and in making preparations for our journey. We had a large supply of corn and bran sent for our horses, and as long as any of this remained, I determined to continue in depot.

In the mean time, the overseer was thoroughly occupied in preparing pack-saddles, (all of which we had to make) extra bridles, new hobbles, and in shoeing all the horses. I undertook the duty of new stuffing and repairing the various saddles, making what extra clothes were required for myself and the native boys for our journey; weighing out and packing in small linen bags, all the rations of tea, sugar, *etc.* which would be required weekly, preparing strong canvas saddle-bags, making light oilskins to protect our things from the wet, *etc. etc.* These many necessary and important preparations kept us all very busy, and the time passed rapidly away. On one occasion, I attempted with one of my native boys, to explore the country due north of Fowler's Bay, but the weather turned out unfavourable, the wind being from the north-east, and scorchingly hot; I succeeded, however, in penetrating fully twenty miles in the direction I had taken, the first ten of which was through a dense heavy scrub, of the *Eucalyptus dumosa*, or the tea-tree. Emerging from this, we entered an open pretty looking country, consisting of grassy plains of great extent, divided by belts of shrubs and bush; as we advanced the shrubs became less numerous, the country more open, and salsolaceous plants began to occupy the place of the grass. Had we been able to continue our exploration for another day's journey, I have no doubt, from the change which appeared gradually to be taking place as we advanced north, that the whole country around would have been one vast level open waste, without bush or shrub of any kind, and covered by salsolae. I felt strongly convinced, we were gradually approaching a similar kind of country to that I had been in between Lake Torrens and Flinders range; the only difference was

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that as far as we had yet gone from Fowler's Bay, the elevation of the country did not appear to have been diminished; its average height above the level of the sea, I judged to be about 300 feet, and forming doubtless a continuation of the table land, I had found existing at the head of the Great Bight. The weather, however, was as unfavourable as the country, for such researches, at this season of the year, and the horses I had taken out with me suffered a good deal, even in the short space of two days, during which I was engaged in this attempt.

On some occasions the thermometer was 113 degrees in the shade, and whenever the wind was from the north-east, it was hot and oppressive beyond all conception. The natives, though occasionally seen, generally kept away from us during the time we were in depot. One old man alone (called Mumma) came up to our camp, and remained with us for several days; he was one of the few who had accompanied us so far from the neighbourhood of Denial Bay, and seemed to have taken a great fancy to us. We now endeavoured to reward him for his former services, by giving him a red shirt, a blanket, and a tomahawk, and whenever we got our meals he joined us, eating and drinking readily any thing we gave him—tea, broth, pease soup, mutton, salt pork, rice, damper, sugar, dried fruits, were all alike to him, nothing came amiss, and he appeared to grow better in condition every day.

At last he too got tired of remaining so long in one place; the novelty had worn away, and packing up his things he left us. During the time this man had been with us, I took the opportunity of ascertaining whether the King George's Sound native, Wylie, could understand him, but I found he could not. There were one or two words common to both, but the general character, meaning, and sound of the two languages were so very different upon comparison, that I could myself understand the old man much better than Wylie could.

Whilst remaining in depot, the whole party were one day suddenly seized with a severe attack of illness, accompanied with vomiting and violent pain in the stomach, and I began to fear that we had unknowingly taken some deleterious ingredient in our food, as all were seized in the same way; this attack continued for several days, without our being able to discover the cause of it, but at last by changing the sugar we were using, we again got well. It appeared that a new bag of sugar had been broached about the time we were first attacked, and upon inspecting it, we found the bag quite wet—something or other of a deleterious character having been spilled over it, and which had doubtless caused us the inconvenience we experienced. Fortunately we had other sugar that had not been so injured, and the loss of the damaged bag was not of great consequence to us.





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By the 23rd of February our preparations for entering upon our journey were nearly all completed, the horses had eaten up all their bran and corn, and were now in good condition; all our pack-saddles, saddles, and harness were ready, our provisions were all packed, and every thing in order for commencing the undertaking; there remained but to bury our surplus stores, and for this the hole was already dug. On the afternoon of the 24th I intended finally to evacuate the depot, and on the evening of the 23rd, to amuse my natives, I had all the rockets and blue-lights we had, fired off, since we could not take them with us, our pack-horses being barely able to carry for us the mere necessaries of life.

### Chapter XV.

Return of Mr. Scott in the *Hero*—Mr. Scott again sails for *Adelaide*—commence journey to the westward—opportune arrival at the sand-hills—large flies—take on the sheep—leave the overseer with the horses—reach *Yeerkumban kauwe*—joined by the overseer—tormenting flies again—move on with the sheep—leave overseer to follow with the horses—character of country along the bight—scenery of the cliffs—leave the sheep—anxiety about water—reach the termination of the cliffs—find water.

February 24.—*This* being the day I had appointed to enter upon the arduous task before me, I had the party up at a very early hour. Our loads were all arranged for each of the horses; our blankets and coats were all packed up, and we were in the act of burying in a hole under ground the few stores we could not take with us, when to our surprise a shot was heard in the direction of Fowler's Bay, and shortly after a second; we then observed two people in the distance following up the dray tracks leading to the depot. Imagining that some whaler had anchored in the bay, and being anxious to prevent our underground store from being noticed, we hastily spread the tarpaulins over the hole, so that what we were about could not be observed, and then fired shots in reply.

As the parties we had seen gradually approached nearer I recognised one of them with the telescope as being Mr. Germain, the master of the *Hero*; the other I could not make out at first from his being enveloped in heavy pilot clothes; a little time however enabled me to distinguish under this guise my young friend Mr. Scott, and I went anxiously to meet him, and learn what had brought him back. Our greeting over,

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he informed me that the Governor had sent him back with letters to me, and desired me to return in the *Hero* to Adelaide. As Mr. Scott had not brought the letters up, I walked down with him after luncheon, and went on board the cutter, where I received many friendly letters, all urging me to return and give up the attempt I meditated to the westward, and which every one appeared to consider as little less than madness. From the Governor I received a kind letter to the same effect, offering to assist me in any further attempts I might wish to make round Lake Torrens, or to explore the Northern Interior, and placing absolutely at my disposal, within the colony, the services of the *Hero*, to enable me either to take my party back overland, or to follow out any examinations I might wish to make from the coast northerly. As a further inducement, and with a view to lessen the feelings of disappointment I might experience at the unsuccessful termination of an expedition from which such great results had been expected, the assistant commissioner had been instructed to write to me officially, communicating the approbation of His Excellency and of the Colonists of the way in which I had discharged the trust confided to me, and directing me to relinquish all further attempts to the westward, and to return in the *Hero* to Adelaide.

Added to the numerous letters I received, were many friendly messages to the same effect, sent to me through Mr. Scott. I felt deeply sensible of the lively interest expressed in my welfare, and most grateful for the kind feeling manifested towards me on the part of the Governor and the Colonists; it was with much pain and regret, therefore, that I found myself unable to comply with their requests, and felt compelled by duty to adopt a course at variance with their wishes. When I first broke up my party and sent Mr. Scott back to Adelaide, on the 31st January, 1841, I had well and maturely considered the step I felt myself called upon to adopt; after giving my best and serious attention to the arguments of my friends, and carefully reconsidering the subject now, I saw nothing to induce me to change the opinion I had then arrived at.

It will be remembered, that in stating the origin and commencement of the Northern expedition, it was remarked, that a previously contemplated expedition to the Westward, was made to give way to it, and that I had myself been principally instrumental in changing the direction of public attention from the one to the other; it will be remembered also, what publicity had been given to our departure, how great was the interest felt in the progress of our labours, and how sanguine were the expectations formed as to the results; alas, how signally had these hopes been dashed to the ground, after the toils, anxieties, and privations of eight months, neither useful nor valuable discoveries had been made; hemmed in by an impracticable desert, or the bed of an impassable lake, I had been baffled

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and defeated in every direction, and to have returned now, would have been, to have rendered of no avail the great expenses that had been incurred in the outfit of the expedition, to have thrown away the only opportunity presented to me of making some amends for past failure, and of endeavouring to justify the confidence that had been reposed in me, by carrying through the exploration which had been originally contemplated to the westward, now it was no longer possible to accomplish that to the north, for which it had given place; I considered myself in duty and in honour bound, not to turn back from this attempt, as long as there was the remotest possibility of success, without any regard to considerations of a personal or private nature. Under these feelings, therefore, I resolved to remain only another day in depot, to reply to the letters I had received, and return my best thanks to the many friends who had expressed such kind interest on my behalf.

February 25.—Having finished my letters, and buried all the spare stores, I sent the native boys away early with the sheep, that they might travel more slowly than we should do with the horses. About two we loaded the pack animals, and wishing Mr. Scott a final adieu, set off upon our route. The party consisted of myself, the overseer, three native boys, nine horses, one Timor pony, one foal, born at Streaky Bay, and six sheep; our flour which was buried at the sand-hills to the north-west, was calculated for nine weeks, at an allowance of six pounds of flour each weekly, with a proportionate quantity of tea and sugar. The long rest our horses had enjoyed, and the large supply of oats and bran we had received for them, had brought them round wonderfully, they were now in good condition, and strong, and could not have commenced the journey under more favourable circumstances, had it been the winter instead of the summer season.

Two of the native boys having gone on early in the morning with the sheep, there remained only myself, the overseer, and one native, to manage ten horses, and we were consequently obliged to drive some of the pack-horses loose; at first they went well and quietly, but something having unluckily startled one of them, he frightened the others, and four out of the number set off at full gallop, and never stopped for five miles, by which time they had got rid of all their loads except the saddles. Sending the black boy back to the depot with the four horses that had not got away, I and the overseer went on horseback after the others, picking up the baggage they had been carrying, scattered about in every direction; luckily no great damage was done, and at sunset we were all assembled again at the depot, and the animals reloaded. Leaving a short note for Mr. Scott, who had gone on board the cutter, we again recommenced our journey, and, travelling for five miles, halted at the well in the plains. I intended to have made a long stage, but the night set in so dark that I did not like to venture amongst the scrub with the pack-horses now they were so fresh, and where, if they did get frightened and gallop off, they would cause us much greater trouble and delay than they had done in the daytime.

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February 26.—Moving on very early, we arrived at the grassy plain under the sand-hills, a little after three in the afternoon, just in time to save the gun and clothes of the black boys, which they had imprudently left there whilst they took the sheep to water, a mile and a half away. At the very instant of our arrival, a native was prowling about the camp, and would, doubtless, soon have carried off every thing. Upon examining the place at which we had buried our flour on the 31st December, and upon which we were now dependent for our supply, I found that we had only just arrived in time to save it from the depredations of the natives; it seems, that having found where the cask containing it was buried, and being unable, from its weight, to get it out of the ground, they had broken a square hole in one of the staves (by what means I could not discover), and though, as yet, every thing was safe and uninjured inside, I have no doubt, that, had we been one day later in coming, they would have enlarged the opening in the cask, and scattered or destroyed the contents, and we should have then had the unpleasant and laborious task of returning to that we had buried at Fowler's Bay for a fresh supply. A bucket, which we had also left buried, was broken to pieces, a two gallon keg carried off, and a twenty-five gallon cask full of water had been dug up, and the water drank or emptied, so that we were very fortunate in arriving when we did to prevent further loss.

The black boys, who had gone a-head with the sheep, returned soon after our arrival, tired and hungry, having only had one meal since they left us on the 25th. They had been over the sandhills to fetch water, and were now coming to try and find the flour which they knew we had left buried at these plains. After dark, accompanied by the overseer, I took the horses down to the water, but the sand had slipped in, and we could not get them watered to-night.

February 27.—Sending the overseer and two boys down with the horses to the well this morning, I and the other boy set to work, and dug out the cask with the flour, which we then weighed out, and subdivided into packages of fifty pounds each, for the convenience of carrying. The native I had seen about the camp, on our approach, yesterday, had returned, and slept near us at night; but upon inquiring from him this morning, where our two-gallon keg was, he took the very earliest opportunity of decamping, being probably afraid that we should charge him with the robbery, or punish him for it. The natives, generally, are a strange and singular race of people, and their customs and habits are often quite inexplicable to us. Sometimes, in barely passing through a country, we have them gathering from all quarters, and surrounding us, anxious and curious to observe our persons, or actions; at other times, we may remain in camp for weeks together without seeing a single native, though many may be in the neighbourhood; when they do come,

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too, they usually depart as suddenly as their visit had been unexpected. Among all who had come under my observation, hitherto, along this coast, I found that every male had undergone the singular ceremony I have described as prevailing in the Port Lincoln peninsula; each, too, had the cartilage of the nose perforated, but none had lost the front teeth, nor did I see any (with one exception) having scars raised on the back, breast, or arms, as is frequently the case with many tribes in Australia.

For the last few days, the weather had been tolerably cool, and we had not been much troubled with mosquitoes; instead, however, we were persecuted severely by a very large greyish kind of horsefly, with a huge proboscis for sucking up the blood. These pests were in great numbers, and proved a sad annoyance, lighting upon us in every direction, and inflicting very irritating wounds even through clothes of considerable thickness.

February 28.—As we had a long distance to travel to the next water, and the sheep could not keep pace with the horses, I left the overseer and two natives to bring the latter after us, whilst I and the younger boy set off with the sheep. At fifteen miles, we passed the place where the nine-gallon keg of water had been buried on the 5th January. Upon digging it up, and taking out the bung, the water appeared discoloured and offensive in smell. It was still clear, however, and the sheep drank hastily of it, and we did the same ourselves, but the horses would not touch it. Leaving the cask out in the air with the bung out that it might sweeten a little against the overseer came up, we went on with the sheep to the undulating plains, arriving there between ten and eleven at night. After hobbling the horses, and making a brush-yard for the sheep, we laid down, tired with the labours of the day.

March 1.—Travelling through the plains for a mile, we came to our former encampment, where we had left some stores, and a large cask of water; the latter had dried up to about two quarts, and was very horrible, both in smell and flavour; but still we were glad to take it, for, calculating upon finding an abundance in this cask, we had imprudently brought but little with us. After breakfast, I dug up some of the provisions buried here; and leaving a note for the overseer, proceeded onwards with the boy, and the sheep, for twenty-four miles. The stage was a long one, and over heavy ground, so that the sheep began to get tired, as we did ourselves also, one of us being always obliged to walk whilst the other was riding. We had two horses with us, but required one exclusively to carry our coats, blankets, and provisions, the other one we rode in turn.

March 2.—A hot day, with the wind north-east. Between eleven and twelve we arrived at the first water, at the head of the Bight, and had a long and arduous task to get the sheep and horses watered, no natives being here to help us now, and the sand rushing in as fast as we could throw it out. By great exertion we effected our object, and then getting some tea, and leaving a note to tell the overseer not to halt at this difficult

watering-place, if he could possibly avoid it, we pushed on again, and took up our position at Yeerkumban kauwe, in time to dig holes, and water the sheep, before dark.

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March 3.—Having got up and watered the horses and sheep, I sent the boy out to tend them at grass, whilst I commenced digging two large holes to water the pack-horses, that there might be no delay when the overseer came up with them. I had nothing but a shell to dig with, and, as a very large excavation was required to enable a bucket to be dipped, my occupation was neither a light nor a short one. Having completed my work, I killed a sheep, well knowing the party would be fatigued and hungry, when they came up. About three they made their appearance, and thus, upon the whole, we had very successfully got over this our first push, and were soon very comfortably established at “Yeerkumban kauwe.” The holes I had dug enabled us easily and speedily to water the horses, and the sheep I had killed afforded a refreshing meal to the overseer and boys, after their harassing journey. In the afternoon the sand blew about in a most annoying manner, covering us from head to foot, and filling everything we put down, if but for an instant. This sand had been our constant torment for many weeks past; condemned to live among the sand-hills for the sake of procuring water, we were never free from irritation and inconvenience. It floated on the surface of the water, penetrated into our clothes, hair, eyes, and ears, our provisions were covered over with it, and our blankets half buried when we lay down at nights,—it was a perpetual and never-ceasing torment, and as if to increase our miseries we were again afflicted with swarms of large horse-flies, which bit us dreadfully. On the 4th, we remained in camp to rest the horses, and I walked round to reconnoitre. Upon the beach I found the fragments of a wreck, consisting of part of a mast, a tiller wheel, and some copper sheathings, the last sad records of the fate of some unfortunate vessel on this wild and breaker-beaten shore. There was nothing to indicate its size, or name, or the period when the wreck occurred.

No recent traces of natives having been either at Yeerkumban kauwe, or the more distant water, were visible anywhere, and I imagined they might perhaps have made an excursion to the westward. A large flight of red-winged cockatoos were seen today hovering around the sand-hills, and appearing quite disconcerted at finding us in possession of the water; we had not before seen them in the neighbourhood, and I can hardly conjecture where they go to from this place, for generally they are birds fond of water.

Knowing from the accounts of the natives that upon leaving Yeerkumban kauwe, I should have a task before me of no ordinary difficulty to get either the sheep or the horses to the next water, I determined to proceed myself in advance, with the sheep, that by travelling slowly, at the same time that we kept steadily advancing, every chance might be given to them of accomplishing the journey in safety. I was anxious too to precede my party, in order that by finding out where the water



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was, I might be on the look out for them, to guide them to it, and that thus when in their greatest difficulty, no time should be lost in searching for water. Having given the overseer orders to keep the tracks of my horses, when he had travelled about seventy miles along the coast, I set off on the 7th March, with the youngest of the natives to assist me in driving the sheep, leaving the two elder ones with the overseer, to aid in managing the pack-horses. As before we took two horses with us, one to carry our provisions and water, and the other to ride upon in turn, the boy however, being young, and incapable of much fatigue, the greater portion of the walking naturally fell to my share. The day was cool and favourable, and we accomplished a stage of twenty-four miles; the afternoon became dark and lowering, and I fully expected rain, but towards sunset two or three drops fell, and the clouds cleared away. Our horses fed tolerably upon the little withered grass that we found, but the sheep were too tired to eat, and lay down; we put them therefore into a yard we had made for them for the night.

March 8.—Having turned the sheep out of the yard three hours before daylight, I was in hopes they would have fed a little before we moved on, but they would not touch such food as we had for them, and at six I was obliged to proceed onwards; the morning was dark and looked like rain, but as was the case yesterday, a drop or two only fell. We made a stage to-day of twenty-six miles, through a level country, generally open, but near the sea covered with a very low dwarf tea-tree, small prickly bushes, and salsolae, and having the surface almost every where sprinkled over with fresh-water shells; further from the coast the plains extending to the north were very extensive, level, and divided by belts of scrub or shrubs. There was no perceptible inclination of the country in any direction, the level land ran to the very borders of the sea, where it abruptly terminated, forming the steep and precipitous cliffs, observed by Captain Flinders, and which it was quite impossible to descend anywhere. The general elevation of this table land, was from three to four hundred feet.

The day turned out fine and clear, and the effect produced by refraction in these vast plains was singular and deceptive: more than once we turned considerably out of our way to examine some large timber, as we thought it to be, to the north of us, but which, upon our approach, proved to be low scrubby bushes. At another time we imagined we saw two natives in the distance, and went towards them as carefully and cautiously as we could; instead, however, of our having seen the heads of natives, as we supposed, above the bushes, it turned out to be only crows. Yet the native boy, whose quickness and accuracy of vision had often before surprised me, was equally deceived with myself. Upon halting in the evening our sheep again were very tired, and refused to eat. The horses too were



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now beginning to feel the want of water, and fed but little. I therefore sat up and watched them until half past eight, after which I tied them up to some bushes. At one o'clock I again got up and let them loose, hoping they might feed a little better in the cool of the night. The scud was rapidly passing the moon, and I watched for hours the clouds gathering to the south and passing to the north, but no rain fell.

March 9.—Moving on early we passed through a similar country to that we had before traversed; but there was more of the tea-tree scrub, which made our travelling more difficult and fatiguing. This kind of scrub, which is different from any I had seen before, is a low bush running along the ground, with very thick and crooked roots and branches, and forming a close matted and harassing obstacle to the traveller. The sheep and horses got very tired, from having to lift their legs so high to clear it every step they took. To the westward we found the country rising as we advanced, and the cliffs becoming higher; they now answered fully, where we could obtain a view of any projecting parts, to the description given by Flinders—"the upper part brown and the lower part white;" but as yet we could not find any place where we could descend to examine them. The lower, or white part, appeared soft and crumbling, and its decay had left the upper, or harder rock, fearfully overhanging the ocean. Upon the summits we again found flints in the greatest abundance lying loosely scattered over the surface.

The day was cloudy and gathering for rain, but none fell. After travelling twenty-five miles we halted for an hour or two to rest the sheep and horses, feeding was out of the question, for they were too much in want of water to attempt to eat the dry and withered grass around us. We now lay down to rest ourselves, and the boy soon fell asleep; I was however feverish and restless, and could not close my eyes. In an hour and a half I arose, got up the horses and saddled them, and then, awaking my companion, we again pushed on by moonlight. At ten miles we crossed a well beaten native pathway, plainly discernible even then, and this we followed down towards the cliffs, fully hoping it would lead to water. Our hopes however had been excited but to render our disappointment the greater, for upon tracing it onwards we found it terminate abruptly at a large circular hole of limestone rock, which would retain a considerable quantity of water after rains, but was now without a single drop. Gloomily turning away we again pushed on for eight miles further, and at three in the morning of the 10th were compelled to halt from downright exhaustion and fatigue. The horses and sheep were knocked up. The poor boy was so tired and sleepy that he could scarcely sit upon his horse, and I found myself actually dosing as I walked: mechanically my legs kept moving forwards, but my eyes were every now and then closed in forgetfulness

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of all around me, until I was suddenly thrown down by getting entangled amongst the scrub, or aroused by a severe blow across the face from the recoil of a bough after the passage of the boy's horse. I now judged we had come about ninety-three miles from Yeerkumban-kauwe, and hoped that we could not be very far from water. Having tied up the horses for an hour or two, and without making a fire, or even unrolling our cloaks to cover us, we stretched ourselves on the ground, and were in a few moments fast asleep.

March 10.—At five we were again on our route, every moment expecting to see a break in the line of cliffs along which we had now travelled so far. Alas! they still continued stretching as far as the eye could see to the westward, and as fast as we arrived at one point which had bounded our vision (and beyond which we hoped a change might occur), it was but to be met with the view of another beyond. Distressing and fatal as the continuance of these cliffs might prove to us, there was a grandeur and sublimity in their appearance that was most imposing, and which struck me with admiration. Stretching out before us in lofty unbroken outline, they presented the singular and romantic appearance of massy battlements of masonry, supported by huge buttresses, and glittering in the morning sun which had now risen upon them, and made the scene beautiful even amidst the dangers and anxieties of our situation. It was indeed a rich and gorgeous view for a painter, and I never felt so much regret at my inability to sketch as I did at this moment.

Still we kept moving onwards and still the cliffs continued. Hour after hour passed away, mile after mile was traversed, and yet no change was observable. My anxiety for the party who were to follow behind with the pack-horses became very great; the state of doubt and uncertainty I was in was almost insupportable, and I began to fear that neither sheep nor horses would ever reach the water, even should we succeed in doing so ourselves, which now appeared to be very doubtful. At noon I considered we had come one hundred and ten miles from the last water, and still the country remained the same. The cliffs indeed appeared to be gradually declining a little in elevation to the westward, but there was nothing to indicate their speedy termination. Our sheep still travelled, but they were getting so tired, and their pace was so slow, that I thought it would be better to leave them behind, and by moving more rapidly with the horses endeavour at least to save their lives. Foreseeing that such a contingency as this might occur, I had given the overseer strict orders to keep the tracks of my horses, that if I should be compelled to abandon the sheep he might find them and bring them on with his party.

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Having decided upon this plan we set to work and made a strong high yard of such shrubs as we could find, and in this we shut up the sheep. I then wrote a note for the overseer, directing him to bury the loads of the horses, and hastening on with the animals alone endeavour to save their lives. To attract attention I raised a long stick above the sheep-yard, and tied to it a red handkerchief, which could be seen a long way off. At one we again proceeded, and were able to advance more rapidly than we could whilst the sheep were with us. In a few miles we came to a well-beaten native road, and again our hopes were raised of speedily terminating the anxiety and suspense we were in. Following the road for ten miles it conducted us to where the cliffs receded a little from the sea, leaving a small barren valley between them and the ocean, of low, sandy ground; the road ceased here at a deep rocky gorge of the cliffs, where there was a breach leading down to the valley. There were several deep holes among the rocks where water would be procurable after rains, but they were now all dry. The state of mind in which we passed on may be better imagined than described. We had now been four days without a drop of water for our horses, and we had no longer any for ourselves, whilst there appeared as little probability of our shortly procuring it as there had been two days ago. A break, it is true, had occurred in the line of the cliffs, but this appeared of a very temporary character, for we could see beyond them the valley again abutting upon the ocean.

At dark we were fifteen miles from where we left the sheep, and were again upon a native pathway, which we twice tried to follow down the steep and rugged slopes of the table land into the valley below. We were only, however, fagging our poor horses and bewildering ourselves to no purpose, for we invariably lost all track at the bottom, and I at last became convinced that it was useless to try and trace the natives' roadway further, since it always appeared to stop at rocky holes where there was no water now. Keeping, therefore, the high ground, we travelled near the top of the cliffs, bounding the sandy valley, but here again a new obstacle impeded our progress. The country, which had heretofore been tolerably open was now become very scrubby, and we found it almost impossible either to keep a straight course, or to make any progress through it in the dark. Still we kept perseveringly onwards, leading our horses and forcing our way through in the best way we could. It was, however, all in vain; we made so little headway, and were so completely exhausting the little strength we had left, that I felt compelled to desist. The poor boy was quite worn out, and could scarcely move. I was myself but little better, and we were both suffering from a parching thirst; under such obstacles labour and perseverance were but thrown away, and I determined to await the day-light. After tying up the horses the boy lay down, and was

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soon asleep, happy in his ignorance of the dangers which threatened him. I lay down, too, but not to sleep; my own distresses were lost in the apprehensions which I entertained for those who were behind. We were now about one hundred and twenty-eight miles from the last water; we had been four whole days and nights without a drop for our horses, and almost without food also, (for parched as they were they could not feed upon the dry and withered grass we found.) The state the poor animals were in was truly pitiable, what then was likely to be the condition of those that were coming after us, and carrying heavy packs. It was questionable, even, if they would reach the distance we had already attained in safety; and it was clear, that unless I discovered water early in the morning, the whole of our horses must perish, whilst it would be very doubtful if we could succeed even in saving our own lives.

March 11.—Early this morning we moved on, leading slowly our jaded animals through the scrub. The night had been one of painful suspense and gloomy forebodings; and the day set in dark and cloudy, as if to tantalise us with the hope of rain which was not destined to fall. In a few miles we reached the edge of the cliffs, from which we had a good view of the sandy valley we had been travelling round, but which the thick scrub had prevented our scrutinising sooner. I now noticed some hillocks of bare sand in the midst of it. These I had not seen before, as the only previous point from which they could have been visible had been passed by us in the dark. It now struck me, that the water spoken of by the natives at Yeerkumban-kauwe might be situated among these sand-hills, and that we were going away from instead of approaching it. The bare idea of such a possibility was almost maddening, and as the dreadful thought flashed across my mind I stood for a moment undecided and irresolute as to what I ought to do. We were now many miles past these hills, and if we went back to examine them for water, and did not find it, we could never hope that our horses would be able to return again to search elsewhere; whilst if there was water there, and we did not return, every step we took would but carry us further from it, and lead to our certain destruction.

For a few minutes I carefully scanned the line of coast before me. In the distance beyond a projecting point of the cliffs, I fancied I discerned a low sandy shore, and my mind was made up at once, to advance in the line we were pursuing. After a little while, we again came to a well beaten native pathway, and following this along the summit of the cliffs, were brought by it, in seven miles, to the point where they receded from the sea-shore; as they inclined inland, leaving a low sandy country between them and some high bare sand-hills near the sea. The road now led us down a very rocky steep part of the cliffs, near the angle where they broke away from the beach, but upon reaching the bottom we lost it altogether

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on the sandy shore; following along by the water's edge, we felt cooled and refreshed by the sea air, and in one mile and a half from where we had descended the cliffs, we reached the white sand-drifts. Upon turning into these to search for water, we were fortunate enough to strike the very place where the natives had dug little wells; and thus on the fifth day of our sufferings, we were again blessed with abundance of water,—nor could I help considering it as a special instance of the goodness of Providence, that we had passed the sandy valley in the dark, and had thereby been deterred from descending to examine the sand-hills it contained; had we done so, the extra fatigue to our horses and the great length of time it would have taken up, would probably have prevented the horses from ever reaching the water we were now at. It took us about two hours to water the animals, and get a little tea for ourselves, after which the boy laid down to sleep, and I walked round to search for grass. A little grew between the sand-drifts and the cliffs, and though dry and withered, I was most thankful to find it. I then returned to the camp and laid down, but could not sleep, for although relieved myself, my anxiety became but the greater, for the party behind, and the more so, because at present I could do nothing to aid them; it was impossible that either the horses, or ourselves, could go back to meet them without a few hours' rest, and yet the loss of a few hours might be of the utmost consequence; I determined, however, to return and meet them as early as possible in the morning, and in the mean time, as I knew that the overseer and natives would, when they came, be greatly fatigued, and unable to dig holes to water the horses, I called up the boy, and with his assistance dug two large holes about five feet deep, from which the horses could readily and without delay be watered upon their arrival. As we had only some shells left by the natives to work with, our wells progressed slowly, and we were occupied to a late hour. In the evening we watered the horses, and before laying down ourselves, drove them to the grass I had discovered. For the first time for many nights, I enjoyed a sound and refreshing sleep.

## Chapter XVI.

Go back to meet the overseer—party arrive at the water—long encampment—geological formation of the cliffs—move on again—dig for water—traces of natives—send back for water—parrots seen—cool winds from north-east—overseer returns—continue the journey—abandon baggage—dense scrubs—driven to the beach—meet natives—mode of procuring water from roots.

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March 12.—*The* first streak of daylight found us on our way to meet the party, carrying with us three gallons of water upon one of the horses, the other was ridden by the boy. Upon passing the sandy valley, where I had been in such a state of suspense and doubt at seeing the sand-hills behind me, I determined to descend and examine them; but before doing so, I wrote a note for the overseer (in case he should pass whilst I was in the valley,) and hoisted a red handkerchief to attract his attention to it.

I was unsuccessful in my search for water; but whilst among the sand-hills, I saw the party slowly filing along the cliffs above the valley, and leaving the boy to look about a little longer, I struck across to meet them. Both horses and people I found greatly fatigued, but upon the whole, they had got through the difficulty better than I had anticipated; after leaving a great part of the loads of the pack-horses about seventeen miles back, according to the written instructions I had left. The sheep, it seemed, had broken out of the yard and travelled backwards, and were picked up by the overseer, twelve miles away from where we had left them; as they had got very tired and were delaying the horses, he left one of the natives, this morning, to follow slowly with them, whilst he pushed on with the pack-horses as rapidly as they could go. After giving him the pleasing intelligence that his toil was nearly over for the present, and leaving some few directions, I pushed on again with the boy, who had not found the least sign of water in the valley, to meet the native with the sheep. In about three miles we saw him coming on alone without them, he said they were a mile further back, and so tired they could not travel. Halting our horses, I sent him to bring them on, and during his absence, had some tea made and dinner prepared for him. When the sheep came up they were in sad condition, but by giving them water and a few hours rest, they recovered sufficiently to travel on in the evening to the water.

At night, the whole party were, by God's blessing, once more together, and in safety, after having passed over one hundred and thirty-five miles of desert country, without a drop of water in its whole extent, and at a season of the year the most unfavourable for such an undertaking. In accomplishing this distance, the sheep had been six and the horses five days without water, and both had been almost wholly without food for the greater part of the time. The little grass we found was so dry and withered, that the parched and thirsty animals could not eat it after the second day. The day following our arrival at the water was one of intense heat, and had we experienced such on our journey, neither men nor horses could ever have accomplished it; most grateful did we feel, therefore, to that merciful Being who had shrouded us from a semi-tropical sun, at a time when our exposure to it would have ensured our destruction.



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From the 12th to the 18th we remained at the sand-drifts, during which time we were engaged in attending to the horses, in sending back to recover the stores that had been left by the overseer, and in examining the country around. The natives had told me that there were two watering places at the termination of the cliffs to the eastward, and that these were situated in a somewhat similar manner to those at the head of the Great Bight. We were encamped at one, and I made several ineffectual attempts to find the other during the time the horses were recruiting. The traces of natives near us were numerous, and once we saw their fires, but they did not shew themselves at all. The line of cliffs which had so suddenly turned away from the sea, receded inland from eight to ten miles, but still running parallel with the coast; between it and the sea the country was low and scrubby, with many beds of dried up salt lakes; but neither timber nor grass, except the little patch we were encamped at. Above the cliffs the appearance of the country was the same as we had previously found upon their summits, with, perhaps, rather more scrub; pigeons were numerous at the sand-hills, and several flocks of red-crested and red-winged cockatoos were hovering about, watching for an opportunity to feast upon the red berries I have before spoken of, and which were here found in very great abundance, and of an excellent quality. The sand, as usual at our encampments, was a most dreadful annoyance, and from which we had rarely any respite. The large flies were also very numerous, troublesome and irritating tormentors. They literally assailed us by hundreds at a time, biting through our clothes, and causing us constant employment in endeavouring to keep them off. I have counted twenty-three of these blood-suckers at one time upon a patch of my trousers eight inches square.

Being now at a part of the cliffs where they receded from the sea, and where they had a last become accessible, I devoted some time to an examination of their geological character. The part that I selected was high, steep, and bluff towards the sea, which washed its base; presenting the appearance described by Captain Flinders, as noted before. By crawling and scrambling among the crags, I managed, at some risk, to get at these singular cliffs. The brown or upper portion consisted of an exceedingly hard, coarse grey limestone, among which some few shells were embedded, but which, from the hard nature of the rock, I could not break out; the lower or white part consisted of a gritty chalk, full of broken shells and marine productions, and having a somewhat saline taste: parts of it exactly resembled the formation that I had found up to the north, among the fragments of table-land; the chalk was soft and friable at the surface, and easily cut out with a tomahawk, it was traversed horizontally by strata of flint, ranging in depth from six to eighteen inches, and having varying thicknesses of chalk between

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the several strata. The chalk had worn away from beneath the harder rock above, leaving the latter most frightfully overhanging and threatening instant annihilation to the intruder. Huge mis-shapen masses were lying with their rugged pinnacles above the water, in every direction at the foot of the cliffs, plainly indicated the frequency of a falling crag, and I felt quite a relief when my examination was completed, and I got away from so dangerous a post.

I have remarked that the natives at the head of the Great Bight had intimated to us, that there were two places where water might be found in this neighbourhood, not far apart, and as with all our efforts we had only succeeded in discovering one, I concluded that the other must be a little further along the coast to the westward; in this supposition I was strengthened, by observing that all the native tracks we had met with apparently took this direction. Under this impression I determined to move slowly along the coast until we came to it, and in order that our horses might carry no unnecessary loads, to take but a few quarts of water in our kegs.

On the 18th we moved on, making a short stage of fourteen miles, through a heavy, sandy, and scrubby country. At first I tried the beach, but finding the sand very loose and unsuitable for travelling, I was again compelled to enter the scrub behind the sea-shore ridge, travelling through a succession of low scrubby undulations, with here and there the beds of dried up lakes. The traces of natives were now more recent and numerous, but found principally near the bushes bearing the red berries, and which grew behind the front ridge of the coast in the greatest abundance. From this circumstance, and from our having now travelled a considerable distance beyond the first water, I began to fear that the second which had been spoken of by the natives must, if it existed at all, be behind us instead of in advance, and that in reality the fruit we saw, and not water, was the object for which the natives, whose tracks were around us, were travelling to the westward. The day was cloudy, and likely for rain, but after a few drops had fallen, the clouds passed away. In the afternoon the overseer dug behind the sand-ridge, and at six feet came to water, but perfectly salt.

March 19.—To-day we travelled onwards for twenty-six miles, through a country exactly similar to that we had passed through yesterday. At three in the afternoon we halted at an opening when there was abundance of grass, though dry and withered. The indications of natives having recently passed still continued, and confirmed me in my impression, that they were on a journey to the westward, and from one distant water to another, and principally for the purpose of gathering the fruit. We were now forty miles from the last water, and I became assured that we had very far to go to the next; I had for some time given over any hope of finding the second water spoken of by the natives at the head of the



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Bight, and considered that we must have passed it if it existed, long ago, perhaps even in that very valley, or among those very sandhills where we had searched so unsuccessfully on the 12th. There was now the prospect of a long journey before us without water, as we had brought only a little with us for ourselves, and which was nearly exhausted, whilst our horses had been quite without, and were already suffering from thirst. Consulting with the overseer, I resolved to leave our baggage where we were, whilst the horses were sent back to the water (forty miles) to rest and recruit for three or four days; by this means I expected they would gather strength, and as they would have but little weight to carry until they reached our present position, when they returned we should be better able to force a passage through the waste before us, at the same time that we should be able to procure a fresh and larger stock of water for ourselves. At midnight I sent the whole party back to the last water, but remained myself to take care of the baggage and sheep. I retained an allowance of a pint of water per day for six days, this being the contemplated period of the overseer's absence. My situation was not at all enviable, but circumstances rendered it unavoidable.

From the departure of my party, until their return, I spent a miserable time, being unable to leave the camp at all. Shortly after the party left, the sheep broke out of the yard, and missing the horses with which they had been accustomed to travel and to feed, set off as rapidly as they could after them; I succeeded in getting them back, but they were exceedingly troublesome and restless, attempting to start off, or to get down to the sea whenever my eye was off them for an instant, and never feeding quietly for ten minutes together; finding at last that they would be quite unmanageable, I made a very strong and high yard, and putting them in, kept them generally shut up, letting them out only to feed for two or three hours at once. This gave me a little time to examine my maps, and to reflect upon my position and prospects, which involved the welfare of others, as well as my own. We had still 600 miles of country to traverse, measured in straight lines across the chart; but taking into account the inequalities of the ground, and the circuit we were frequently obliged to make, we could not hope to accomplish this in less than 800 miles of distance. With every thing in our favour we could not expect to accomplish this in less than eight weeks; but with all the impediment and embarrassments we were likely to meet with, it would probably take us twelve. Our sheep were reduced to three in number, and our sole stock of flour now amounted to 142 pounds, to be shared out amongst five persons, added to which the aspect of the country before us was disheartening in the extreme; the places at which there was any likelihood of finding water were probably few and far apart, and the strength of our horses

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was already greatly reduced by the hardships they had undergone. Ever since we had left Fowler's Bay, the whole party, excepting the youngest boys, had been obliged chiefly to walk, and yet every care and precaution we could adopt were unable to counteract the evil effects of a barren country, and an unfavourable season of the year. The task before us was indeed a fearful one, but I firmly hoped by patience and perseverance, safely and successfully to accomplish it at last.

During nearly the whole time that my party were away the weather was cool and cloudy. Occasionally there was a great deal of thunder and lightning, accompanied by a few drops of rain, but it always cleared away without heavy showers. The storms came up from seawards, and generally passed inland to the north-east; which struck me as being somewhat singular, especially when taken in conjunction with the fact that on one or two occasions, when the wind was from the north-east, it was comparatively cool, and so unlike any of those scorching blasts we had experienced from the same quarter when on the western side of the Great Bight. There was another thing connected with my present position which equally surprised me, and was quite as inexplicable: whilst engaged one morning rambling about the encampment as far as I could venture away, I met with several flights of a very large description of parrot, quite unknown to me, coming apparently from the north-east, and settling among the shrubs and bushes around. They had evidently come to eat the fruit growing behind the sand-hills, but being scared by my following them about, to try and shoot one, they took wing and went off again in the direction they had come from.

Several days had now elapsed since the departure of the overseer with the horses, and as the time for their return drew nigh I became anxious and restless. The little stock of water left me was quite exhausted. It had originally been very limited, but was reduced still further by the necessity I was under of keeping it in a wooden keg, where it evaporated, and once or twice by my spilling some. At last, on the 25th, I was gratified by seeing my party approach. They had successfully accomplished their mission, and brought a good supply of water for ourselves, but the horses looked weary and weak, although they had only travelled fourteen miles that day. After they had rested a few hours I broke up the encampment, and travelling for fourteen miles further over a scrubby country, came to a patch of grass, at which we halted early. From the nature of the country, and the consequent embarrassment it entailed upon us, it was impossible for any of the party to have any longer even the slight advantage formerly enjoyed of occasionally riding for a few miles in turn; all were now obliged to walk, except the two youngest boys, who were still permitted to ride at intervals. The weather was cloudy, and showers were passing to the north-east.

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March 26.—Upon moving on this morning we passed through the same wretched kind of country for eighteen miles, to an opening in the scrub where was a little grass, and at which we halted to rest. There was so much scrub, and the sandy ridges were so heavy and harassing to the horses, that I began to doubt almost if we should get them along at all. We were now seventy-two miles from the water, and had, in all probability, as much further to go before we came to any more, and I saw that unless something was done to lighten the loads of the pack-animals (trifling as were the burdens they carried) we never could hope to get them on. Leaving the natives to enjoy a sleep, the overseer and I opened and re-sorted all our baggage, throwing away every thing that we could at all dispense with; our great coats, jackets, and other articles of dress were thrown away; a single spare shirt and pair of boots and socks being all that were kept for each, besides our blankets and the things we stood in, and which consisted only of trowsers, shirt, and shoes. Most of our pack-saddles, all our horse-shoes, most of our kegs for holding water, all our buckets but one, our medicines, some of our fire-arms, a quantity of ammunition, and a variety of other things, were here abandoned. Among the many things that we were compelled to leave behind there was none that I regretted parting with more than a copy of Captain Sturt's Expeditions, which had been sent to me by the author to Fowler's Bay to amuse and cheer me on the solitary task I had engaged in; it was the last kind offering of friendship from a highly esteemed friend, and nothing but necessity would have induced me to part with it. Could the donor, however, have seen the miserable plight we were reduced to, he would have pitied and forgiven an act that circumstances alone compelled me to.

After all our arrangements were made, and every thing rejected that we could do without, I found that the loads of the horses were reduced in the aggregate about two hundred pounds; but this being divided among ten, relieved each only a little. Myself, the overseer, and the King George's Sound native invariably walked the whole way, but the two younger natives were still permitted to ride alternately upon one of the strongest horses. As our allowance of flour was very small, and the fatigue and exertion we were all obliged to undergo very great, I ordered a sheep to be killed before we moved on again. We had been upon short allowance for some time, and were getting weak and hardly able to go through the toils that devolved upon us. Now, I knew that our safety depended upon that of our horses, and that their lives again were contingent upon the amount of fatigue we were ourselves able to endure, and the degree of exertion we were capable of making to relieve them in extremity. I did not therefore hesitate to make use of one of our three remaining sheep to strengthen us for coming trials, instead of retaining them until perhaps they might be of little use to us. The whole party had a hearty meal, and then, watching the horses until midnight, we moved on when the moon rose.

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During the morning we had passed along an extensive dried-up salt swamp behind the coast ridge, which was soft for the horses in some places, but free from that high brush which fatigued them so much, and which now appeared to come close in to the sea, forming upon the high sandy ridges a dense scrub. The level bank of the higher ground, or continuation of the cliffs of the Bight, which had heretofore been distinctly visible at a distance of ten or twelve miles inland, could no longer be seen: it had either merged in the scrubby and sandy elevations around us, or was hid by them from our view.

March 27.—During the night we travelled slowly over densely scrubby and sandy ridges, occasionally crossing large sheets of oolitic limestone, in which were deep holes that would most likely retain water after rains, but which were now quite dry. As the daylight dawned the dreadful nature of the scrub drove us to the sea beach; fortunately it was low water, and we obtained a firm hard sand to travel over, though occasionally obstructed by enormous masses of sea-weed, thrown into heaps of very many feet in thickness and several hundreds of yards in length, looking exactly like hay cut and pressed ready for packing.

To-day we overtook the natives, whose tracks we had seen so frequently on our route. There was a large party of them, all busily engaged in eating the red berries which grew behind the coast ridge in such vast quantities; they did not appear so much afraid of us as of our horses, at which they were dreadfully alarmed, so that all our efforts to communicate with them were fruitless; they would not come near us, nor would they give us the opportunity of getting near them, but ran away whenever I advanced towards them, though alone and unarmed. During the route I frequently ascended high scrubby ridges to reconnoitre the country inland, but never could obtain a view of any extent, the whole region around appeared one mass of dense impenetrable scrub running down to the very borders of the ocean.

After travelling twenty miles I found that our horses needed rest, and halted for an hour or two during the heat of the day, though without grass, save the coarse wiry vegetation that binds the loose sands together, and without even bushes to afford them shade from the heat, for had we gone into the scrub for shelter we should have lost even the wretched kind of grass we had.

At half past two we again moved onwards, keeping along the beach, but frequently forced by the masses of sea-weed to travel above high water mark in the heavy loose sand. After advancing ten miles the tide became too high for us to continue on the shore, and the scrub prevented our travelling to the back, we were compelled therefore to halt for the night with hardly a blade of grass for our horses. I considered we were now one hundred and two miles from the last water, and expected we had about fifty more to go to the next; the poor animals were almost exhausted, but as the dew was heavy they were disposed to eat had there been grass of any kind for them. The overseer and I as usual watched them alternately, each taking the duty for four hours

and sleeping the other four; to me this was the first sleep I had had for the last three nights.

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Whilst in camp, during the heat of the day, the native boys shewed me the way in which natives procure water for themselves, when wandering among the scrubs, and by means of which they are enabled to remain out almost any length of time, in a country quite destitute of surface water. I had often heard of the natives procuring water from the roots of trees, and had frequently seen indications of their having so obtained it, but I had never before seen the process actually gone through. Selecting a large healthy looking tree out of the gum-scrub, and growing in a hollow, or flat between two ridges, the native digs round at a few feet from the trunk, to find the lateral roots; to one unaccustomed to the work, it is a difficult and laborious thing frequently to find these roots, but to the practised eye of the native, some slight inequality of the surface, or some other mark, points out to him their exact position at once, and he rarely digs in the wrong place. Upon breaking the end next to the tree, the root is lifted, and run out for twenty or thirty feet; the bark is then peeled off, and the root broken into pieces, six or eight inches long, and these again, if thick, are split into thinner pieces; they are then sucked, or shaken over a piece of bark, or stuck up together in the bark upon their ends, and water is slowly discharged from them; if shaken, it comes out like a shower of very fine rain. The roots vary in diameter from one inch to three; the best are those from one to two and a half inches, and of great length. The quantity of water contained in a good root, would probably fill two-thirds of a pint. I saw my own boys get one-third of a pint out in this way in about a quarter of an hour, and they were by no means adepts at the practice, having never been compelled to resort to it from necessity.

Natives who, from infancy, have been accustomed to travel through arid regions, can remain any length of time out in a country where there are no indications of water. The circumstance of natives being seen, in travelling through an unknown district, is therefore no proof of the existence of water in their vicinity. I have myself observed, that no part of the country is so utterly worthless, as not to have attractions sufficient occasionally to tempt the wandering savage into its recesses. In the arid, barren, naked plains of the north, with not a shrub to shelter him from the heat, not a stick to burn for his fire (except what he carried with him), the native is found, and where, as far as I could ascertain, the whole country around appeared equally devoid of either animal or vegetable life. In other cases, the very regions, which, in the eyes of the European, are most barren and worthless, are to the native the most valuable and productive. Such are dense brushes, or sandy tracts of country, covered with shrubs, for here the wallabie, the opossum, the kangaroo rat, the bandicoot, the leipoa, snakes, lizards, iguanas, and many other animals, reptiles, birds, *etc.*, abound; whilst the kangaroo, the emu, and the native dog, are found upon their borders, or in the vicinity of those small, grassy plains, which are occasionally met with amidst the closest brushes.

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### Chapter XVII.

Horses begin to Knock up—compelled to follow round the beach—TINOR pony *unable to proceed—gloomy prospects—overseer begins to despond—two more horses left behind—fragments of wrecks—water all consumed—collect dew—change in character of country—dig A well—procure water—native and family visit us—overseer goes back for baggage—disastrous termination of his journey—situation and prospects of the party.*

March 28.—At daylight we moved on, every one walking, even the youngest boy could not ride now, as the horses were so weak and jaded. Soon after leaving the camp, one of them laid down, although the weight upon his back was very light; we were consequently obliged to distribute the few things he carried among the others, and let him follow loose. Our route lay along the beach, as the dense scrub inland prevented us from following any other course; we had, therefore, to go far out of our way, tracing round every point, and following along every bay, whilst the sea-weed frequently obstructed our path, and drove us again to the loose sands, above high water mark, causing extra fatigue to our unfortunate horses. At other times we were forced to go between these banks of sea-weed and the sea, into the sea itself, on which occasions it required our utmost vigilance to prevent the wretched horses from drinking the salt water, which would inevitably have destroyed them. In order to prevent this we were obliged to walk ourselves in the water, on the sea-side of them, one of the party being in advance, leading one horse, another being behind to keep up the rear, and the other three being at intervals along the outside of the line, to keep them from stopping for an instant until the danger was past.

We had scarcely advanced six miles from our last night's camp when the little Timor pony I had purchased at Port Lincoln broke down completely; for some time it had been weak, and we were obliged to drive it loose, but it was now unable to proceed further, and we were compelled to abandon it to a miserable and certain death, that by pushing on, we might use every exertion in our power to relieve the others, though scarcely daring to hope that we could save even one of them. It was, indeed, a fearful and heart-rending scene to behold the noble animals which had served us so long and so faithfully, suffering the extremity of thirst and hunger, without having it in our power to relieve them. Five days of misery had passed over their heads since the last water had been left,



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and one hundred and twelve miles of country had been traversed without the possibility of procuring food for them, other than the dry and sapless remains of last year's grass, and this but rarely to be met with. No rains had fallen to refresh them, and they were reduced to a most pitiable condition, still they travelled onwards, with a spirit and endurance truly surprising. Whenever we halted, they followed us about like dogs wherever we went, appearing to look to us only for aid, and exhibiting that confidence in us which I trust we all reposed in the Almighty, for most truly did we feel, that in His mercy and protection alone our safety could now ever be hoped for.

About ten o'clock the tide became too high for us to keep the beach, and we were compelled to halt for some hours. Our horses were nearly all exhausted, and I dreaded that when we next moved on many of them would be unable to proceed far, and that, one by one, they would all perish, overcome by sufferings which those, who have not witnessed such scenes, can have no conception of. We should then have been entirely dependent upon our own strength and exertions, nearly midway between Adelaide and King George's Sound, with a fearful country on either side of us, with a very small supply of provisions, and without water.

The position we were in, frequently forced sad forebodings with respect to the future, and though I by no means contemplated with apathy the probable fate that might await us, yet I was never for a moment undecided as to the plan it would be necessary to adopt, in such a desperate extremity—at all hazards, I was determined to proceed onwards.

The country we had already passed through, precluded all hope of our recrossing it without the horses to carry water for us, and without provisions to enable us to endure the dreadful fatigue of forced marches, across the desert. The country before us was, it is true, quite unknown, but it could hardly be worse than that we had traversed, and the chance was that it might be better. We were now pushing on for some sand-hills, marked down in Captain Flinders' chart at about 126 1/2 degrees of east longitude; I did not expect to procure water until we reached these, but I felt sure we should obtain it on our arrival there. After this point was passed, there appeared to be one more long push without any likelihood of procuring water, as the cliffs again became the boundary of the ocean; but beyond Cape Arid, the change in the character and appearance of the country, as described by Flinders, indicated the existence of a better and more practicable line of country than we had yet fallen in with.



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My overseer, however, was now unfortunately beginning to take up an opposite opinion, and though he still went through the duty devolving upon him with assiduity and cheerfulness, it was evident that his mind was ill at ease, and that he had many gloomy anticipations of the future. He fancied there were no sand-hills ahead, that we should never reach any water in that direction, and that there was little hope of saving any of the horses. In this latter idea I rather encouraged him than otherwise, deeming it advisable to contemplate the darker side of the picture, and by accustoming ourselves to look forward to being left entirely dependent upon our own strength and efforts, in some measure to prepare ourselves for such an event, should it unfortunately befall us. In conversing with him upon our prospects, and the position we should be in if we lost all our horses, I regretted extremely to find that his mind was continually occupied with thoughts of returning, and that he seemed to think the only chance of saving our lives, would be to push on to the water ourselves, and then endeavour again to return to Fowler's Bay, where we had buried a large quantity of provisions. Still it was a gratification to find that the only European with me, did not altogether give way to despondency, and could even calmly contemplate the prospect before us, considering and reasoning upon the plan it might be best to adopt, in the event of our worst forebodings being realized. In discussing these subjects, I carefully avoided irritating or alarming him, by a declaration of my own opinions and resolutions, rather agreeing with him than otherwise, at the same time, that I pointed out the certain risk that would attend any attempt to go back to Fowler's Bay, and the probability there was of much less danger attending the effort to advance to King George's Sound. With respect to the native boys, they appeared to think or care but little about the future; they were not sensible of their danger, and having something still to eat and drink, they played and laughed and joked with each other as much as ever.

Whilst waiting for the tide to fall, to enable us to proceed, the overseer dug a hole, and we buried nearly every thing we had with us, saddles, fire-arms, ammunition, provisions; all things were here abandoned except two guns, the keg with the little water we had left, and a very little flour, tea and sugar. I determined to relieve our horses altogether from every weight (trifling as was the weight of all we had), and by pushing, if possible, on to the water, endeavour to save their lives; after which we could return for the things we had abandoned. Our arrangements being completed, we all bathed in the sea, ate a scanty meal, and again moved onwards at half past two o'clock.

The poor horses started better than could have been expected, but it was soon evident that all were fast failing, and many already quite exhausted. At six miles my favourite mare could no longer keep up with the rest, and we were obliged to let her drop behind. Her foal, now six months old, we got away with some difficulty from her, and kept it with the other horses; at four miles further another of the horses failed, and I had him tied up, in the hope that if we reached water during the evening, I might send back and recover him.

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Towards dark we all imagined we saw a long point stretching to the S. W. and backed by high sandy looking cones. We hoped that these might be the sand-hills we were pushing for, and our hearts beat high with hope once more. It, however, soon become too dark to discern anything, and at fourteen miles from where we had halted in the morning, we were again obliged by the tide to encamp for the night, as the country behind the shore was densely scrubby, and quite impracticable as a line of route. It was nine o'clock when we halted, and we were all very tired, and our feet somewhat inflamed, from getting so frequently wet with the salt water, whilst endeavouring to keep the horses from it; there was no grass but the coarse wiry kind that bound the sand together, of this the poor animals cropped a little, as a very heavy dew fell, and served to moisten it. As usual, the overseer and myself kept watch upon the horses at night, whilst the natives enjoyed their undisturbed repose. Two of the boys were young, and none of the three had their frame and muscles sufficiently developed to enable them to undergo the fatigue of walking during the day if deprived of their rest at night; still the duty became very hard upon two persons, where it was of constant occurrence, and superadded to the ordinary day's labour.

March 29.—After calling up the party, I ascended the highest sand-hill near me, from which the prospect was cheerless and gloomy, and the point and sandy cones we imagined we had seen last night had vanished. Indeed, upon examining the chart, and considering that as yet we had advanced only one hundred and twenty-six miles from the last water, I felt convinced that we had still very far to go before we could expect to reach the sand-drifts. The supply of water we had brought for ourselves was nearly exhausted, and we could afford none for breakfast to-day; the night, however, had been cool, and we did not feel the want of it so much. Upon moving, I sent one of the natives back to the horse I had tied up, about four miles from our camp to try to bring him on to where we should halt in the middle of the day.

For ten miles we continued along the beach until we came to a bluff rocky ridge, running close into the sea; here we rested until the tide fell, and to give the native boy an opportunity of rejoining us, which he did soon after, but without the horse; the poor animal had travelled about eight miles with him from the place where we had left him, but had then been unable to come any further, and he abandoned him.

Whilst the party were in camp, I sent the overseer to a distant point of land to try and get a view of the coast beyond; but upon his return, after a long walk, he told me his view to the west was obstructed by a point similar to the one I had sent him to. During the day, we had passed a rather recent native encampment, where were left some vessels of bark for holding water, or for collecting it from the roots of trees, or the grass. Near where we halted in the middle of the day, the foot-prints of the natives were quite fresh, and shewed that they were travelling the same way as ourselves.

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For the last two or three days, we had passed many pieces of wreck upon the beach, oars, thwarts of boats, fragments of masts, spars, *etc.* strewed about in every direction; none of them, however, appeared to have been recently deposited there, and many of the oars, and lighter spars, were stuck up on their ends in the sand above high water mark, probably so placed by the natives, but with what object I know not. One oar was stuck up upon a high sand ridge, some distance from the shore, and I spent some time in examining the place, in the vain hope that it might be an indication of our vicinity to water.

In the afternoon we all had a little tea; and after a bathe in the sea, again moved onwards; fortunately the beach was firm and hard, and the evening cool; the horses advanced slowly and steadily, and in a way that quite surprised me. After travelling for thirteen miles, we encamped under the coast ridge late in the evening, all very much exhausted, having made several ineffectual searches for water, among the sandy ridges, as we passed along.

In our route along the shore, we had seen immense numbers of fish in the shallow waters, and among the reefs lying off the coast; several dead ones had been picked up, and of these the boys made a feast at night. Our last drop of water was consumed this evening, and we then all lay down to rest, after turning the horses behind the first ridge of the coast, as we could find no grass; and neither the overseer nor I were able to watch them, being both too much worn out with the labours of the day, and our exertions, in searching for water.

March 30.—Getting up as soon as the day dawned, I found that some of the horses had crossed the sand ridge to the beach, and rambled some distance backwards. I found, too, that in the dark, we had missed a patch of tolerable grass among the scrub, not far from our camp. I regretted this the more, as during the night a very heavy dew had fallen, and the horses might perhaps have fed a little.

Leaving the overseer to search for those that had strayed, I took a sponge, and went to try to collect some of the dew which was hanging in spangles upon the grass and shrubs; brushing these with the sponge, I squeezed it, when saturated, into a quart pot, which, in an hour's time, I filled with water. The native boys were occupied in the same way; and by using a handful of fine grass, instead of a sponge, they collected about a quart among them. Having taken the water to the camp, and made it into tea, we divided it amongst the party, and never was a meal more truly relished, although we all ate the last morsel of bread we had with us, and none knew when we might again enjoy either a drink of water, or a mouthful of bread. We had now demonstrated the practicability of collecting water from the dew. I had often heard from the natives that they were in the habit of practising this plan, but had never before actually witnessed its adoption. It was,

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however, very cold work, and completely wet me through from head to foot, a greater quantity of water by far having been shaken over me, from the bushes, than I was able to collect with my sponge. The natives make use of a large oblong vessel of bark, which they hold under the branches, whilst they brush them with a little grass, as I did with the sponge; the water thus falls into the trough held for it, and which, in consequence of the surface being so much larger than the orifice of a quart pot, is proportionably sooner filled. After the sun once rises, the spangles fall from the boughs, and no more water can be collected; it is therefore necessary to be at work very early, if success is an object of importance.

The morning was very hazy, and at first nothing could be seen of the country before us; but as the mist gradually cleared away a long point was seen to the south-west, but so very distant that I felt certain our horses never would get there if it lay between us and the water. To our astonishment they kept moving steadily along the beach, which was tolerably firm near the sea, in which were many reefs and shelves of rocks, covered with muscles below low water mark. As we progressed, it was evident that the country was undergoing a considerable change; the sea shore dunes and the ridges immediately behind them were now of a pure white sand, and steep, whilst those further back were very high and covered with low bushes. Upon ascending one of the latter I had a good view around, and to my inexpressible pleasure and relief saw the high drifts of sand we were looking for so anxiously, in the corner between us and the more distant point of land first seen. The height of the intervening ridges and the sand-drifts being in the angle prevented us from noticing them sooner.

We had now travelled ten miles, and the sand-hills were about five miles further. The horses were, however, becoming exhausted, and the day was so hot that I was compelled to halt, and even now, in sight of our long-expected goal, I feared we might be too late to save them. Leaving the boys to attend to the animals, I took the overseer up one of the ridges to reconnoitre the country for the purpose of ascertaining whether there was no place near us where water might be procured by digging. After a careful examination a hollow was selected between the two front ridges of white sand, where the overseer thought it likely we might be successful. The boys were called up to assist in digging, and the work was anxiously commenced; our suspense increasing every moment as the well was deepened. At about five feet the sand was observed to be quite moist, and upon its being tasted was pronounced quite free from any saline qualities. This was joyous news, but too good to be implicitly believed, and though we all tasted it over and over again, we could scarcely believe that such really was the case. By sinking another foot the question was put beyond all doubt, and to

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our great relief fresh water was obtained at a depth of six feet from the surface, on the seventh day of our distress, and after we had travelled one hundred and sixty miles since we had left the last water. Words would be inadequate to express the joy and thankfulness of my little party at once more finding ourselves in safety, and with abundance of water near us. A few hours before hope itself seemed almost extinguished, and those only who have been subject to a similar extremity of distress can have any just idea of the relief we experienced. The mind seemed to have been weighed down by intense anxiety and over-wrought feelings. At first the gloomy restlessness of disappointment or the feverish impatience of hope had operated upon our minds alternately, but these had long since given way to that calm settled determination of purpose, and cool steady vigour of action which desperate circumstances can alone inspire. Day by day our prospects of success had gradually diminished; our horses had become reduced to so dreadful a state that many had died, and all were likely to do so soon; we ourselves were weak and exhausted by fatigue, and it appeared impossible that either could have gone many miles further. In this last extremity we had been relieved. That gracious God, without whose assistance all hope of safety had been in vain, had heard our earnest prayers for his aid, and I trust that in our deliverance we recognized and acknowledged with sincerity and thankfulness his guiding and protecting hand. It is in circumstances only such as we had lately been placed in that the utter hopelessness of all human efforts is truly felt, and it is when relieved from such a situation that the hand of a directing and beneficent Being appears most plainly discernible, fulfilling those gracious promises which he has made, to hear them that call upon him in the day of trouble.

[Note 27: "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them."

"I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."—Isa. xli. 17, 18.

"I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."—Isa. xliii. 19.]

As soon as each had satisfied his thirst the pots were filled and boiled for tea, and some bread was baked, whilst the overseer and natives were still increasing the size of the well to enable us to water the horses. We then got a hasty meal that we might the better go through the fatigue of attending to the suffering animals. Our utmost caution now became necessary in their management; they had been seven days without a drop of water, and almost without food also, and had suffered so much that with abundance of water near us, and whilst they were suffering agonies from the want of it, we dared not give it to them freely. Having tied them up to some low bushes, we gave each in turn about four gallons, and then driving them away for half a mile to where there was a

little withered grass, we watched them until the evening, and again gave each about four gallons more of water.

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Whilst thus engaged, a very fine looking native with his wife and family, passed us and halted for a few moments to observe us, and procure a drink from the well we had made. This man did not seem at all alarmed, and made signs that he was going to sleep, a little further along the coast, where there was also water, pointing to the white sandhills about five miles from us. The language he spoke seemed to be the same as that of the other natives we had met with along the Great Bight, nor did the King George's Sound native understand him a bit better than he had done the others.

At night one of our two remaining sheep was killed, and the overseer and myself proceeded to watch the horses for the night. The poor creatures were scarcely able to crawl, yet were restless and uneasy, and fed but little, they had tasted water and they were almost mad for it, so that it was a severe task to both myself and the overseer to keep them from returning to the well. The single sheep now left had also given us a good deal of trouble, it was frightened at being alone, and frustrated all our efforts to yard it, preferring to accompany and remain with the horses,—an arrangement we were obliged to acquiesce in.

March 31.—The morning broke wild and lowering, and the sand blew fearfully about from the drifts among which the water was. Our well had tumbled in during the night, and we had to undergo considerable labour before we could water the horses. After clearing it out, we gave each of them seven gallons, and again sent them away to the grass, letting the native boys watch them during the day, whilst we rested for a few hours, shifted our camp to a more sheltered place, weighed out a week's allowance of flour at half a pound each per day, and made sundry other necessary arrangements.

Fearful of losing our only remaining sheep, if left to wander about, we made a strong yard to put it into at nights, for a long time, however, we could not get it to go near the yard, and only succeeded at last by leading in a horse first, behind which it walked quite orderly.

April 1.—The last night had been bitterly cold and frosty, and as we were badly clad, and without the means of making a large or permanent fire, we all felt acutely the severity of the weather. After breakfast, I left the overseer and natives to clear out the well, which had again fallen in, and water the horses, whilst I walked five miles along the beach to the westward, and then turned inland to examine the sand-drifts there and search for grass. Behind the drifts I found some open sandy plains, with a coarse kind of dry grass upon them, and as they were not far from where the natives had dug wells for water, I thought the place might suit us to encamp at for a time when we left our present position. In returning to the camp, through the scrub behind the coast, I shot a fine wallabie, and saw several others; but having only cartridges with me, I did not like to cut up the balls for ammunition.



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April 2.—Another severe cold frosty night made us fully sensible that the winter was rapidly closing in upon us, notwithstanding the ill-provided and unprotected state we were in to encounter its inclemencies. Our well had again tumbled in, and gave us a good deal of trouble, besides, each successive clearing out deepened it considerably, and this took us to a level where the brackish water mixed with the fresh; from this cause the water was now too brackish to be palatable, and we sunk another well apart from that used for the horses, at which to procure any water we required for our own use. During the afternoon I shot a wallabie behind the camp, but the place being densely scrubby, and the animal not quite dead, I did not get it.

On the 3rd, I sent the overseer out in one direction and I went myself out in another, to examine the country and try to procure wallabies for food. We both returned late, greatly fatigued with walking through dense scrubs and over steep heavy sand ridges, but without having fired a shot.

Our mutton (excepting the last sheep) being all used on the 4th, we were reduced to our daily allowance of half a pound of flour each, without any meat.

On the 5th, the overseer and one of the native boys got ready to go back for some of the stores and other things we had abandoned, forty-seven miles away. As they were likely to have severe exercise, and to be away for four days, I gave them five pounds extra of flour above their daily allowance, together with the wallabie which I had shot, and which had not yet been used; they drove before them three horses to carry their supply of water, and bring back the things sent for.

As soon as they were gone, with the assistance of the two native boys who were left, I removed the camp to the white sand-drifts, five miles further west. Being anxious to keep as near to the grass as I could, I commenced digging at some distance away from where the natives procured their water, but at a place where there were a great many rushes. After sinking to about seven feet, I found the soil as dry as ever, and removing to the native wells, with some little trouble opened a hole large enough to water all the horses. The single sheep gave us a great deal of trouble and kept us running about from one sand hill to another, until we were tired out, before we could capture it; at last we succeeded, and I tied him up for the night, resolved never to let him loose again.

In the evening I noticed the native boys looking more woe-begone and hungry than usual. Heretofore, since our mutton was consumed, they had helped out their daily half-pound of flour, with the roasted roots of the gum-scrub, but to-day they had been too busy to get any, and I was obliged to give to each a piece of bread beyond the regular allowance. It was pitiable to see them craving for food, and not to have the power of satisfying them; they were young and had large appetites, and never having been accustomed to any restraint of this nature, scarcity of food was the more sensibly felt, especially as they could not comprehend the necessity that compelled us to hoard with



greater care than a miser does his gold, the little stock of provisions which we yet had left.

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April 6.—The severe frost and intense cold of last night entirely deprived me of sleep, and I was glad when the daylight broke, though still weary and unrefreshed. After clearing out the well, and watering the horses, I sent one of the boys out to watch them, and gave the other the gun to try and shoot a wallaby, but after expending the only two charges of slugs I had left, he returned unsuccessful. At night we all made up our supper with the bark of the young roots of the gum-scrub. It appears to be extensively used for food by the natives in this district, judging from the remnants left at their encamping places. The bark is peeled off the young roots of the *eucalyptus dumosa*, put into hot ashes until nearly crisp, and then the dust being shaken off, it is pounded between two stones and ready for use. Upon being chewed, a farinaceous powder is imbibed from between the fibres of the bark, by no means unpleasant in flavour, but rather sweet, and resembling the taste of malt; how far a person could live upon this diet alone, I have no means of judging, but it certainly appeases the appetite, and is, I should suppose, nutritious.

April 7.—Another sleepless night from the intense cold. Upon getting up I put a mark upon the beach to guide the overseer to our camp on his return, then weighed out flour and baked bread for the party, as I found it lasted much better when used stale than fresh. I tried to shoot some pigeons with small gravel, having plenty of powder but no shot. My efforts were, however, in vain, for though I several times knocked them over, and tore feathers out, I killed none. The day being very clear, I ascended the highest sand-hill to obtain a view of what had appeared to us to be a long point of land, stretching to the south-west. It was now clearly recognisable as the high level line of cliffs forming the western boundary of the Great Bight, and I at once knew, that when we left our present position, we could hope for no water for at least 140 or 150 miles beyond.

The weather on the 8th and 9th suddenly became mild and soft, with the appearance of rain, but none fell. I was becoming anxious about the return of my overseer and native boy, who had been absent nine tides, when they ought to have returned in eight, and I could not help fearing some mischance had befallen them, and frequently went backwards and forwards to the beach, to look for them. The tenth tide found me anxiously at my post on the look out, and after watching for a long time I thought I discerned some dark objects in the distance, slowly advancing; gradually I made out a single horse, driven by two people, and at once descended to meet them. Their dismal tale was soon told. After leaving us on the 5th, they reached their destination on the 7th; but in returning one of the horses became blind, and was too weak to advance further, when they had barely advanced thirteen miles; they were consequently obliged to abandon him,

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and leave behind the things he had been carrying. With the other two horses they got to within five miles of the place we first procured water at on the 30th March. Here a second horse had become unable to proceed, and the things he had carried were also obliged to be left behind. They then got both horses to the first well at the sand-hills and watered them, and after resting a couple of hours came on to join me. Short as this distance was, the jaded horse could not travel it, and was left behind a mile and a half back. Having shewn the overseer and boy the camp, I sent the other two natives to fetch up the tired horse, whilst I attended to the other, and put the solitary sheep in for the night. By a little after dark all was arranged, and the horse that had been left behind once more with the others.

From the overseer I learnt, that during the fifty miles he had retraced our route to obtain the provisions we had left, he had five times dug for water: four times he had found salt water, and once he had been stopped by rock. The last effort of this kind he had made not far from where we found water on the 30th of March, and I could not but be struck with the singular and providential circumstance of our first halting and attempting to dig for water on that day in all our distress, at the very first place, and at the only place, within the 160 miles we had traversed, where water could have been procured. It will be remembered, that in our advance, we had travelled a great part of the latter portion of this distance by night, and that thus there was a probability of our having passed unknowingly some place where water might have been procured. The overseer had now travelled over the same ground in daylight, with renovated strength, and in a condition comparatively strong, and fresh for exertion. He had dug wherever he thought there was a chance of procuring water, but without success in any one single instance.

After learning all the particulars of the late unlucky journey, I found that a great part of the things I had sent for were still thirty-eight miles back, having only been brought twelve miles from where they had originally been left; the rest of the things were ten miles away, and as nearly all our provisions, and many other indispensable articles were among them, it became absolutely necessary that they should be recovered in some way or other, but how that was to be accomplished was a question which we could not so easily determine. Our horses were quite unfit for service of any kind, and the late unfortunate attempt had but added to the difficulties by which we were surrounded, and inflicted upon us the additional loss of another valuable animal. Many and anxious were the hours I spent in contemplating the circumstances we were in, and in revolving in my mind the best means at our command to extricate ourselves from so perilous a situation. We were still 650 miles from King George's Sound, with an entirely unknown country

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before us. Our provisions, when again recovered, would be barely sufficient to last us for three weeks and a half, at a very reduced rate of allowance. Our horses were jaded and miserable beyond all conception; they could literally scarcely crawl, and it was evident they would be unable to move on again at all without many days' rest where we were. On the other hand we had still the prospect of another of those fearful pushes without water to encounter, as soon as we left our present encampment, and had first to recover the provisions and other things yet so far away. Nothing could be more disheartening than our situation, and it was also one in which it was difficult to decide what was best to be done. Aware that a single false step would now be fatal to us all, I saw that our circumstances required promptness and decision. With every thing depending upon my sole judgment, and the determination I arrived at, I felt deeply and anxiously the over-whelming responsibility that devolved upon me.

We were now about half way between Fowler's Bay and King George's Sound, located among barren sand-drifts, and without a drop of water beyond us on either side, within a less distance than 150 miles. Our provisions were rapidly decreasing, whilst we were lying idle and inactive in camp; and yet it would be absolutely necessary for us thus to remain for some time longer, or at once abandon the horses, and endeavour to make our way without them. To the latter, however, there were many objections, one of which was, that I well knew from the experience we had already had, that if we abandoned the horses, and had those fearful long distances to travel without water, we never could accomplish them on foot, if compelled at the same time to live upon a very low diet, to carry our arms, ammunition, and provisions, and in addition to these, a stock of water, sufficient to last six or seven days. The only thing that had enabled us to get through so far on our journey in safety, had been the having the horses with us, for though weak and jaded, they had yet carried the few things, which were indispensable to us, and which we never could have carried ourselves under the circumstances.

There was another inducement to continue with the horses, which had considerable weight with me, and however revolting the idea might be at first, it was a resource which I foresaw the desperate circumstances we were in must soon compel us to adopt. It was certainly horrible to contemplate the destruction of the noble animals that had accompanied us so far, but ere long I well knew that such would be the only chance of saving our own lives, and I hoped that by accustoming the mind to dwell upon the subject beforehand, when the evil hour did arrive, the horror and disgust would be in some degree lessened. Upon consulting the overseer, I was glad to find that he agreed with me fully in the expediency of not abandoning the horses until it became unavoidable, and that he had himself already contemplated the probability of our being very shortly reduced to the alternative of using them for food.

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It remained now only to decide, which way we would go when we again moved on, whether to prosecute our journey to the Sound, or try to retrace our steps to Fowler's Bay. On this point my own opinion never wavered for an instant. My conviction of the utter impossibility of our ever being able to recross the fearful country we had passed through with such difficulty, under circumstances so much more favourable than we were now in, was so strong that I never for a moment entertained the idea myself. I knew the many and frightful pushes without water we should have to make in any such attempt, and though the country before us was unknown, it could not well be worse than that we had passed through, whilst the probability was, that after the first long stage was accomplished, and which would take us beyond the western boundary of the Great Bight, we should experience a change in the character of the country, and be able to advance with comparative ease and facility. Unhappily my overseer differed from me in opinion upon this point.

The last desperate march we had made, had produced so strong an impression upon his mind, that he could not divest himself of the idea that the further we went to the westward the more arid the country would be found, and that eventually we should all perish from want of water; on the other hand, the very reduced allowance of food we were compelled to limit ourselves to, made his thoughts always turn to the depot at Fowler's Bay, where we had buried a large supply of provisions of all kinds. In vain I pointed out to him the certain difficulties we must encounter in any attempt to return, the little probability there was of a single horse surviving even the first of those dreadful stages we should have to make, and the utter impossibility of our getting successfully through without the horses; and, on the other hand, the very cheering prospect there was of all our most serious difficulties being terminated as soon as we had turned the western extremity of the Bight (to accomplish which, would not occupy more than six or seven days at the furthest when we moved on,) and the strong hopes that we might then reasonably entertain of falling in with some vessel, sealing or whaling upon the coast, and from which we might obtain a fresh supply of provisions. All my arguments were fruitless. With the characteristic obedience and fidelity with which he had ever served me, he readily acquiesced in any plan I might decide upon adopting; but I perceived, with pain, that I could not convince him that the view I took was the proper one, and that the plan I intended to follow was the only one which held out to us even the remotest hopes of eventual safety and success.



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Finding that I made little progress in removing his doubts on the question of our advance, I resolved to pursue the subject no further, until the time for decision came, hoping that in the interim, his opinions and feelings might in some degree be modified, and that he might then accompany me cheerfully. The important and pressing duty of recovering at once the stores we had left behind, now claimed my attention. The overseer, with his usual anxiety to save me from any extra labour, kindly offered to attempt this object again; but as he had just returned from a severe, though unfortunately unsuccessful journey for the same purpose, I decided upon doing it myself, and at once made my preparations for leaving the camp.

### Chapter XVIII.

Go back with A native—spear sting-rays—recover the baggage—cold weather—overseer reconnoitres the cliffs—unfavourable report—difference of opinion as to best plans for the future—kill A horse for food—injurious effects from meat diet—native boys become disaffected—they steal provisions—native boys desert the party—they return almost starved—party proceed onwards to the westward—cliffs of the bight—country behind them—threatening weather—murder of the overseer.

April 10.—Four days' provisions having been given to each of the party, I took the King George's Sound native with me to retrace, on foot, our route to the eastward. For the first ten miles I was accompanied by one of the other native boys, leading a horse to carry a little water for us, and take back the stores the overseer had buried at that point, when the second horse knocked up with him on the morning of the 9th. Having found the things, and put them on the horse, I sent the boy with them back to the camp, together with a large sting-ray fish which he had speared in the surf near the shore. It was a large, coarse, ugly-looking thing, but as it seemed to be of the same family as the skate, I did not imagine we should run any risk in eating it. In other respects, circumstances had broken through many scruples and prejudices, and we were by no means particular as to what the fish might be, if it were eatable.

Having buried our little keg of water until our return, the King George's Sound native and myself pushed on for five miles further, and then halted for the night, after a day's journey of fifteen miles. We now cooked some sting-ray fish (for the native with me had speared a second one,) and though it was coarse and dry, our appetites had been sharpened by our walk, and we thought it far from being unpalatable.

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April 11.—Moving away long before daylight, we pushed steadily on, and about dusk arrived, after a stage of twenty-three miles, at the place where our stores were. I found a much greater weight here than I expected, and feared it would be quite impossible for us to carry the whole away. By the light of the fire, I threw out saddles, clothes, oil-skins, etc. that we did not absolutely require, and packing up the remainder, weighed a bundle of thirty-two pounds for myself to carry, and one of twenty-two for the native, who also had a gun to take. Our arrangements being completed for the morrow, we enjoyed our supper of sting-ray, and lay down for the night.

April 12.—To-day the weather was cloudy and sultry, and we found it very oppressive carrying the weight we had with us, especially as we had no water. By steady perseverance, we gained the place where our little keg had been buried; and having refreshed ourselves with a little tea, again pushed on for a few miles to a place where I had appointed the overseer to send a native to meet us with water. He was already there, and we all encamped together for the night, soon forgetting, in refreshing sleep, the fatigues and labours of the day.

The 13th was a dark cloudy day, with light rains in the morning. About noon we arrived at the camp, after having walked seventy-six miles in the last three days and a half, during great part of which, we had carried heavy weights. We had, however, successfully accomplished the object for which we had gone, and had now anxieties only for our future progress, the provisions and other stores being all safely recovered.

During my absence, I had requested the overseer to bake some bread, in order that it might be tolerably stale before we used it. To my regret and annoyance, I found that he had baked one third of our whole supply, so that it would be necessary to use more than our stated allowance, or else to let it spoil. It was the more vexing, to think that in this case the provisions had been so improvidently expended, from the fact of our having plenty of the sting-ray fish, and not requiring so much bread.

April 14.—Early this morning I sent the overseer, and one of the native boys, with three days' provision to the commencement of the cliffs to the westward, visible from the sand-hills near our camp, in order that they might ascertain the exact distance they were from us, and whether any grass or water could be procured nearer to their base than where we were. After their departure, I attended to the horses, and then amused myself preparing some fishing lines to set off the shore, with a large stone as an anchor, and a small keg for a buoy. The day was, however, wild and boisterous; and in my attempts to get through the surf, to set the lines, I was thrown down, together with the large stone I was carrying, and my leg severely cut and bruised. The weather was extremely cold, too, and being without coat or jacket of any kind, I suffered severely from it.



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The 15th was another cold day, with the wind at south-west, and we could neither set the lines, nor spear sting-ray, whilst the supply we had before obtained was now nearly exhausted. One of the horses was taken ill, and unable to rise, from the effects of the cold; his limbs were cramped and stiff, and apparently unable to sustain the weight of his body. After plucking dry grass, and making a bed for him, placing a breakwind of boughs round, and making a fire near him, we left him for the night.

Late in the evening, the overseer and boy returned from the westward, and reported, that the cliffs were sixteen miles away; that they had dug for water, but that none could be found, and that there was hardly a blade of grass any where, whilst the whole region around was becoming densely scrubby; through much of which we should have to pass before we reached the cliffs. Altogether, the overseer seemed quite discouraged by the appearance of the country, and to dread the idea of moving on in that direction, often saying, that he wished he was back, and that he thought he could retrace his steps to Fowler's Bay, where a supply of provisions had been buried. I was vexed at these remarks, because I felt that I could not coincide in them, and because I knew that when the moment for decision came, my past experience, and the strong reasons which had produced in my own mind quite a different conviction, would compel me to act in opposition to the wishes of the only European with me, and he a person, too, whom I sincerely respected for the fidelity and devotion with which he had followed me through all my wanderings. I was afraid, too, that the native boys, hearing his remarks, and perceiving that he had no confidence in our future movements, would catch up the same idea, and that, in addition to the other difficulties and anxieties I had to cope with, would be the still more frightful one of disaffection and discontent. Another subject of uneasiness arose from the nature of our diet;—for some few days we had all been using a good deal of the sting-ray fish, and though at first we had found it palatable, either from confining ourselves too exclusively to it, or from eating too much, it had latterly disagreed with us. The overseer declared it made him ill and weak, and that he could do nothing whilst living upon it. The boys said the same; and yet we had nothing else to supply its place, and the small quantity of flour left would not admit of our using more than was barely necessary to sustain life. At this time we had hardly any fish left, and the whole party were ravenously hungry. In this dilemma, I determined to have the sick horse killed for food. It was impossible he could ever recover, and by depriving him of life a few hours sooner than the natural course of events would have done, we should be enabled to get a supply of food to last us over a few days more, by which time I hoped we might again be able to venture on, and attempt another push to the westward.



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Early on the morning of the 16th, I sent the overseer to kill the unfortunate horse, which was still alive, but unable to rise from the ground, having never moved from the place where he had first been found lying yesterday morning. The miserable animal was in the most wretched state possible, thin and emaciated by dreadful and long continued sufferings, and labouring under some complaint, that in a very few hours at the farthest, must have terminated its life.

After a great portion of the meat had been cut off from the carcase, in thin slices, they were dipped in salt water and hung up upon strings to dry in the sun. I could not bring myself to eat any to-day, so horrible and revolting did it appear to me, but the overseer made a hearty dinner, and the native boys gorged themselves to excess, remaining the whole afternoon by the carcase, where they made a fire, cutting off and roasting such portions as had been left. They looked like ravenous wolves about their prey, and when they returned to the camp at night, they were loaded with as much cooked meat as they could carry, and which they were continually eating during the night; I made a meal upon some of the sting-ray that was still left, but it made me dreadfully sick, and I was obliged to lie down, seriously ill.

April 17.—Being rather better to-day, I was obliged to overcome my repugnance to the disagreeable food we were compelled to resort to, and the ice once broken, I found that although it was far from being palatable, I could gradually reconcile myself to it. The boys after breakfast again went down to the carcase, and spent the whole day roasting and eating, and at night they again returned to the camp loaded. We turned all the meat upon the strings and redipped it in sea water again to-day, but the weather was unfavourable for drying it, being cold and damp. Both yesterday and to-day light showers fell sufficient to moisten the grass.

April 18.—The day being much warmer, many large flies were about, and I was obliged to have a fire kept constantly around the meat, to keep them away by the smoke. I now put the natives upon an allowance of five pounds of flesh each per day, myself and the overseer using about half that quantity.

On the 19th, I sent out one of the boys to try and get a sting-ray to vary our diet, but he returned unsuccessful. During the forenoon I was seized with a violent attack of dysentery, accompanied with diabetes, from which I suffered extremely. The overseer was affected also, but in a less violent degree. The origin of this complaint was plainly traceable to the food we had used for the last day or two; it rendered us both incapable of the least exertion of any kind, whilst the disorder continued, and afterwards left us very languid and weak. In the evening upon examining the meat, a great deal of it was found to be getting putrid, or fly-blown, and we were obliged to pick it over, and throw what was tainted away.

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April 20.—To-day I had all the meat boiled, as I thought it would keep better cooked than raw, we had only a small tin saucepan without a handle, to effect our cooking operations with, and the preparation of the meat therefore occupied the whole of the day. The overseer was again attacked with dysentery. At night the clouds gathered heavily around, and the weather being mild and soft, I fully expected rain; after dark, however, the wind rose high and the threatened storm passed away.

On the 21st, I was seized again with illness. The overseer continued to be affected also, and we were quite unable to make the necessary preparations for our journey to the westward, which I fully intended to have commenced to-morrow. For several hours we were in the greatest agony, and could neither lie down, sit up, nor stand, except with extreme pain. Towards the afternoon the violence of the symptoms abated a little, but we were exceedingly weak.

April 22.—Upon weighing the meat this morning, which as usual was left out upon the strings at night, I discovered that four pounds had been stolen by some of the boys, whilst we were sleeping. I had suspected that our stock was diminishing rapidly for a day or two past, and had weighed it overnight that I might ascertain this point, and if it were so, take some means to prevent it for the future. With so little food to depend upon, and where it was so completely in the power of any one of the party, to gratify his own appetite at the expense of the others, during their absence, or when they slept, it became highly necessary to enforce strict honesty towards each other; I was much grieved to find that the meat had been taken by the natives, more particularly as their daily allowance had been so great. We had, moreover, only two days' supply of the meat left for the party, and being about to commence the long journey before us, it was important to economise our provisions to support us under the fatigue and labours we should then have to undergo.

Having deducted the four pounds stolen during the night, from the daily rations of the three boys, I gave them the remainder, (eight pounds) telling them the reason why their quantity was less to-day than usual, and asking them to point out the thief, who alone should be punished and the others would receive their usual rations. The youngest of the three boys, and the King George's Sound native, resolutely denied being concerned in the robbery; but the other native doggedly refused to answer any questions about it, only telling me that he and the native from King George's Sound would leave me and make their way by themselves. I pointed out to them the folly, in fact the impossibility almost, of their succeeding in any attempt of the kind; advised them to remain quietly where they were, and behave well for the future, but concluded by telling them that if they were bent upon going they might do so, as I would not attempt to stop them.

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For some time past the two eldest of the boys, both of whom were now nearly grown up to manhood, had been far from obedient in their general conduct. Ever since we had been reduced to a low scale of diet they had been sulky and discontented, never assisting in the routine of the day, or doing what they were requested to do with that cheerfulness and alacrity that they had previously exhibited. Unaccustomed to impose the least restraint upon their appetites or passions, they considered it a hardship to be obliged to walk as long as any horses were left alive, though they saw those horses falling behind and perishing from fatigue; they considered it a hardship, too, to be curtailed in their allowance of food, as long as a mouthful was left unconsumed; and in addition to this, they had imbibed the overseer's idea that we never should succeed in our attempt to get to the westward, and got daily more dissatisfied at remaining idle in camp, whilst the horses were recruiting.

The excess of animal food they had had at their command for some few days after the horse was killed, made them forget their former scarcity, and in their folly they imagined that they could supply their own wants, and get on better and more rapidly than we did, and they determined to attempt it. Vexed as I had been at finding out they had not scrupled to plunder the small stock of provisions we had left, I was loth to let them leave me foolishly without making an effort to prevent it. One of them had been with me a great length of time, and the other I had brought from his country and his friends, and to both I felt bound by ties of humanity to prevent if possible their taking the rash step they meditated; my remonstrances and expostulations were however in vain, and after getting their breakfasts, they took up some spears they had been carefully preparing for the last two days, and walked sulkily from the camp in a westerly direction. The youngest boy had, it seemed, also been enticed to join them, for he was getting up with the intention of following, when I called him back and detained him in the camp, as he was too young to know what he was doing, and had only been led astray by the others. I had intended to have moved on myself to-day, but the departure of the natives made me change my intention, for I deemed it desirable that they should have at least three or four days start of us. Finding that the single sheep we had left would now be the cause of a good deal of trouble, I had it killed this afternoon, that we might have the full advantage of it whilst we had plenty of water, and might be enabled to hoard our bread a little. We had still a little of the horse-flesh left, and made a point of using it all up before the mutton was allowed to be touched.

The morning of the 23rd broke cool and cloudy, with showers gathering from seawards; the wind was south-west, and the sky wild and lowering in that direction. During the forenoon light rain fell, but scarcely more than sufficient to moisten the grass; it would, however, probably afford our deserters a drink upon the cliffs. Towards evening the sky cleared, and the weather became frosty.

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On the following day we still remained in camp, hoping for rain;—a single heavy shower would so completely have freed us from the danger of attempting to force a passage through the great extent of arid country before us, that I was unwilling to move on until the very last moment. Our rations were however rapidly disappearing whilst we were idling in camp, the horse-flesh was all consumed, and to-day we had commenced upon the mutton, so that soon we should be compelled to go, whether it rained or not. Month after month however had passed away without any fall of rain, and the season had now arrived when, under ordinary circumstances, much wet might be expected; and though each day, as it passed without gratifying our hopes, but added to our disappointment, yet did every hour we lingered give us a better chance of being relieved by showers in our route round the last cliffs of the Bight. The evening set in mild but close, with the wind at north-east, and I had great hopes that showers would fall.

April 25.—During the night dense clouds, accompanied by gusts of wind and forked lightning, passed rapidly to the south-west, and this morning the wind changed to that quarter. Heavy storms gathered to seawards with much thunder and lightning, but no rain fell near us; the sea appearing to attract all the showers. The overseer shot a very large eagle to-day and made a stew of it, which was excellent. I sent the boy out to try and shoot a wallaby, but he returned without one.

In the evening, a little before dark, and just as we had finished our tea, to my great astonishment our two runaway natives made their appearance, the King George's Sound native being first. He came frankly up, and said that they were both sorry for what they had done, and were anxious to be received again, as they found they could get nothing to eat for themselves. The other boy sat silently and sullenly at the fire, apparently more chagrined at being compelled by necessity to come back to us than sorry for having gone away. Having given them a lecture, for they both now admitted having stolen meat, not only on the night they were detected but previously, I gave each some tea and some bread and meat, and told them if they behaved well they would be treated in every respect as before, and share with us our little stock of provisions as long as it lasted.

I now learnt that they had fared in the bush but little better than I should have done myself. They had been absent four days, and had come home nearly starved. For the first two days they got only two small bandicoots and found no water; they then turned back, and obtaining a little water in a hollow of the cliffs, left by the shower which had passed over, they halted under them to fish, and speared a sting-ray; this they had feasted on yesterday, and to-day came from the cliffs to look for us without any thing to eat at all.

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During the night some heavy clouds passed over our heads, and once a drop or two of rain fell. The 26th broke wild and stormy to the east and west, and I determined to remain one day longer in camp, in the hope of rain falling, but principally to rest the two natives a little after the long walk from which they had returned. Breakfast being over, I sent the overseer and one native to the beach, to try to get a sting-ray, and to the other I gave my gun to shoot wallabie: no fish was procured, but one wallabie was got, half of which I gave to the native who killed it, for his dinner.

Being determined to break up camp on the 27th, I sent the King George's Sound native on a-head, as soon as he had breakfasted, that, by preceding the party, he might have time to spear a sting-ray against we overtook him. The day was dull, cloudy, and warm, and still looking likely for rain, with the wind at north-east. At eleven we were ready, and moved away from a place where we had experienced so much relief in our extremity, and at which our necessities had compelled us to remain so long. For twenty-eight days we had been encamped at the sand-drifts, or at the first water we had found, five miles from them. Daily, almost hourly, had the sky threatened rain, and yet none fell. We had now entered upon the last fearful push, which was to decide our fate. This one stretch of bad country crossed, I felt a conviction we should be safe. That we had at least 150 miles to go to the next water I was fully assured of; I was equally satisfied that our horses were by no means in a condition to encounter the hardships and privations they must meet with in such a journey; for though they had had a long rest, and in some degree recovered from their former tired-out condition, they had not picked up in flesh or regained their spirits; the sapless, withered state of the grass and the severe cold of the nights had prevented them from deriving the advantage that they ought to have done from so long a respite from labour. Still I hoped we might be successful. We had lingered day by day, until it would have been folly to have waited longer; the rubicon was, however, now passed, and we had nothing to rely upon but our own exertions and perseverance, humbly trusting that the great and merciful God who had hitherto guarded and guided us in safety would not desert us now.

Upon leaving the camp we left behind one carbine, a spade, some horse hobbles, and a few small articles, to diminish as much as possible the weight we had to carry. For eight miles we traced round the beach to the most north-westerly angle of the Bight, and for two miles down its south-west shore, but were then compelled by the rocks to travel to the back, through heavy scrubby ridges for four miles; after which we again got in to the beach, and at one mile along its shore, or fifteen miles from our camp, we halted for the night, at a patch of old grass. The afternoon had been hot, but the night set in cold and clear, and all appearance of rain was gone. The native I had sent on before had not succeeded in getting a fish, though he had broken one or two spears in his attempts.

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April 28.—After travelling along the beach for two miles we ascended behind the cliffs, which now came in bluff to the sea, and then keeping along their summits, nearly parallel with the coast, and passing through much scrub, low brushwood, and dwarf tea-tree growing upon the rocky surface, we made a stage of twenty miles; both ourselves and the horses greatly tired with walking through the matted scrub of tea-tree every where covering the ground. The cliffs did not appear so high as those we had formerly passed along, and probably did not exceed from two to three hundred feet in elevation. They appeared to be of the same geological formation; the upper crust an oolitic limestone, with many shells embedded, below that a coarse, hard, grey limestone, and then alternate streaks of white and yellow in horizontal strata, but which the steepness of the cliffs prevented my going down to examine.

Back from the sea, the country was rugged and stony, and every where covered with scrub or dwarf tea-tree. There was very little grass for the horses, and that old and withered. In the morning one of the natives shot a large wallabie, and this evening the three had it amongst them for supper; after which they took charge of the horses for the night, this being the first time they had ever watched them on the journey, myself and the overseer having exclusively performed this duty heretofore; but, as I was now expecting a longer and almost more arduous push than any we had yet made, and in order that we might be able to discharge efficiently the duties devolving upon us, and make those exertions which our exigences might require, I deemed it only right that we should sometimes be assisted by the two elder boys, in a task which we had before always found to be the most disagreeable and fagging of any, that of watching the horses at night, after a long and tiring day's journey.

On the morning of the 29th we moved away very early, passing over a rocky level country, covered with low brush, and very fatiguing to both ourselves and our horses. The morning was gloomy and close, and the day turned out intensely hot. After travelling only fifteen miles we were compelled to halt until the greatest heat was passed. Our stock of water and provisions only admitted of our making two meals in the day, breakfast and supper; but as I intended this evening to travel great part of the night, we each made our meal now instead of later in the day, that we might not be delayed when the cool of the evening set in. We had been travelling along the summit of the cliffs parallel with the coast line, and had found the country level and uniform in its character; the cliffs still being from two to three hundred feet in elevation, and of the same formation as I noticed before. There were patches of grass scattered among the scrub at intervals, but all were old and withered.



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At four in the afternoon we again proceeded on our journey, but had not gone far before the sky unexpectedly became overcast with clouds, and the whole heavens assumed a menacing and threatening appearance. To the east and to the west, thunderclouds gathered heavily around, every indication of sudden and violent rain was present to cheer us as we advanced, and all were rejoicing in the prospects of a speedy termination to our difficulties. The wind had in the morning been north-east, gradually veering round to north and north-west, at which point it was stationary when the clouds began to gather. Towards sunset a heavy storm passed over our heads, with the rapidity almost of lightning; the wind suddenly shifted from north-west to south-west, blowing a perfect hurricane, and rendering it almost impossible for us to advance against it. A few moments before we had confidently expected a heavy fall of rain; the dark and lowering sky had gradually gathered and concentrated above and around us, until the very heavens seemed overweighted and ready every instant to burst. A briefer interval of time, accompanied by the sudden and violent change of wind, had dashed our hopes to the ground, and the prospect of rain was now over, although a few heavy clouds still hung around us.

Three miles from where we had halted during the heat of the day, we passed some tolerable grass, though dry, scattered at intervals among the scrub, which grew here in dense belts, but with occasional openings between. The character of the ground was very rocky, of an oolitic limestone, and having many hollows on its surface. Although we had only travelled eighteen miles during the day, the overseer requested I would stop here, as he said he thought the clouds would again gather, and that rain might fall to-night; that here we had large sheets of rock, and many hollows in which the rain-water could be collected; but that if we proceeded onwards we might again advance into a sandy country, and be unable to derive any advantage from the rain, even should it fall. I intended to have travelled nearly the whole of this night to make up for the time we had lost in the heat of the day, and I was the more inclined to do this, now that the violence of the storm had in some measure abated, and the appearance of rain had almost disappeared. The overseer was so earnest, however, and so anxious for me to stop for the night, that greatly against my own wishes, and in opposition to my better judgment, I gave way to him and yielded. The native boys too had made the same request, seconding the overseer's application, and stating, that the violence of the wind made it difficult for them to walk against it.

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The horses having been all hobbled and turned out to feed, the whole party proceeded to make break-winds of boughs to form a shelter from the wind, preparatory to laying down for the night. We had taken a meal in the middle of the day, which ought to have been deferred until night, and our circumstances did not admit of our having another now, so that there remained only to arrange the watching of the horses, before going to sleep. The native boys had watched them last night, and this duty of course fell to myself and the overseer this evening. The first watch was from six o'clock P. M. to eleven, the second from eleven until four A. M., at which hour the whole party usually arose and made preparations for moving on with the first streak of daylight.

To-night the overseer asked me which of the watches I would keep, and as I was not sleepy, though tired, I chose the first. At a quarter before six, I went to take charge of the horses, having previously seen the overseer and the natives lay down to sleep, at their respective break-winds, ten or twelve yards apart from one another. The arms and provisions, as was our custom, were piled up under an oilskin, between my break-wind and that of the overseer, with the exception of one gun, which I always kept at my own sleeping place. I have been thus minute in detailing the position and arrangement of our encampment this evening, because of the fearful consequences that followed, and to shew the very slight circumstances upon which the destinies of life sometimes hinge. Trifling as the arrangement of the watches might seem, and unimportant as I thought it at the time, whether I undertook the first or the second, yet was my choice, in this respect, the means under God's providence of my life being saved, and the cause of the loss of that of my overseer.

The night was cold, and the wind blowing hard from the south-west, whilst scud and nimbus were passing very rapidly by the moon. The horses fed tolerably well, but rambled a good deal, threading in and out among the many belts of scrub which intersected the grassy openings, until at last I hardly knew exactly where our camp was, the fires having apparently expired some time ago. It was now half past ten, and I headed the horses back, in the direction in which I thought the camp lay, that I might be ready to call the overseer to relieve me at eleven. Whilst thus engaged, and looking steadfastly around among the scrub, to see if I could anywhere detect the embers of our fires, I was startled by a sudden flash, followed by the report of a gun, not a quarter of a mile away from me. Imagining that the overseer had mistaken the hour of the night, and not being able to find me or the horses, had taken that method to attract my attention, I immediately called out, but as no answer was returned, I got alarmed, and leaving the horses, hurried up towards the camp as rapidly as I could. About a hundred yards from it, I met the King George's Sound native (Wylie), running towards me, and in great alarm, crying out, "Oh Massa, oh Massa, come here,"—but could gain no information from him, as to what had occurred. Upon reaching the encampment, which I did in about five minutes after the shot was fired, I was horror-struck to find my poor overseer lying on the ground, weltering in his blood, and in the last agonies of death.



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## APPENDIX.

### DESCRIPTION OF SOME NEW AUSTRALIAN ANIMALS. BY J. E. GRAY, ESQ., F.R.S.

I. It was formerly believed, that all the Mammalia inhabiting the Australian continent, but the wild dog, were marsupial; but as the natural history of the country is better known, we are becoming acquainted with nearly as many native non-marsupial beasts as there are marsupial; but they are certainly, generally, of a small size, such as bats, mice, *etc.*, as compared to the kangaroos and other marsupial genera.

Some years ago, in the Proceedings of the Geological Society, (iii. 52.) I described a species of RHINOLOPHUS, from Moreton Bay, which was peculiar for the large size of its ears, hence named R. MEGAPHYLLUS; the one now about to be described, which was found flying near the hospital at Port Essington, by Dr. Sibbald, R.N., is as peculiar for the brightness and beauty of its colour, the male being nearly as bright an orange as the Cock of the rock (RUPICOLA) of South America.

*The orange horse-shoe Bat*, (RHINOLOPHUS AURANTIUS.) t. 1. f. 1.—Ears moderate, naked, rather pointed at the end; nose-leaf large, central process small, scarcely lobed, blunt at the top; fur elongate, soft, bright orange, the hairs of the back with short brown tips, of the under side rather paler, of the face rather darker; female pale yellow, with brown tips to the hair of the upper parts.

Inhab. Port Essington, near the Hospital, Dr. Sibbald, R.N.

The membranes are brown, nakedish; the tail is rather produced beyond the membrane at the tip; the feet are small, and quite free from the wings.

Male. Female.

The length of the body and head	1.10	1.10
The length of the fore-arm bone	1.11	1.10
The length of the shin-bone	8	8
The length of the ankle and foot	4	4

II. In Captain Grey's Travels in Western Australia I gave a list of the different species of Reptiles and Amphibia found in Australia. Since that period the British Museum has received from the different travellers various other species from that country. The lizards have been described in the catalogue of the Museum collection, recently published, and are being figured in the zoology of H.M.S. Erebus and Terror. Two of the most interesting specimens lately received, belong to a new genus of frogs which appear to be peculiar to Australia, which I shall now proceed to describe:—



*Genus* PERIALIA. *Fam.* RANIDAE.—Tongue nearly circular, entire; palate concave, with two groups of palatine teeth between the orifices of the internal nostrils; jaw toothed; head smooth, high on the side; mouth large; eyes convex, swollen above, tympanum scarcely visible; back rather convex, high on the sides; skin smooth, not porous; limbs rather short; toes 4.5, tapering to a point, nearly free, the palms with roundish tubercles beneath; the fourth hind toe elongate, the rest rather short; the ankle with an oblong, compressed, horny, sharp-edged tubercle on the inner side at the base of the inner toe; the male with an internal vocal sac under the throat.

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This genus agrees with SCIAPHOS, PYXICEPHALUS, and PELOLATES, in having a large, sharp-edged tubercle on the inner edge of the ankle, but it differs from them at first sight, by the head and body being compressed and high, the mouth very large, and the eyes convex on the side of the forehead.

PERIALIA EYREI, t. 2. f. 3.—Olive, sides of the face, and body blackish brown; face varies with white streak; the sides of body marbled with unequal white spots; limbs brown and white marbled; under side of the body whitish.

Inhab. Australia, on the banks of the river Murray.

PERIALIA? ORNATA, t. 2. f. 2.—Pale grey, back and sides, marbled with symmetrical dark-edged spots, those of the middle of the back being generally confluent, of the face elongate, band-like; the legs dark-banded, beneath white.

Inhab. Port Essington.

Somewhat like DISCOGLOSUS PICTUS in appearance. The internal nostrils are far apart, with an elongate group of palatine teeth level with their hinder edges.

Taking advantage of the space of the plate, figures of the following species from the same country, which have not hitherto been illustrated have been added. They were described or noticed in the list before referred to.

1. *Cystignathus dorsalis*, t. 1. f. 2. *Gray, Ann. Nat. Hist.* 1841.

2. *Phryniscus Australis*, t. 2. f. 1. DUM. *And bib. E. Gen.* viii. 725. *Bombinator Australis*, *Gray, proc. Zool. Soc.* 1838. 57.

III. Mr. Eyre having brought home with him the drawing of a species of cray-fish found near the river Murray, which is called by the natives UKODKO, I have been induced to examine the different species of *Astaci* in the British Museum collection, which have been received at various times from Australia, for the purpose of attempting to identify it.

As we have three very distinct species which have not yet been described or figured in any of the works which have passed under my inspection, I shall proceed to detail their peculiar characters and give figures of their more characteristic features.

The drawing of "the UKODKO or smaller Murray cray-fish" most nearly resembles *ASTACUS Quinque-CARINATUS*, but it is three or four times larger than any of the specimens of that species which we possess, and the figure does not shew any indications of the five keels on the front of the head. In wanting the keel on the thorax it agrees with an Australian species described by Mr. Milne Edwards under the name of *ASTACUS AUSTRALASIENSIS*, said to come from New Holland, and to be about two inches long, while Mr. Eyre's figure is more than six inches, and is said not to be taken

from a large specimen. It differs from Mr. Milne Edwards' figures, in having only one spine on the wrist, so that probably there are still two more species of the genus to be found in Australia.

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Mr. Eyre in his notes states—"The Fresh water cray-fish, of the smaller variety; native names, cu-kod-ko, or koon-go-la, is found in the alluvial flats of the river Murray, in South Australia, which are subject to a periodical flooding by the river; it burrows deep below the surface of the ground as the floods recede and are dried up, and remains dormant, until the next flooding recalls it to the surface; at first it is in a thin and weakly state, but soon recovers and gets plump and fat, at which time it is most excellent eating. Thousands are procured from a small space of ground with ease, and hundreds of natives are supported in abundance and luxury by them for many weeks together. It sometimes happens that the flood does not recur every year, and in this case the eu-kod-ko lie dormant until the next, and a year and a half would thus be passed below the surface. I have often seen them dug out of my garden, or in my wheat field, by the men engaged in digging ditches for irrigation. The floods usually overflow the river flats in August or September, and recede again in February or March. For further particulars respecting the modes of catching the eu-kod-kos, vide vol. ii. pages 252 and 267."

"I have spoken of this cray-fish as the *smaller* variety as respects the Murray. It is *larger* than the one found in the ponds of the river Torrens at Adelaide; but in the river Murray one is procured of a size ranging to 4 1/2 lbs., and which is *quite equal* in flavour to the *finest* lobster."

These latter have not yet been received in any of our collections, so that we are unable to state how it differs from those now described: they must be the giants of the genus.

1. The Van Diemen's Land Cray-fish. ASTACUS FRANKLINII, t. 3. f. 1.—Carapace convex on the sides, rather rugose on the sides behind, the front only slightly produced and edged with a toothed raised margin not reaching beyond the front edge of the lower orbit, and with a very short ridge at the middle of each orbit behind; the hands compressed, rather rugose, edge thick and toothed: wrist with four or five conical spines on the inner side, the front the largest: the central caudal lobe, broad, continuous, calcareous to the tip, lateral lobes, with a very slight central keel; the sides of the second abdominal rings spinose.

Inhab. Van Diemen's Land.

Mr. Milne Edwards, (Archives du Museum, ii. 35. t. 3.) has recently described a species of this genus from Madagascar, under the name of A. MADAGASCARIENSIS, which is nearly allied to the Van Diemen's Land species, in the shortness of the frontal process, the spines on the sides of the second abdominal segment, and in the lobes of the tail; but it differs from it in the length of the claws, and other particulars. Madagascar appears to be the tropical confines of the genus.

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2. The Western Australia Cray-fish. *ASTACUS Quinque-CARINATUS*, t. 3. f. 3.—Carapace smooth, rather convex, and with three keels above; the beak, longly produced, ending in a spine, simple on the side and produced into a keel on each side behind; the central caudal lobe rather narrow, indistinctly divided in half, and like the other lobes flexile at the end, the lateral lobes with a central keel ending a slight spine; the hands elongated, compressed, smooth, with a thickened, toothed, inner margin, which is ciliated above; wrist with two conical spines on the inner side.

Inhab. Western Australia, near Swan River.

3. The Port Essington Cray-fish. *ASTACUS BICARINATUS*, t. 3.f. 2.—Carapace smooth, rather flattened, with a keel on each side above in front; the beak longly produced, flattened, three toothed at the top; hands rather compressed, smooth, thinner and slightly toothed on the inner edge; the wrist triangular, angularly produced in front; the central caudal lobes with two slightly diverging keels continued, and like the others thin and flexible at the end, the inner lateral lobes with two keels, each ending with a spine.

Inhab. Port Essington, Mr. Gilbert.

The *A. AUSTRALASIENSIS*, Milne Edwards, Crust ii. 332. t. 24. f. 1—5. agrees with this species in the form of the beak, but the keels on the thorax are not noticed either in the description or in the figure; and the caudal lobes in the figure appear most to resemble *A. FRANKLINII*.

As the genus *ASTACUS* is now becoming more numerous in species, it may be divided, with advantage, into three sections, according to the form of the caudal lobes; thus:—

A. The central caudal lobes divided by a transverse suture into two parts, both being hard and calcareous, and with a small spine at the outer angle of the suture (*PATAMOBIOUS*, *Leach*) as *A. FLUVIATILIS* of Europe, and *A. AFFINIS* of North America, with an elongated rostrum, and *A. BARTONII* of North America, with a short rostrum.

B. The central caudal lobe continued hard and calcareous to the end, as *ASTACUS FRANKLINII* of Van Diemen's Land, and *A. MADAGASCARIENSIS* of Madagascar; both have a very short beak, and the second abdominal ring spinose.

C. The central caudal lobe continued or only slightly divided on the middle of each side; but it and all the lateral lobes are thin and flexible at the hinder parts, as *ASTACUS Quinque-CARINATUS*, and *A. BICARINATUS* of Australia, and *A. CHILIENSIS* of Chili.

*Catalogue of reptiles and fish,  
found at king George's sound,  
by Deputy assistant commissary-general Neill,*

*In A letter to J. E. Gray, Esq. British museum, London.*

\* \* \* \* \*

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“Sir,—Although in the course of my life, I have had little opportunity to pay attention to the study of Ichthyology, it occurred to me, as now and then a leisure moment was afforded from official duties, that it would perhaps be useful, as well as amusing, to collect and make drawings of the fish about King George’s Sound; and I have been in a great degree stimulated to do so, from an accidental visit of my friend, His Excellency Captain Grey, Governor of South Australia, who advised me to forward the drawings to you for the purpose of being placed with others of a similar kind in the British Museum, where ultimately sufficient material may be collected to give some account of the New Holland fish.

“Nothing is assumed as to the execution of the drawings; in fact it often occurred when I set off in my little skiff, (especially in the outset) that seven or eight species were procured in the course of the excursion, which compelled me to make drawings of all when I came home tired in the evening; forwarding them to ensure, as far as possible, their colours before they became extinct—a sort of forced effort in respect to the execution has, therefore, only been effected. The outline of nearly every specimen was taken from *actual profile*, by laying the fish upon the paper—in this way I defied error in outline—of course, afterwards carefully drawing and correcting various parts which required it, in a free or rough manner, time not admitting of much pains.

“In naming the fish, I have merely attempted to give the aboriginal and popular names known to the sealers and settlers. In obtaining the former, no little difficulty has been experienced. The younger natives generally giving different names to those of the elder; but finding the fish named by the latter more descriptive, I have, of course, in most instances, adopted them.

“For instance, No. 1, KOJETUCK means the fish with the bones; which is very descriptive, from Koje the bones, [Note 28: This was noticed by Governor Grey.] having very singular bones placed vertically in the neck, connecting the dorsal spines to the back, resembling small tobacco pipes.

“Also the KYNARNOCH, No 13, the bearded, *etc.* In many other instances the savages of this province are equally clear in naming their animals; and it is curious, even this applies to their children, who commonly receive their name from some extraordinary circumstance at, or about the time of their birth. I find, also, the old men are more minute in *species*; the younger often call very different fish by the same name, as the MEMON, Nos. 17, and 43, *etc.* but as this is curious, merely for the sake of fact, it is otherwise of little importance to the naturalist,—the native name being only useful to enable the collector to obtain any particular species hereafter. As regards the fidelity of the drawings, it may be worth while to mention a singular mistake made by my friend TOOLEGETWALEE; one of the oldest and most friendly savages we have of the King George tribe; who, in looking over my collection to assist me in naming them, observed that the drawings were a little raised off the paper; and like a monkey, began to touch them with his long talons; of course I flew to their rescue, and asked what he meant?



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“‘INIKEN how make em? me twank skin put him on!’ which literally means—‘Ah! I now see how you do it, you put the skin on!’ From want of paper of uniform size, I was obliged to use any paper which came to hand, cut the figures out, and afterwards paste them on clean paper; which circumstance gave rise to the poor savage’s mistake, and it was not until I actually cut one out before him, that he could be convinced that he was in error—a compliment I could hardly help smiling at. I have only to add in conclusion, that no attempt has been made at *arrangement*, having drawn and numbered the fish as they were caught. Most have been taken by my own hook; some by the native’s spear, and some by the seine net.

“The natural *scale* of each has been pasted on to the drawing, and when remarkable, both from the back and sides of the fish, which I considered a more desirable plan than giving imitations, that could hardly, in objects so minute, without the aid of a powerful magnifier, be depended on.

“A descriptive account of each specimen, with the corresponding number to that on the drawing, is also added.

“The effort has afforded me much amusement, and it will be still more agreeable, if they will in any way contribute to a better knowledge of the subject.

“I remain, Sir,

“Your most obedient servant,

“J. Neill.

“Albany, King George’s Sound,

“Western Australia.”

On receiving this most valuable and interesting collection, I referred the part relative to the Fish to my excellent friend, Dr. Richardson of Haslar, one of the first Ichthyologists now living, who has kindly arranged the notes in systematic order, and added to them, as far as he was able, the modern scientific names. I have done the same to the Reptiles myself. I have retained the original numbers as they refer to the drawings which are preserved in the zoological department of the British Museum.—J. E. Gray.

\* \* \* \* \*

### *Reptiles.*

Fam. Lialisidae. LIALIS BURTONII. Native name *Kerry-Gura*. Considered by the natives as harmless; the scales of the back are very minute; the tail when broken is sometimes terminated by three horny blunt ends; tongue divided and rounded.

LIALIS BICATENATA. Native name *William Lunger*. Tongue not forked, broad, and rounded off at the point. Not poisonous or at all dreaded by the natives; finely striped



down the back, and spotted with deep brown equal marks; has a lappel on each side of the vent.

Killed 10th of October, 1841.

*Fam.* COLUBRIDAE.

NAJA,—? Native name *torn-ock* or TOOKYTE. Colour dirty olive over the whole body; belly dirty olive; white, faintly dotted from the throat down to the vent, with reddish dirty orange spots; the whole colour appears as if faded; the scales are more closely united to the skin than those of the *noon*; fangs placed on each side of the upper jaw, short and rather blunt; scuta, 223.

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Although the natives assert, if a person is bitten by this make, and "gets down," *i.e.* lays in bed three days, he will recover, yet I am very doubtful of this account, more particularly from the women differing from the men, as well as the whole subject being hidden in superstition. Another ground of doubt rests upon the fact of having lost in Van Diemen's Land, a favourite dog, by the bite of a snake very similar to this; the poor animal expired fourteen minutes after the bite, although the piece was almost instantaneously cut out.

The women of King George's Sound declare the bite of the Torn-ock mortal; but the men laugh at that, and maintain the three days' "couple," (sleep) will restore the patients.

The specimen was 4 ft. 9 in. long, but they have been seen 6 or 7 feet long. This is a favourite food of the natives of King George's Sound.

COLUBER? Native name BARDICK. Dirty olive green over the whole back; belly dirty white; scuta 130.

The natives state that the bite produces great swelling of the part for a day or two, and goes off.

Never grows above 14 or 15 inches long. Caught October 1841.

COLUBER. Native name TORKITE or TORKYTE. Back, from the point of the tail to the point of the nose, dark sepia brown; under the head yellow; and towards the middle of the belly orange; scales minute; scuta 140; tongue forked; teeth very minute; no fangs observable. Caught August 30th, 1844.

Not at all dreaded by the natives; venomous, but not deadly, the bite merely producing a bad ulcer for a day or two.

ELAPS MELANOCEPHALUS. Native name WERR. Dirty olive green on the back, from the neck to the tail; scuta 147, dirty reddish orange; head black from the nose to neck; sides of the head white; tongue forked.

Doubtful if poisonous; little dreaded by the natives. Killed October 12th, 1845.

ELAPS. Native name *Norn* or NORNE. Whole body covered with spear shaped scales; head shining black; the ground colours of the back rich umber, almost black; scuta 161, of a dirty red orange; fangs two on each side of the upper jaw near the lios, small, and bent inwards; tongue forked

This is the most fatal of the New Holland snakes; the animal bitten seldom recovers. The Aborigines have a great dread of this reptile; they however eat of it if they kill it themselves, but there is a superstition amongst them about snakes, which prevents their eating them if killed by a European.



The specimen I figured was a small one, 3 ft. 9 in. long; they are often seen by the natives much larger. I have endeavoured to represent it as it generally sleeps or lies in wait for its prey, small birds, frogs, lizards, *etc.* It delights in swamps and marshes.

Killed October, 1844.

*Fam.* BOIDAE



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*Python*. Native name WAKEL or wa-A-KEL. This snake is considered by the natives a great delicacy, and by their account resembles mutton in flavour, being also remarkably fat. I requested them to let me taste the specimen from which the drawing was made; but they devoured every atom themselves, pretending they did not understand me. The WAKEL differs from the *Norn* in its habits; although both ascend trees in pursuit of small birds and the young of the opossums. The WAKEL delights in rocky, dry places, near salt water; they are very sluggish, and easily caught by the women, who seize them behind the head and wring their necks. They are described to have been seen 9 or 10 feet long. My specimen, a young male, was exactly 5 feet long. The scales of this species are firmly fixed to the skin, in plates all over the back and belly. The colour is beautiful, dark greenish brown, finely variegated with yellowish white spots.

It was killed by Paddy, a native constable, near Albany, October, 1841.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Fishes.*

### GOBIIDAE.

No. 58.—PATOECUS FRONTO. Rich. Ann. Nat. Hist. Oct. 1844, vol. xiv.p. 280, Ichth. Ereb. and Terr. p. 20, pl. 13, f. 1, 2.

Native name KARRACK. Colour, a rich dragon's blood, or mahogany; found by a Danish boatman, named Byornsan, 80 miles off the east coast from King George's Sound, December 11th, 1841. Anal rays imperfectly counted, and there is a typographical error in the Zool. of Ereb. and Terr. The true numbers of the rays follow: B. 6; D. 24-16; A. 11-5; C. 10; P. 8.

### TRIGLIDAE.

No. 53.—SCORPOENA, or SEBASTES.—Native name, TYLYUCK, or TELUCK (*big-head*). "Rays, D. 12, 1-8; A. 3-5; P. 21; V. 1-5."

Uncommon. Inhabits rocky shores. Flesh firm and well-flavoured. Caught by hook, 16th Aug. 1841.

No. 34.—SEBASTES?—Native name, CUMBEUK.

A common inhabitant of rocky shores. Good eating. The specimen was speared by Munglewert, 17th May, 1841. "Rays, D. 14-17; A. 3-8; P. 14; V. 1-5."

No. 14.—APISTES. Apparently scaleless, and without free pectoral rays. Does not correspond well with A. MARMORATUS. "Rays, D. 12," etc. Caught by Seine, 18th March, 1841.

The fishermen dread wounds made by the species of this fish, as they always fester.

Native name BOORA-pokey, or *poky*. *Sergeant* of the settlers.

No. 36.—PLATYCEPHALUS.—Native name CUMBEL. Common Flat-head of the settlers. Seems to differ from described species in the two dark bars of the tail, being directly transverse, and followed by five large dark purple round spots.

Inhabits sandy shores very commonly, all round the coast of New Holland. A variety occurs at Maria Island, Van Diemen's Land. Caught by hook, 15th May, 1841. Good eating.

#### MULLIDAE.

No. 13.—UPENEUS.—Native name, MINAME, or KGNARNUCK (the bearded); "Red mullet" of the settlers.



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### PERCIDAE.

No. 46.—*ENOPLOSUS ARMATUS*. Cuv. et Val. 2, p. 133, pl. 20.—Native name, KARLOCK. Speared by a native, June 1841. Inhabits rocky shores.

### BERYCIDAE.

No. 2.—*BERYX LINEATUS*, C. and V. 3, p. 226.—Native name, CHETONG. Red Snapper, or Tide-fisher of the sealers. Very common in the bays of rocky shores. "Rays, D. 5-14; A. 4-13; P. 12; V. 1-7."

### SPHYRAENIDAE.

No. 59.—*SPHYROENA*.—Native name, KORDONG. "Rays, D. 5, 1-9; A. 11; P. 13; V. 1-5."

The "Common Baracoota" is found off the whole coast of New Holland, but the KORDONG seems to be peculiar to Western Australia. It comes into the shallow bays in summer; and being a sluggish fish, is easily speared by the natives, who esteem it to be excellent food. It will lay for a minute looking with indifference at its enemy, while he poises the fatal and unerring spear. Specimen caught in a net, December, 1841.

### SILLAGINIDAE.

No. 25.—*SILLAGO*.—Native name, MURDAR. "Rock whiting" of the settlers. "Rays, D. 10-23; A. 18; P. 13; A. 5."

Inhabits rocky shores and deep water. Caught by the seine, 3rd April, 1841. Good eating.

No. 11.—*SILLAGO PUNCTATA*, C. et V 3, P. 413.—Native name MURDAR. "Common whiting" of the settlers. "Rays, D. 12, 1-26; A. 22; P. 11; V. 5."

Inhabits shallow sandy bays abundantly, and is much admired for the delicacy of its flesh, but it is dryer eating than the whiting of Europe.

### SCIAENIDAE.

No. 55.—*CORVINA?*—Native name T'CHARK or T'CHYARK. King-fish of the sealers. "Rays, D. 9—1-27; A. 1-7; P. 15; V. 1-5."

Teeth strong and sharp. Grows to a great size; as I am informed by the natives, that they often spear individuals weighing sixty or seventy pounds. This fish enters the fresh-water periodically, like the Salmon of Europe, to spawn, and it is the only fish in this country which I have distinctly made out to do so. It is tolerably good eating. The



specimen was caught at the mouth of Oyster Harbour by a hook, on the 30th August, 1841. (This may be the adult of the *CORVINA KUHLII* of the *HISTOIRE des POISSONS*, 5. p. 121.)

SERRANIDAE.

No. 19.—*CENTROPRISTES TRUTTA*. *SCIAENA TRUTTA*, G. Foster, Icon. 210. (vide Ichth. of Ereb. and Terror, p. 30.)—Native name *king-NURRIE*, or *IINAGUR*. “Salmon” of the sealers. Pectorals yellow or orange coloured, with dark bases; scales faintly fan-streaked; last rays of dorsal and anal elongated. Faint oblong, orange-coloured spots on the sides, not in vertical rows. “Rays, D. 9-16; A. 2-10; P. 16.” Eye remarkably brilliant. Good eating in the summer time, but far inferior to the *Salmo SALAR*. It congregates in vast shoals, and pursues the fry of other fishes in shallow bays, but never enters fresh-water. It is often taken of from seven to ten pounds weight. It affords excellent sport to the angler. The specimen was caught by the hook from my own door on the 4th May, 1841.





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No. 3.—CENTROPRISTES (CIRRIPIS) GEORGIANUS. C. et V. 7. p. 451. Jenyn's Zool. of Beagle, p. 13.—Native name WARRAGUIT. "Herring" of the settlers. Rays, D. 9-14; A. 3-10; *etc.*

Inhabits rocky shores, and is taken in the summer, by net on sandy beaches. Specimen caught by the hook, on the 27th March, 1841.

No. 23.—SERRANUS? vel CAPRODON (Schlegel.) aut PLECTROPOMA.—Native name *Tang* or TAA (It bites.) The "Perch" of the Sealers. "Rays, D. 10-24; A. 2-9; P. 14; V. 1-5."

Eye fine crimson: pupil deep blue-black. Tail slightly rounded. Remarkably strong canines, from which peculiarity it has obtained its native name of TAA, as it bites severely when taken, if the fisher be not on the alert. It is good to eat, but is not common. Caught by the hook on 9th of April, 1841.

No. 4.—PLECTROPOMA *Nigro-RUBRUM*. C. et V. 2. p. 403.—Native name BUNDEL. "Crab-eyed soldier" of the settlers. "Rays, D. 10-17; A. 3-9."

Inhabits rocky shores, and is not common. Specimen caught by the hook, on the 4th April, 1841. Good eating.

No. 21.—*Helotes?*—Native names, BOORA, BOWRU, also CHARLUP. The "Pokey," or "small Trumpeter" of the sealers. "Rays, D. 11—1-11; A. 2-11; *etc.*"

Inhabits rocky places. Good to eat. Caught by the seine, on the 3rd March, 1841.

### CIRRHITIDAE.

No. 24.—CHEILODACTYLUS GIBBOSUS. Solander. Icon. Ined. Banks. No. 23.—Richardson Zool. Trans. 3, p. 102.—Native name KNELOCK (not certain).

Inhabits sandy beaches; is little known to the sealers. Caught in a net, 3rd March, 1841.

No. 39. CHEILODACTYLUS CARPONEMUS.—C. et V. 5. p. 362.—Native name CHETTANG. "Jew-fish" of the sealers (the name "Jew-fish" is applied otherwise by the colonists).

Inhabits rocky shores. Some specimens weigh upwards of sixteen pounds. Caught by hook, 17th May, 1841.

No. 42.—CHEILODACTYLUS. Native name TOORJENONG. "Black Jew-fish" of the sealers. "Rays, D. 16-26; A. 2-10; P. 13; V. 5."



Inhabits rocky points of sandy bays, where they love to run in and root up the sand with their fleshy mouths. They are sluggish, and easily speared by the Aborigines, whose chief food it constitutes at certain seasons. The specimen was speared in my presence by Wallup, on the 8th of June, 1841. The TOORJENONG grows to a large size, exceeding twenty pounds in weight. It is a gross feeder, and its flesh is hard and dry, but the head and sides are much prized by the natives, and the head of a large one makes tolerable soup.

No. 45.—LATRIS? (vix. GERRES?)—Native name QUIKE or QUIK, (horned). “Rays, 9-16; A. 3-16; P. 14; V. 1-5.”

Caught by the hook, off Rocky Point, on the 17th of August, 1844. Good to eat. (A spine before each nostril, probably springing from the heads of the maxillaries).

#### SPARIDAE.

No. 1.—PAGRUS GUTTULATUS. C. et V. 6, p. 160.—Native name KOJETUCK. “Common Snapper” of the sealers, “Rays, D. 12-9; A. 3-8; P. 1-5.”



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The Snapper grows to a large size, attaining from thirty to forty pounds weight, and is very voracious. It devours crabs and shell fish, crushing them with its strong teeth. It is common on all the rocky inlets of the coast of New Holland, extending down the eastern shores to Sidney.

### CHAETODONTIDAE.

No. 41.—CHAETODON SEXFASCIUTUS. Richardson Ann. of Nat. Hist.—Native name KNELOCK.

Inhabits rocky places. Not common.

No. 40.—CHAETODON.—Native name MITCHEBULLER or METYEBULLAR. Teeth very minute.

Inhabits rocky places. Speared by Warrawar, on the 27th of May, 1841.

No. 27.2.—CHAETODON.—Native name WAMEL or WAMLE. "Rays, D. 10-20; A. 3-17."

No. 6.—PLATAX?—Native names, TEUTUEK or KARLOCK, from the shape of the fins, also MUDEUR. "Striped sweep" of the sealers, and Pomfret of the settlers. D. 10; A. 2. Teeth small. Very common on rocky shores. Is a gross feeder; but good to eat. Caught by a hook on the 12th of March, 1841.

No. 8.—PIMELEPTERUS? MELANICHTHYS?—Native names, KGNMMUL or KARRAWAY. The striped zebra fish of the settlers. "Rays, D. 14-12; A. 3 11; V. 1-5." Mouth, small; tail rather concave.

Inhabits rocky shores, is a gross feeder, bad eating, and is not common. Caught by the hook on the 6th of April 1841.

No. 10.—PIMELEPTERUS? MELANICHTHYS? Schlegel.—Native names, KOWELANY, KARRAWAY, or MEMON. Tail a little forked. "Rays, D. 14-13; A.3-11; P. 17; V. 1-5." Eye, grey.

Inhabits rocky shores, and is not very common. Caught by a hook, on the 6th of April, 1841.

No. 17.—MELANICHTHYS.—Native name MEMON or *muddier*. "Rays, D. 14-13; A. 3-11; P. 17; V. 1-5."



Eye greyish yellow; teeth in a trenchant series on the edge of the upper and lower jaw, and also on the maxillaries. Is a gross feeder, and its flesh has a strong disagreeable smell, but is much relished by the Aborigines.

Inhabits rocky shores, and is rare. Caught by hook, 3rd May, 1841.

No. 33. Genus unknown.—Native name, TOOBETOET or TOOBITOO-*it*. Rays, D. 17-11; A. 11; P. 11; V. 4.

Is a rare inhabitant of rocky places. Speared by Mooriane, 14th of May, 1841. This seems to be a new generic form, nearly allied to HOPLEGNATHUS, Richardson; or SCARODON, Schlegel.

No. 43.—SCORPIS?—Native name, MEMON or MEEMON. “Sweep” of the sealers. “Rays, D.; A. 1.” Teeth minute. It is a gross feeder and poor eating. Very common on rocky shores. Being a bold voracious fish, it is easily speared or taken with a hook. The Aborigines generally select a rock which juts out into the sea, and sitting on their hams, beat crabs into fragments with a little stone, and throw them into the sea to attract this fish. The instant a fish comes to feed on the bait, the native, whose spear is ready, suddenly darts it, and rarely fails in bringing up the fish on its barbed point. Specimen caught by the hook, 15th of June, 1841.

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No. 44.—KURTUS?—Native name, TELYUA, or TELLYA, “Rays, D. 13; A. 2-19; V.5.”

Thrown up on Albany beach, 14th of August, 1841.

### PLATESSIDEAE.

No. 50.—PLATESSA? vel. HIPPOGLOSSUS? CHUNDELA.—Native name, CHONDELAR, or CHUNDELA. The “Spotted sole” of the settlers. Very common in all the shallow bays in the summer time, where it may be taken by the seine. The natives detect it when its body is buried in the sand, by the glistening of its eyes, and spear it. When fishing with the torch, in the night time, the natives feel for this fish with their naked feet. Specimen caught by seine, August, 1841. This fish is delicate eating.

### SCOMBERIDAE.

No. 32.—CARANX MICANS, Solander, Icon. Parkinson, Bib. Banks, No. 89.—Native name, MADAWICK, “Skip-jack” of the settlers. “Rays, D. 8-28; A. 2-23; P. 15.” Very common in shallow sandy bays, and forming the staple food of the natives, who assemble in fine calm days, and drive shoals of this fish into weirs that they have constructed of shrubs and branches of trees. Specimen caught by hook on the 12th of May, 1841.

No. 16.—TRACHURUS LUTESCENS. Solander (SCOMBER) Pisees Austr. p. 38. Richard. Ann. Nat. Hist. x. p. 14.—Native name, WARAWITE and MADIWICK. “Yellow tail” of the sealers. “Rays, D. 6; A. 2.” Eye very large.

Inhabits the edges of sandy banks. Good eating. Caught by hook 5th of March, 1841.

### MUGILIDAE.

No. 29. MUGIL vel. DAJAUS DIEMENSIS. Richardson, Ichth. of the Erebus and Terror, p. 37, pl. 26, f. 1.—Native name, KNAMLER or KNAMALER. “Common mullet” of the settlers. “Rays, D. 4-9; A. 1-13.”

Frequents shores with sandy beaches, and forms a principal article of food to the native youths, who are continually practising throwing their spears at this fish. It is very common, and is good eating. Caught by the seine, 12th April, 1841.

No. 57.—MUGIL.—Native name, MERRONG, or MIRRONG. “The flut-nosed mullet” of the settlers.

This is the finest fish of New Holland that I am acquainted with. In Wilson’s Inlet, about forty miles west of King George’s Sound, it abounds in the winter months; and the different tribes, from all parts of the coast, assemble there, by invitation of the proprietors of the ground, (the MURRYMIN,) who make great feasts on the occasion.



The fish attains a weight of three and a-half pounds, and a fat one yields about three quarters of a pound of oil, which the natives use for greasing their heads and persons. This fish runs up the rivers during the floods, and so becomes very fat. In summer it retires to the ocean. Caught in September, 1841.

LABRIDAE.

No. 47.—LABRUS LATICLAVIUS. Richardson, Zool. Trans. 3. p. 139.—Native name, KANUP, or PARILL, (Green-fish.)

Is a rare inhabitant of rocky shores. Caught by hook, 17th August, 1841. Poor eating.

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No. 20.—LABRUS?—Native name, KNELMICK, KIELMICK, or KIELNMICK. “Rock-cod” of the sealers. “Rays, D. 22; A. 14.”

Tail square. Very common on rocky coasts. Soft, indifferent eating. Caught by the hook, 3rd May, 1841.

No. 9.—LABRUS?—Native name, PARIL. “Common rock-fish of the sealers. “Rays, D. 9-11; A. 2-11, *etc.*”

Mouth furnished with small sharp teeth. Caught by hook, 12th March, 1841.

No. 37.—LABRUS?—Native name, PARIL, KUHOUL, or BOMBURN. “Black rock-fish” of the sealers. “Rays, D. 9-11; A. 3-10 seconds, *etc.*”

Inhabits rocky shores, and grows to the size of fifteen or twenty pounds weight. Poor, soft eating. Speared by Warrawar, 12th May, 1841.

No. 7.—LABRUS?—Native name, POKONG. “Brown rock-fish” of the sealers. “Rays, D. 9-12; A. 3-10,” *etc.*

Flesh soft and poor. Inhabitants rocky shores; very common. Caught by hook, 12th March, 1841.

No. 18.—CRENILABRUS?—Native name, KNELMICH, MINAME, or MINAMEN. Common “rock-fish” or “Parrot” of the sealers. “Rays, D. 8-11; A. 2-10,” *etc.*

Poor and soft. Inhabits bold rocky shores, where it is troublesome to the fisher by carrying off his bait. Caught by hook, 3rd May, 1841.

No. 12.—LABRUS?—Native name IANON'T, WOROGLUT, or CUMBEAK. “Rays, D. 30; A. 12.” Tail rounded, teeth very small.

Inhabits weedy places in deep water, and along sandy bays. Sometimes taken by the natives on the edge of banks. Excellent eating. Caught by hook, 18th March, 1841.

No. 30.—COSSYPHUS? CRENILABRUS?—Native name MOOLET or CHETON. “Red rock-fish” of the settlers. “Rays, D. 11-10; A. 3-11; P. 15.” *etc.*—Teeth very strong; tail rounded; its rays oblong.

Inhabits rocky shores. Bites eagerly, and is a gross feeder. Indifferent eating. Caught by hook, 6th April, 1841.

No. 35.-----? Genus not ascertained.--Native name KOOGENUCK, QUEJUIMUCK,



or *Knowl*. Little known to the sealers. "Rays, 11-12; A. 2 or 3; P. 16 or 18." Dorsal spines remarkable; scales large; grows to a large size; the flank scales of one weighing twenty-eight pounds, measure an inch and a half in length, and an inch and a quarter in breadth. (They are cycloid.—J. R.)

Inhabits rocky shores. The specimen was speared by Warrawar, 12th May, 1841.

#### CYPRINIDAE.

No. 5.—RYNCHANA GREYI. Richardson, Ichth. of Voy. of Erebus and Terror, p. 44 pl. 29. f. 1. 6.—Native name, *pinig* or WAUNUGUR, not certain. Not known to the sealers. Pupil like that of the shark elliptical, with the long axis vertical.

When the skin was removed the flesh was very fat, resembling that of the eel, had an unpleasant smell, and could not be eaten. The natives also were averse to eating it, and only one man acknowledged to have seen it before. Caught by seine, by Corporal Emms of the 51st regiment, 7th April, 1841. (This fish is also an inhabitant of Queen Charlotte's Sound, New Zealand.—J. R.)





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### SALMONIDAE.

No. 48.—AULOPUS PURPURISSATUS. Richardson, *Icones Piscium*, p. 6, pl. 2, f. 3. —Native name, KARDAR. "Rays, D. 19; A. 14; V. 9; P. 10."

Very rare. Caught by hook, on a rocky shore, by Mr. Sholl of Albany, 14th July, 1841. (Mr. Niell's figure differs slightly from that of Lieutenant Emery, published in the *Icones Piscium* above quoted, and chiefly in the dorsal occupying rather more space, by commencing before the ventrals, and extending back to opposite the beginning of the anal. The anus is under the fourteenth dorsal ray. Mr. Niell's drawing also shews a series of six large roseate spots on the sides below the lateral line, and a more depressed head, with a prominent arch at the orbit.—J. R.)

### ESOCIDAE.

No. 22.—HEMIRAMPHUS.—Native name, IIMEN. "Guardfish" of the settlers. "Rays, D. 16, delicate black rays; A. 15, do; P. 12; V. 6." Lower jaw equal to the head in length. Caught by the seine, 3rd March, 1841.

Inhabits sandy bays, but approaches the shore only in summer. It is very delicate eating.

### MURAENIDAE.

No. 52.—MURAENA? vel SPHAGEBRANCHUS.—Native name KALET. The eel figure, nat. size. Dorsal fin continuous for about three and a half inches behind the snout to the point of the tail: its rays very delicate; anal like the dorsal, but commencing behind the vent. One small lobe in the gills, about the size of a pin's head; no other perceptible opening.

Caught at the mouth of Oyster Harbour, 16th August, 1841.

## LOPHOBRANCHI.

No. 56.—OSTRACIAN FLAVIGASTER, Gray. Richardson, *Zool. Trans.* 3. p. 164, p. 11, f. 1.—Native name, *Conde* or KOODE. "Rays, D. 10; A. 9; P. 11, etc."

This fish is not eaten by the natives, who abhor it. It is seen only in the summer, and in shallow sandy bays, Caught in a net in October, 1841.

No 51.—MONACANTHUS.—Native name, TABADUCK. Rays, D. 28; A. 26; P. 12; C. 12.

Very rare, scarcely ever seen by the Aborigines. Caught by hook, August, 1841.



No. 49.—MONACANTHUS.—Not known to the Aborigines. Rays, D. 32; A. 30; C. 12; P. 11. Eye yellow; dorsal spine short.

Taken in deep water by Mr. Johnson, off the Commissariat stores, near a sunken rock, in deep water.

No. 15.—MONACANTHUS.—Native name, CAUDIEY. “Small leather-jacket” of the sealers.

Inhabits deep water, with a rocky bottom; is good to eat. Caught by a net, 18th March, 1841. Dorsal spine toothed behind.

No. 31.—MONACANTHUS, or (ALEUTERES, no spinous point of the pelvis visible in figure.—J. R.)—Native name, TABEDUCK. The “yellow leather-jacket” of the sealers. Dorsal spine toothed. D. 33; A. 32; P. 13. Caudal rounded, its rays very strong.

Inhabits deep water in rocky places, and is very common. It is esteemed for food by the Aborigines; is much infested by an Isopode named NETTONG, or TOORT, by the natives. This insect inserts its whole body into a pocket by the side of the anus, separated from the gut by a thin membrane. The fish to which the insect adheres are yellow; those which are free from it are of a beautiful purple colour. Caught by hook, 12th May, 1841.



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### CARCHARIDAE.

No. 54.—CARCHARIAS (PRIONODON) MELANOPTERUS, Muller and Henle.—Native name, MATCHET. “Common blue shark” of the settlers. Specimen four feet and a half long; have been seen longer. A female had four young alive when taken. Spiracles behind the eyes. Caught by hook, 16th August, 1841.

No. 26—CESTRACION *Philippi*, Mull. and Henle.—Native names, MATCHET, KORLUCK, or QUORLUCK. “Bull-dog-shark” of the sealers. Specimen two feet and a half long.

Inhabits rocky shores, and is very sluggish; it does not grow to a very large size. Caught by hook, 6th April, 1841.

### TRYGONES.

No. 38.—UROLOPHUS.—Native name, KEGETUCK or BEBIL. “Young sting-ray” of the sealers. Caught by seine, 4th May, 1841.

No. 28.—Near PLATYRHINA.—Native name, PARETT. “Fiddler” of the sealers; Green skate of the settlers. Eye dullish yellow; pupil sea-green, glaring in some lights; teeth transverse, like a file; spiracles two, large, behind the eye, in the same cavity; belly white, terminating at the caudal fin.

Very common in the sheltered bays, close in shore among the weeds. Not eaten by the Aborigines, who greatly abhor them, as they do also the sting-ray. Specimen two feet nine inches and a half long.

\* \* \* \* \*

(D.) *Description and figures of four new species of Australian insects.* By Adam white, Esq. M.E.S.

The four insects here figured and described are, as far as I am aware, new. Petasida, and Tettigarcta are interesting in the shape of the Thorax, differing widely from that in any of the allied genera, while the new species of Eurybrachys and Chrysopa are striking from their colouring and marks.

*Petasida* EPHIPPIGERA, pl. 4. fig. 1.

Thorax much dilated behind, depressed and rounded at the end; the side deeply sinuated behind; head pointed, antennae long; of a yellowish orange; antennae with a few greenish rings, cheek below the eye with a greenish line, head above with a longitudinal greenish line. Thorax with a slight keel down the middle, wrinkled behind of a dusky blueish green, a large patch of an orange colour on each side in front, and a



small spot of the same colour on each edge of the produced part at base; elytra orange with numerous black spots, and black at the tip, lower wings pale orange at the base, clouded with black at the tip; abdomen orange, slightly ringed with green; legs orange, with three greenish spots on the outside of the femora of hind legs.

Length 1 inch 9 lines.

Hab. Australia.

*Chrysopa* MACULIPENNIS, pl. 4. fig. 2.

Head red, with a black spot on the crown; antennae short brownish black; thorax hairy; thorax, abdomen, and legs, brownish black. Wings brown, with iridescent hues, the upper with transverse yellowish lines and spots at the base; a long yellowish line parallel to the outer edge at the end, and emitting a whitish spot which reaches the edge, three spots on the apical portion, the two on the outer edge large; basal half lower wings pale, some of the areolets yellowish; a few clouded with brown, tip of the wing yellowish.



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Expanse of wings 1 inch 4 1/2 lines.

Hab. Australia.

*Eurybrachys* LAETA, pl. 4, fig. 3.

Head thorax and upper wings of a rich brown colour, the outer edge of the last is deep black, with a transverse yellowish spot just before the middle, the remainder of the edge slightly spotted with black, upper side covered with short blackish hairs; lower wings deep black; abdomen of a bright red, with a round white tuft on the upper side near the end; first two pairs of legs of a deep brown, with some reddish lines; hind legs ferruginous with blackish spines.

Expanse of wings 7 lines.

Hab. Australia.

*Tettigarcta*, n. genus, *white*. Fam. CICADIDAE.

Head very small in front, blunt; lateral ocelli close to the eyes, space between them with long hairs.

Prothorax very large, extending back in a rounded form beyond the base of hind wings, the sides sharp pointed, the back very convex and wrinkled.

Body and under parts densely clothed with hair.

This very singular genus differs from all the Stridulantes in the size and shape of the prothorax; in the neuration of the elytra it is allied to PLATYPLEURA (Amyst and Serville) in the size of head and hairiness of body it approaches CARINETA of the same authors. The Pupa, (fig. 5.) differs in the form of fore legs from those of the other Cicada.

*Tettigarcta* TOMENTOSA, pl. 4, fig. 4, and 5 its pupa.

Of a brownish ash colour, the hairs on upper part of body short and deep brown, on the sides and under parts long and grey; prothorax varied with black, in front, two large patches covered with grey hairs, mixed with longer; elytra spotted and varied with brown, wings clear, somewhat ferruginous at the base.

Expanse of wings 3 inches 4 lines.

Hab. Australia.

\* \* \* \* \*

DESCRIPTION OF TWO NEW INVERTEBRATED ANIMALS FROM AUSTRALIA, BY J. E. GRAY, ESQ., F.R.S.

Lamarck separated the mother-of-pearls shell (*Margarita*) from the swallow-tail muscles (AVICULA) on account of its more orbicular shape. Other Conchologists have been inclined to unite them, as some of the species of AVICULA approach to the shape of the other genus. The new one just received from Australia, which I am now about to describe, in this respect more resembles the *Margarita* than any before noticed; yet I am inclined to think that the pearl-shells deserved to be kept separate, as the cardinal teeth are quite obliterated in the adult shells, which is not the case with any AVICULAE I am acquainted with; and the young pearl-shells are furnished with a broad serrated distant leafy fringe, while the AVICULAE are only covered with very closely applied short concentric slightly raised minutely denticulated lamina, forming an epidermal coat on the surface.

1. AVICULA *lata*, pl. 6. f. 1.

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Shell dark brown; half ovate; broad obliquely truncated, and scarcely notched behind; covered with close regular very thin denticulated concentric lamina, forming a paler external coat. The front ear rather produced, with a distant inferior notch; internally pearly, with a broad brown margin on the lower-edge.

Inhab. North and West coasts of Australia.

### 2. SPATANGUS ELONGATUS, pl. 6. f. 2.

Body elongate, cordate, with a deep anterior groove and notch; covered above with minute hair-like spines, with scattered very elongated tubular minutely striated spines on the sides; the anterior grooves and circumference of the vent with larger equal hair-like spines on each side; the under surface with a triangular disk of similar spines beneath the vent, and with elongated larger tubular spines.

Inhab. Western Australia.

Having only a single specimen completely covered with spines, it is impossible to describe the form of the ambulacra or the disposition of the tubercles. The lower figures represent the mouth and vent of the animal in detail.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Description of some new Australian LEPIDOPTEROUS insects  
by Edward Doubleday, Esq., F.L.S., etc.*

### THYRIDOPTERYX NIGRESCENS, pl. 5. f. 1.

Head densely clothed with long whitish hairs; thorax and abdomen with black hairs; wings hyaline, the nervures and nervules brown, with a few black scales: base of the anterior and abdominal fold of the posterior more or less covered with black hairs; antennae and legs fuscous brown.

Exp. 10—12 lines.

The larva of this species forms a dwelling for itself, similar in form and structure to that of its American congener, the EPHEMERAIFORMIS, Steph.

### CALLIMORPHA SELENAEA, pl. 5. f. 2.

Wings of a brilliant silvery white; the anterior traversed by a fulvous band commencing at the base on the costa, which it follows for about one-third of its length, then crossing the wings directly to the anal angle, where it unites with a vitta of the same colour, extending from the angle nearly to the base along the inner margin; this vitta is bordered interiorly with thickly placed black dots; the transverse portion of the fulvous band is



bordered on both sides with black, and has a sinus about the middle; cilia fulvous; posterior wing with a black spot near the outer angle: below, the wings are white, except the cilia of the anterior, and a large blotch, red anteriorly, black posteriorly, near the outer angle; head rufous; antennae fuscous; thorax and abdomen white, the former with the shoulders rufous.

Exp. 2 1/2 inches.

CHELONIA PALLIDA, pl. 5. f. 3.





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Anterior wings pale brown, with white nervures and nervules, and marked with several whitish spots, of which four are on the costa, two longitudinal before, two transverse beyond the middle of the wing, and on the inner margin are three irregular patches, sometimes confluent, beyond which is a band parallel with the outer margin, commencing above the upper median nervule, and terminating on the inner margin; posterior wings white, with a discoidal spot, a macular band near the outer margin, and a less distinct marginal one, all brownish; head white; thorax white, with three black vittae; abdomen above rufous, with six transverse black spots, the sides varied with black and white; antennae black; femora red; tibiae and tarsi black.

Exp. 2 1/4 inches.

CHELONIA FUSCINULA, pl. 5. f. 4.

Anterior wings fuscous, with a pale vitta commencing near the base on the subcostal nervure, reaching the costa before the middle, and extending along it to the apex, where it joins a flexuous submarginal band, connected with a vitta occupying the whole inner margin; beyond the cell is an abbreviated flexuous striga; followed by a subquadrate dot; posterior wings pale dull red, with a broad submarginal fuscous band, and a discoidal spot of the same colour; head and anterior part of thorax pale, posterior black; abdomen above red, with a black dorsal line; antennae fuscous; femora red; tibiae and tarsi fuscous.

Exp. 1 1/4 inch.

ACONTIA? PULCHRA, pl. 5. f. 5.

Wings of a somewhat chalky white, the anterior with three rufous dots on the costa before the middle, of which the third is the largest, and near the apex a large brown spot, fulvous towards the costa, clouded with bluish white, connected with the inner margin by four indistinct yellow dots; forehead red; head, thorax, and abdomen, white; palpi red at the apex; feet white first and second pairs spotted with red.

Exp. 2 inches.

\* \* \* \* \*

LIST OF BIRDS, KNOWN TO INHABIT SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA, BY JOHN GOULD,  
ESQ. F.R.S.

Order RAPTORES.

*Aquila fucosa*, Cuv.

*Ichthyiaetus leucogaster*, Gould.

*Pandion leucocephalus*, Gould.



Haliastur sphenurus.  
Falco melanogenys, *Gould*.  
----- sub-niger, G. R. *Gray*.  
----- frontatus, *Gould*.  
Ieracidea Occidentalis, *Gould*.  
----- Berigora.  
Tinnunculus Cencroides.  
Astur approximans, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- Novae-Hollandiae, *Vig.* and *HORSF.?*  
Accipiter torquatus, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Buteo melanosternon, *Gould*.  
Milvus isurus, *Gould*.  
----- affinis, *Gould*.  
Elanus axillaris.  
----- scripta, *Gould*.  
Circus assimilis, *JARD.*  
----- Jardinii, *Gould*.  
Strix personata, *Vig.*  
----- delicatulis, *Gould*.  
Athene connivens.  
----- Boobook



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### *Order INSESSORES.*

Hirundo neoxena, *Gould*.  
Cotyle pyrrhonota.  
Acanthylis caudacuta.  
Eurostopodus guttatus.  
Podargus humeralis, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
Aegotheles Novae-Hollandiae, *Vig.* and HORSE.?  
Merops ornatus, *lath*.  
Dacelo gigas, BODD.  
Halcyon sanctus, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
----- pyrrhopygia, *Gould*.  
Alcyone azurea.  
Falcunculus frontatus, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
Oreoica gutturalis.  
Xerophila leucopsis, *Gould*.  
Colluricincla cinerea, *Vig.* and HORSE.?  
Pachycephala gutturalis, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
----- inornata, *Gould*.?  
----- pectoralis, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
----- rufogularis, *Gould*.  
Artamus sordidus.  
----- personatus, *Gould*.  
Cracticus destructor, *Temm*.  
Gymnorhina leuconota, *Gould*.  
Grallina melanoleuca, *Vieill*.  
Strepera -----?  
Campephaga humeralis, *Gould*.?  
Graucalus melanops, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
Cinclosoma punctatum, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
----- castanotus, *Gould*.  
Malurus cyaneus, *Vieill*.  
----- melanotus, *Gould*.  
----- leucopterus, QUOY and GAIM.  
----- Lamberti, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
Stipiturus malachurus, *less*.  
Cysticola exilis?  
Hylacola pyrrhopygia.  
----- cauta, *Gould*.  
Acanthiza pusilla, *Vig.* and HORSE.  
----- uropygialis, *Gould*.  
----- inornata, *Gould*.  
----- lineata, *Gould*.



----- chrysorrhoea.  
Epithianura aurifrons, *Gould*.  
----- tricolor, *Gould*.  
Sericornis frontalis.  
Pyrrholaemus brunneus, *Gould*.  
Calamanthus campestris.  
Anthus pallescens, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Cinchoramphus cantillans, *Gould*.  
Petroica multicolor, *Swains*.  
----- phoenicea, *Gould*.  
----- Goodenovii, *JARD.* And *SELB.*  
----- rosea, *Gould*.  
----- bicolor, *Swains*.  
Drymodes brunneopygia, *Gould*.  
Zosterops dorsalis, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Pardalotus punctatus, *Temm*.  
----- striatus, *Temm*.  
Dicaeum hirundinaceum  
Estrela bella.  
----- temporalis.  
Amadina Lathamii.  
----- castanotus, *Gould*.  
Rhipidura albiscapa, *Gould*.  
----- Motacilloides.  
Seisura volitans, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Microeca macroptera, *Gould*.  
Smicronis brevirostris, *Gould*.  
Corvus Coronoides, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Chlamydera maculata, *Gould*.  
Corcorax leucopterus, *less*.  
Pomatorhinus trivirgatus, *Temm*.  
----- temporalis, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Cacatua galerita, *Vieill*.  
----- Leadbeateri.  
Licmetis nasicus, *Wagl*.  
Calyptorhynchus Banksii, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- Leachii



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----- xanthonotus, *Gould*.  
Polytelis melanura.  
Platycercus Baueri, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- Barnardi, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- Adelaidiae, *Gould*.  
----- flaveolus, *Gould*.  
Psephotus multicolor.  
----- haematonotus, *Gould*.  
Melopsittacus undulatus.  
Euphema aurantia, *Gould*.  
----- elegans, *Gould*.  
Pezoporus formosus.  
Trichoglossus Swainsonii, *JARD.* and *SELB.*  
Trichoglossus concinnus, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- pusillus, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- porphyrocephalus.  
Climacteris scandens, *Temm*.  
----- picumnus, *Temm*.  
Sittella melanocephala, *Gould*.  
Cuculus inornatus, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- cineraceus, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Chalcites lucidus, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Meliphaga Novae-Hollandiae, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- Australasiana, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Glyciphila fulvifrons, *Swains*.  
----- albifrons, *Gould*.  
----- ocularis, *Gould*.  
Ptilotis sonora, *Gould*.  
----- cratitia, *Gould*.  
----- ornata, *Gould*.  
----- penicillata, *Gould*.  
Zanthomyza Phrygia, *Swains*.  
Melicophila picata, *Gould*.  
Acanthogenys rufogularis, *Gould*.  
Anthochaera carunculata, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
----- mellivora, *Vig.* and *HORSF.*  
Acanthorynchus tenuirostris.  
Melithreptus gularis, *Gould*.  
----- lunulata, *Vieill*.



Myzantha garrula, Vig. and HORSE.

## ORDER RASORES.

Phaps chalcoptera.  
 ----- elegans.  
 Ocyphaps Lophotes.  
 Geopelia cuneata.  
 Dromeceius Novae-Hollandiae, Vieill.  
 Otis Australasianus, Gould.  
 OEdicnemus longipes, Vieill.  
 Haematopus fuliginosus, Gould.  
 ----- longirostris, Vieill.  
 Eudromias Australis, Gould.  
 Lobivanellus lobatus.  
 Sarcophorus pectoralis.  
 Charadrius Virginianus?  
 Hiaticula monacha.  
 ----- nigrifrons.  
 ----- ruficapilla.  
 Erythrogonys cinctus, Gould.  
 Leipoa ocellata, Gould.  
 Pedionomus torquatus, Gould.  
 Turnix varius.  
 ----- velox, Gould.  
 Coturnix pectoralis, Gould.  
 Synoicus Australis.  
 ----- Sinensis.

## ORDER GRALLATOIRES.

Grus Antigone?  
 Platalea regia, Gould.  
 ----- flavipes, Gould.  
 Ardea cinerea?  
 ----- pacifica, Lath.  
 ----- Novae-Hollandiae, Lath.  
 Nycticorax Caledonicus, Less.  
 Botaurus Australis, Gould.  
 Ibis Falcinellus, Linn.  
 Numenius Australasianus.  
 Numenius uropygialis, Gould.  
 Recurvirostra rubricollis, Temm.



Chladorhynchus pectoralis.  
Himantopus leucocephalus, *Gould*.  
Limosa -----?  
Glottis Glottoides.  
Pelidna -----? like P. MINUTA.  
Scolopax Australis, *lath*.  
Rhynchaea Australis, *Gould*.  
Porphyrio melanotus, *Temm*.  
Tribonyx ventralis, *Gould*.  
Gallinula immaculata.  
Rallus Philipensis? *Linn*.



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### ORDER NATATORES.

Cygnus atratus.  
Anseranas melanoleuca.  
Leptotarsis Eytoni, *Gould*.  
Cereopsis Novae-Hollandiae, *lath*.  
Casarka Tadornoides.  
Biziura lobata, *Shaw*.  
Bernicla jubata.  
Anas Novae-Hollandiae, *lath*.  
—— naevosa, *Gould*.  
—— castanea.  
Nyroca Australis, *Eyton*.  
Rhynchapsis Rhynchotis, *Steph*.  
Malacorhynchus membranaceus, *Swains*.  
Podiceps Australis, *Gould*.  
----- poliocephalus, *JARD. and SELB*.  
----- gularis, *Gould*.  
Phalacrocorax pica.  
----- leucogaster, *Gould*.  
Phalacrocorax sulcirostris.  
----- melanoleucus.  
Plotus Le Vaillantii?  
Pelecanus spectabilis, *Temm*.  
Sula Australis, *Gould*.  
Spheniscus minor.  
Lestris catarrhactes.  
Laras leucomelas.  
Xema Jamesonii, *WILS*.  
Sterna poliocerca, *Gould*.  
----- velox, *Gould*.  
Sternella nereis, *Gould*.  
Hydrochelidon fluviatilis.  
Diomedea exulans, *Linn*.  
----- cauta, *Gould*.  
----- melanophrys, *Temm*.  
----- chlororhyncha, *lath*.  
----- fuliginosa.  
Procellaria gigantea, *GMEL*.  
----- perspicillata, *Gould*.  
----- hasitata, *Forst*.  
----- leucocephala.  
----- Solandri, *Gould*.





Daption Capensis, *Steph.*  
 Prion vittata, *Cuv.*  
 ----- Banksii.  
 ----- Turtur.  
 ----- Ariel, *Gould.*  
 Puffinus brevicaudus, *Gould.*  
 Puffinuria urinatrix, *less.*  
 Thalassidroma Wilsoni.  
 ----- nereis, *Gould.*  
 ----- melanogaster, *Gould.*

The preceding list comprises the birds inhabiting the settled districts of South Australia: viz. the Murray, from the great bend to the sea, the fertile districts sixty miles northward and southward of Adelaide, Kangaroo Island, Port Lincoln, *etc.* When the remote parts of the colony have been explored, it will doubtless become necessary to add to it many other species common to New South Wales and Western Australia.—J. G.

## VOLUME II

### JOURNAL OF EXPEDITIONS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA, IN 1840-1.

#### Chapter I.

*The camp plundered—night of horrors—proceed on to the westward—the boys follow us—they are left behind—forced marches—desert country—banksias met with—traces of natives—termination of the cliffs—find water.*

Glancing hastily around the camp I found it deserted by the two younger native boys, whilst the scattered fragments of our baggage, which I left carefully piled under the oilskin, lay thrown about in wild disorder, and at once revealed the cause of the harrowing scene before me.

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Upon raising the body of my faithful, but illfated follower, I found that he was beyond all human aid; he had been shot through the left breast with a ball, the last convulsions of death were upon him, and he expired almost immediately after our arrival. The frightful, the appalling truth now burst upon me, that I was alone in the desert. He who had faithfully served me for many years, who had followed my fortunes in adversity and in prosperity, who had accompanied me in all my wanderings, and whose attachment to me had been his sole inducement to remain with me in this last, and to him alas, fatal journey, was now no more. For an instant, I was almost tempted to wish that it had been my own fate instead of his. The horrors of my situation glared upon me in such startling reality, as for an instant almost to paralyse the mind. At the dead hour of night, in the wildest and most inhospitable wastes of Australia, with the fierce wind raging in unison with the scene of violence before me, I was left, with a single native, whose fidelity I could not rely upon, and who for aught I knew might be in league with the other two, who perhaps were even now, lurking about with the view of taking away my life as they had done that of the overseer. Three days had passed away since we left the last water, and it was very doubtful when we might find any more. Six hundred miles of country had to be traversed, before I could hope to obtain the slightest aid or assistance of any kind, whilst I knew not that a single drop of water or an ounce of flour had been left by these murderers, from a stock that had previously been so small.

With such thoughts rapidly passing through my mind, I turned to search for my double-barelled gun, which I had left covered with an oilskin at the head of my own break wind. It was gone, as was also the double-barelled gun that had belonged to the overseer. These were the only weapons at the time that were in serviceable condition, for though there were a brace of pistols they had been packed away, as there were no cartridges for them, and my rifle was useless, from having a ball sticking fast in the breech, and which we had in vain endeavoured to extract. A few days' previous to our leaving the last water, the overseer had attempted to wash out the rifle not knowing it was loaded, and the consequence was, that the powder became wetted and partly washed away, so that we could neither fire it off, nor get out the ball; I was, therefore, temporarily defenceless, and quite at the mercy of the natives, had they at this time come upon me. Having hastily ripped open the bag in which the pistols had been sewn up, I got them out, together with my powder flask, and a bag containing a little shot and some large balls. The rifle I found where it had been left, but the ramrod had been taken out by the boys to load my double-barelled gun with, its own ramrod being too short for that purpose; I found it, however, together with several loose cartridges, lying about near the place where the boys had slept, so that it was evident they had deliberately loaded the fire-arms before they tried to move away with the things they had stolen; one barrel only of my gun had been previously loaded, and I believe neither barrels in that of the overseer.

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After obtaining possession of all the remaining arms, useless as they were at the moment, with some ammunition, I made no further examination then, but hurried away from the fearful scene, accompanied by the King George's Sound native, to search for the horses, knowing that if they got away now, no chance whatever would remain of saving our lives. Already the wretched animals had wandered to a considerable distance; and although the night was moonlight, yet the belts of scrub, intersecting the plains, were so numerous and dense, that for a long time we could not find them; having succeeded in doing so at last, Wylie and I remained with them, watching them during the remainder of the night; but they were very restless, and gave us a great deal of trouble. With an aching heart, and in most painful reflections, I passed this dreadful night. Every moment appeared to be protracted to an hour, and it seemed as if the daylight would never appear. About midnight the wind ceased, and the weather became bitterly cold and frosty. I had nothing on but a shirt and a pair of trowsers, and suffered most acutely from the cold; to mental anguish was now added intense bodily pain. Suffering and distress had well nigh overwhelmed me, and life seemed hardly worth the effort necessary to prolong it. Ages can never efface the horrors of this single night, nor would the wealth of the world ever tempt me to go through similar ones again.

April 30.—At last, by God's blessing, daylight dawned once more, but sad and heart-rending was the scene it presented to my view, upon driving the horses to what had been our last night's camp. The corpse of my poor companion lay extended on the ground, with the eyes open, but cold and glazed in death. The same stern resolution, and fearless open look, which had characterized him when living, stamped the expression of his countenance even now. He had fallen upon his breast four or five yards from where he had been sleeping, and was dressed only in his shirt. In all probability, the noise made by the natives, in plundering the camp, had awoke him; and upon his jumping up, with a view of stopping them, they had fired upon and killed him.

Around the camp lay scattered the harness of the horses, and the remains of the stores that had been the temptation to this fatal deed.

As soon as the horses were caught, and secured, I left Wylie to make a fire, whilst I proceeded to examine into the state of our baggage, that I might decide upon our future proceedings. Among the principal things carried off by the natives, were, the whole of our baked bread, amounting to twenty pounds weight, some mutton, tea and sugar, the overseer's tobacco and pipes, a one gallon keg full of water, some clothes, two double-barrelled guns, some ammunition, and a few other small articles.

There were still left forty pounds of flour, a little tea and sugar, and four gallons of water, besides the arms and ammunition I had secured last night.

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From the state of our horses, and the dreadful circumstances we were placed in, I was now obliged to abandon every thing but the bare necessities of life. The few books and instruments I had still left, with many of the specimens I had collected, a saddle, and some other things, were thrown aside to lighten somewhat more the trifling loads our animals had to carry. A little bread was then baked, and I endeavoured once more to put the rifle in serviceable condition, as it was the only weapon we should have to depend upon in any dangers that might beset us. Unable in any way to take out the breech, or to extract the ball, I determined to melt it out, and for that purpose took the barrel off the stock, and put the breech in the fire, holding the muzzle in my hand. Whilst thus engaged, the rifle went off, the ball whizzing close past my head; the fire, it seems, had dried the powder, which had been wetted, not washed out; and when the barrel was sufficiently heated, the piece had gone off, to the imminent danger of my life, from the incautious way in which I held it. The gun, however, was again serviceable; and after carefully loading it, I felt a degree of confidence and security I had before been a stranger to.

At eight o'clock we were ready to proceed; there remained but to perform the last sad offices of humanity towards him, whose career had been cut short in so untimely a manner. This duty was rendered even more than ordinarily painful, by the nature of the country, where we happened to have been encamped. One vast unbroken surface of sheet rock extended for miles in every direction, and rendered it impossible to make a grave. We were some miles away from the sea-shore, and even had we been nearer, could not have got down the cliffs to bury the corpse in the sand. I could only, therefore, wrap a blanket around the body of the overseer, and leaving it enshrouded where he fell, escape from the melancholy scene, accompanied by Wylie, under the influence of feelings which neither time nor circumstances will ever obliterate. Though years have now passed away since the enactment of this tragedy, the dreadful horrors of that time and scene, are recalled before me with frightful vividness, and make me shudder even now, when I think of them. A life time was crowded into those few short hours, and death alone may blot out the impressions they produced.

For some time we travelled slowly and silently onwards. Wylie preceding, leading one of the horses, myself following behind and driving the others after him, through a country consisting still of the same alternations of scrub and open intervals as before. The day became very warm, and at eleven, after travelling ten miles to the west, I determined to halt until the cool of the evening. After baking some bread and getting our dinners, I questioned Wylie as to what he knew of the sad occurrence of yesterday. He positively denied all knowledge of it—said he had been asleep, and was awake by the report of

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the gun, and that upon seeing the overseer lying on the ground he ran off to meet me. He admitted, however, that, after the unsuccessful attempt to leave us, and proceed alone to King George's Sound, the elder of the other two natives had proposed to him again to quit the party, and try to go back to Fowler's Bay, to the provisions buried there. But he had heard or knew nothing, he said, of either robbery or murder being first contemplated.

My own impression was, that Wylie had agreed with the other two to rob the camp and leave us;—that he had been cognisant of all their proceedings and preparations, but that when, upon the eve of their departure, the overseer had unexpectedly awoke and been murdered, he was shocked and frightened at the deed, and instead of accompanying them, had run down to meet me. My opinion upon this point received additional confirmation from the subsequent events of this day; but I never could get Wylie to admit even the slightest knowledge of the fatal occurrence, or that he had even intended to have united with them in plundering the camp and deserting. He had now become truly alarmed; and independently of the fear of the consequences which would attach to the crime, should we ever reach a civilized community again, he had become very apprehensive that the other natives, who belonged to quite a different part of Australia to himself, and who spoke a totally different language, would murder him as unhesitatingly as they had done the white man.

We remained in camp until four o'clock, and were again preparing to advance, when my attention was called by Wylie to two white objects among the scrub, at no great distance from us, and I at once recognized the native boys, covered with their blankets only, and advancing towards us. From Wylie's account of their proposal to go back towards Fowler's Bay, I fully hoped that they had taken that direction, and left us to pursue our way to the Sound unmolested. I was therefore surprised, and somewhat alarmed, at finding them so near us. With my rifle and pistols I felt myself sufficiently a match for them in an open country, or by daylight. Yet I knew that as long as they followed like bloodhounds on our tracks our lives would be in their power at any moment that they chose to take them, whilst we were passing through a scrubby country, or by night. Whatever their intention might be, I knew, that if we travelled in the same direction with them, our lives could only be safe by their destruction. Although they had taken fully one-third of the whole stock of our provisions, their appetites were so ravenous, and their habits so improvident, that this would soon be consumed, and then they must either starve or plunder us; for they had already tried to subsist themselves in the bush, and had failed.

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As these impressions rapidly passed through my mind, there appeared to me but one resource left, to save my own life and that of the native with me: that was, to shoot the elder of the two. Painful as this would be, I saw no other alternative, if they still persisted in following us. After packing up our few things, and putting them upon the horses, I gave the bridles to Wylie to hold, whilst I advanced alone with my rifle towards the two natives. They were now tolerably near, each carrying a double-barrelled gun, which was pointed towards me, elevated across the left arm and held by the right hand. As I attempted to approach nearer they gradually retreated.

Finding that I was not likely to gain ground upon them in this way, I threw down my weapons, and advanced unarmed, hoping that if they let me near them I might suddenly close with the eldest and wrest his gun from him. After advancing about sixty or seventy yards towards them, I found that they again began to retreat, evidently determined not to let me approach any nearer, either armed or unarmed. Upon this I halted, and endeavoured to enter into parley with them, with a view to persuading them to return towards Fowler's Bay, and thus obviate the painful necessity I should have been under of endeavouring, for my own security, to take away the life of the eldest whenever I met with him, should they still persist in going the same road as myself. The distance we were apart was almost too great for parley, and I know not whether they heard me or not; though they halted, and appeared to listen, they did not reply to what I said, and plainly wished to avoid all closer contact. They now began to call incessantly to Wylie, and in answer to my repeated efforts to get them to speak to me, only would say, "Oh massa, we don't want you, we want Wylie." Thus fully confirming me in the opinion I had formed, that Wylie had agreed to go with them before the deed of violence was committed. It was now apparent to me that their only present object in following us had been to look for Wylie, and get him to join them. In this they were unsuccessful; for he still remained quietly where I left him holding the horses, and evidently afraid to go near them. There was no use wasting further time, as I could not get them to listen to me. The sun, too, was fast sinking in the horizon, we had been four days without finding water, and the probability was we had very far still to go before we could hope to procure any; every moment, therefore, was precious.

Having returned to Wylie, I made him lead one of the horses in advance, and I followed behind, driving the rest after him, according to the system of march I had adopted in the morning. As soon as the two natives saw us moving on, and found Wylie did not join them, they set up a wild and plaintive cry, still following along the brush parallel to our line of route, and never ceasing in their importunities to Wylie, until the denseness of the scrub, and the closing in of night, concealed us from each other.

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I was now resolved to make the most of the opportunity afforded me, and by travelling steadily onwards, to gain so much distance in advance of the two natives as to preclude the possibility of their again overtaking us until we had reached the water, if indeed we were ever destined to reach water again. I knew that they would never travel more than a few miles before lying down, especially if carrying all the bread they had taken, the keg of water, guns, and other articles. We had, however, seen none of these things with them, except the fire-arms.

Our road was over scrubby and stony undulations, with patches of dry grass here and there; in other parts, we passed over a very sandy soil of a red colour, and overrun by immense tufts of prickly grass (spinifex), many of which were three and four yards in diameter. After pushing on for eighteen miles, I felt satisfied we had left the natives far behind, and finding a patch of grass for the horses, halted for the remainder of the night. It was quite impossible, after all we had gone through, to think of watching the horses, and my only means of preventing from them straying, was to close the chains of their hobbles so tight, that they could not go far; having thus secured them, we lay down, and for a few hours enjoyed uninterrupted and refreshing sleep.

Moving on again on the 1st of May, as the sun was above the horizon, we passed through a continuation of the same kind of country, for sixteen miles, and then halted for a few hours during the heat of the day. We had passed many recent traces of natives both yesterday and to-day, who appeared to be travelling to the westward. After dividing a pot of tea between us, we again pushed on for twelve miles, completing a stage of twenty-eight miles, and halting, with a little dry grass for the horses.

It was impossible they could endure this much longer, they had already been five days without water, and I did not expect to meet with any for two days more, a period which I did not think they could survive. As yet no very great change had taken place in the country; it was still scrubby and rocky, but the surface stone now consisted of a cream-coloured limestone of a fine compact character, and full of shells. The cliffs, parallel with which we were travelling, were still of about the same height, appearance, and formation as before, whilst the inland country increased in elevation, forming scrubby ridges to the back, with a few open grassy patches here and there. One circumstance in our route to-day cheered me greatly, and led me shortly to expect some important and decisive change in the character and formation of the country. It was the appearance for the first time of the Banksia, a shrub which I had never before found to the westward of Spencer's Gulf, but which I knew to abound in the vicinity of King George's Sound, and that description of country generally. Those only who have looked out with the eagerness and anxiety



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of a person in my situation, to note any change in the vegetation or physical appearance of a country, can appreciate the degree of satisfaction with which I recognised and welcomed the first appearance of the *Banksia*. Isolated as it was amidst the scrub, and insignificant as the stunted specimens were that I first met with, they led to an inference that I could not be mistaken in, and added, in a tenfold degree, to the interest and expectation with which every mile of our route had now become invested. During the day the weather had been again cloudy, with the appearance of rain; but the night turned out cold and frosty, and both I and the native suffered extremely. We had little to protect us from the severity of the season, never being able to procure firewood of a description that would keep burning long at once, so that between cold and fatigue, we were rarely able to get more than a few moments rest at a time; and were always glad when daylight dawned to cheer us, although it only aroused us to the renewal of our unceasing toil.

May 2.—We again moved away at dawn, through a country which gradually become more scrubby, hilly, and sandy. The horses crawled on for twenty-one miles, when I halted for an hour to rest, and to have a little tea from our now scanty stock of water. The change which I had noticed yesterday in the vegetation of the country, was greater and more cheering every mile we went, although as yet the country itself was as desolate and inhospitable as ever. The smaller *Banksias* now abounded, whilst the *Banksia grandis*, and many other shrubs common at King George's Sound, were frequently met with. The natives, whose tracks we had so frequently met with, taking the same course as ourselves to the westward, seemed now to be behind us; during the morning we had passed many freshly lit fires, but the people themselves remained concealed; we had now lost all traces of them, and the country seemed untrodden and untenanted. In the course of our journey this morning, we met with many holes in the sheets of limestone, which occasionally coated the surface of the ground; in these holes the natives appeared to procure an abundance of water after rains, but it was so long since any had fallen, that all were dry and empty now. In one deep hole only, did we find the least trace of moisture; this had at the bottom of it, perhaps a couple of wine glasses full of mud and water, and was most carefully blocked up from the birds with huge stones: it had evidently been visited by natives, not an hour before we arrived at it, but I suspect they were as much disappointed as we were, upon rolling away all the stones to find nothing in it.

After our scanty meal, we again moved onwards, but the road became so scrubby and rocky, or so sandy and hilly, that we could make no progress at all by night, and at eight miles from where we dined, we were compelled to halt, after a day's journey of twenty-nine miles; but without a blade even of withered grass for our horses, which was the more grievous, because for the first time since we left the last water, a very heavy dew fell, and would have enabled them to feed a little, had there been grass. We had now traversed 138 miles of country from the last water, and according to my estimate of the



distance we had to go, ought to be within a few miles of the termination of the cliffs of the Great Bight.

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May 3.—The seventh day's dawn found us early commencing our journey. The poor horses still crawled on, though slowly. I was surprised that they were still alive, after the continued sufferings and privations they had been subject to. As for ourselves, we were both getting very weak and worn out, as well as lame, and it was with the greatest difficulty I could get Wylie to move, if he once sat down. I had myself the same kind of apathetic feeling, and would gladly have laid down and slept for ever. Nothing but a strong sense of duty prevented me from giving way to this pleasing but fatal indulgence.

The road to-day became worse than ever, being one continued succession of sandy, scrubby and rocky ridges, and hollows formed on the top of the cliffs along which our course lay. After travelling two and a half miles, however, we were cheered and encouraged by the sight of sandy hills, and a low coast stretching beyond the cliffs to the south-west, though they were still some distance from us. At ten miles from where we had slept, a native road led us down a very steep part of the cliffs, and we descended to the beach. The wretched horses could scarcely move, it was with the greatest difficulty we got them down the hill, and now, although within sight of our goal, I feared two of them would never reach it. By perseverance we still got them slowly along, for two miles from the base of the cliffs, and then turning in among the sand-drifts, to our great joy and relief, found a place where the natives had dug for water; thus at twelve o'clock on the seventh day since leaving the last depot, we were again encamped at water, after having crossed 150 miles of a rocky, barren, and scrubby table land.

## Chapter II.

Reflections upon situation—watch for the arrival of the native boys—their probable fate—proceed on the journey—facility of obtaining water—kill A horse for food—silver-bark tea-tree—intense cold—first hills seen—good grass—appetite of A native—injurious effects of unwholesome diet—change in the character of the country—granite forms the low water level—tree washed on shore—indisposition.

Having at last got fairly beyond all the cliffs bounding the Great Bight, I fully trusted that we had now overcome the greatest difficulties of the undertaking, and confidently hoped that there would be no more of those fearful long journeys through the desert without water, but that the character of the country would be changed, and so far improved as to enable us to procure it, once at least every thirty or forty miles, if not more frequently.

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Relieved from the pressure of immediate toil, and from the anxiety and suspense I had been in on the subject of water, my mind wandered to the gap created in my little party since we had last been at water; more than ever, almost, did I feel the loss of my overseer, now that the last and most difficult of our forced marches had been successfully accomplished, and that there was every hope of our progress for the future, being both less difficult and more expeditious. How delighted he would have been had he been with us to participate in the successful termination of a stage, which he had ever dreaded more than any other during the whole of our journey, and with what confidence and cheerfulness he would have gone on for the future. Out of five two only were now present; our little band had been severed never to be reunited; and I could not but blame myself for yielding to the overseer's solicitation to halt on the evening of the 29th April, instead of travelling on all night as I had originally intended: had I adhered to my own judgment all might yet have been well. Vain and bootless, however, now were all regrets for the irrecoverable past; but the present was so fraught with circumstances calculated to recal and to make me feel more bitterly the loss I had sustained, that painful as the subject was, the mind could not help reverting to and dwelling upon it.

Having given each of the horses a bucket of water, Wylie watched them whilst I cooked our dinner and made some tea, after getting which we again gave the horses another bucket of water a-piece, hobbled them out for the night, and then lay down ourselves, feeling perfectly secure from being overtaken by the native boys. We were obliged to place ourselves close to the hole of water to keep the horses from getting into it, as they were thirsty and restless, and kept walking round the well nearly the whole night, and feeding very little. We ourselves, too, although dreadfully tired and weak, were so cold and restless, that we slept but little. I had also a large swelling on two of the joints of the second finger of the right hand, which gave me very great pain.

May 4.—After an early breakfast we gave the horses as much water as they chose to drink, and removing their hobbles gave them full liberty to range where they liked. I then left Wylie to continue his slumbers, and taking my rifle, walked about three miles among the sand-drifts to search for grass, but could find none, except the coarse vegetation that grew amongst the sand-drifts. I found two other places where the natives got water by digging, and have no doubt that it may be procured almost anywhere in these drifts, which extend for some miles, along the coast. Some black cockatoos made their appearance near the sand-hills, indicating, in connection with the change I had noticed in the vegetation, that we were now about entering a different and less difficult country than any we had yet traversed. These birds I knew never inhabited that description of country we had been so long travelling through. We had not seen one before, during our whole journey, and poor Wylie was quite delighted at the idea of our vicinity to a better region.

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During the day a strict look out was kept for the other two natives, and at night, after watering the horses and concealing the saddles, we took our provisions and arms up among the sand-hills, and slept there at some distance from the water: that if they travelled onwards by moon-light, they might not come upon us unawares whilst sleeping. If they had continued their route to the westward, they would, I knew, both have a severe task to reach the water, and be unable to go to it without our knowledge; the youngest boy I did not think would prove equal to so arduous a task, but the elder one I thought might, if his courage and perseverance did not fail him in travelling so far, without any indications to lead him to hope for final success, save the fact of our having gone on before. Upon the whole, however, I thought it more than probable that on finding they could not get Wylie to join them, and that they could not keep pace with us, they would turn back, and endeavour to put in practice their original intention of trying to reach Fowler's Bay. Still it was necessary to be cautious and vigilant. A few days at most would decide whether they were advancing this way or not, and until satisfied upon this point, I determined to take every precaution in my power to guard against a surprise. My hand was dreadfully painful at night, and quite deprived me of all rest.

May 5.—Up before day-break, and moved down to the water to breakfast, then examined carefully round the wells, and between the sand-drifts and the sea, to see if any foot-prints had been made during the night, but none had. There were many pigeons about, and as I had still some ammunition left, I felt the loss of my gun severely. During the morning a very large eagle came and settled near us, and I sent Wylie with the rifle to try to shoot it; he crept within a very few yards of it, and being a good shot, I felt sure of a hearty meal, but unfortunately the rifle missed fire, having got damp during the heavy fall of dew a few evenings before. We lost our dinner, but I received a useful lesson on the necessity of taking better care of the only gun I had left, and being always certain that it was in a fit and serviceable state; I immediately set to work, cleaned and oiled it, and in the afternoon made some oil-skin covers for the lock and muzzle to keep the damp from it at nights. For the last day or two I had been far from well, whilst my inflamed hand, which was daily getting worse, caused me most excruciating pain, and quite destroyed my rest at nights. In the evening we again retired among the sand-hills to sleep.

May 6.—After breakfast we carefully examined the sand-drifts and the sea-shore, to see if the two boys had passed, but there were no traces of them to be found, and I now felt that we were secure from all further interruption from them. Three days we had been in camp at the water, making altogether a period of six since we last saw them. Had they continued their course to the westward, they must have arrived long before this, and I now felt satisfied that they had turned back to Fowler's Bay for the sake of the provisions buried there, or else they had fallen in with the natives, whose traces we had so repeatedly seen, and either joined them, or been killed by them.

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It was now apparent to me beyond all doubt, that in following us on the 30th of April, so far out of the direction they ought to have taken if they intended to go to the eastward, their only object had been to get Wylie to accompany them. As he was the eldest of the three, and a strong full grown man, they would have found him a protection to them from his superior age, strength and skill. As it was they had but little chance of making their way safely either to the east or west. At the time I last saw them they were sixty-three miles from the nearest water in the former direction, and eighty-seven miles from that in the latter. They were tired and exhausted from previous walking, and in this state would have to carry the guns, the provisions, and other things they had taken. This would necessarily retard their progress, and lengthen out the period which must elapse before they could obtain water in any direction. On the night of the 29th April they must have had one gallon of water with them, but when we saw them on the 30th, I have no doubt, that with their usual improvidence, they had consumed the whole, and would thus have to undergo the fatigue of carrying heavy weights, as well as walking for a protracted period, without any thing to relieve their thirst. Their difficulties and distress would gradually but certainly increase upon them, and they would then, in all likelihood, throw away their guns or their provisions, and be left in the desert unarmed, without food or water, and without skill or energy to direct them successfully to search for either. A dreadful and lingering death would in all probability terminate the scene, aggravated in all its horrors by the consciousness that they had brought it entirely upon themselves. Painfully as I had felt the loss of my unfortunate overseer, and shocked as I was at the ruthless deed having been committed by these two boys, yet I could not help feeling for their sad condition, the miseries and sufferings they would have to encounter, and the probable fate that awaited them.

The youngest of the two had been with me for four years, the eldest for two years and a half, and both had accompanied me in all my travels during these respective periods. Now that the first and strong impressions naturally resulting from a shock so sudden and violent as that produced by the occurrences of the 29th April, had yielded, in some measure, to calmer reflections, I was able maturely to weigh the whole of what had taken place, and to indulge in some considerations in extenuation of their offence. The two boys knew themselves to be as far from King George's Sound, as they had already travelled from Fowler's Bay. They were hungry, thirsty, and tired, and without the prospect of satisfying fully their appetites, or obtaining rest for a long period of time, they probably thought, that bad and inhospitable as had been the country we had already traversed, we were daily advancing into one still more so, and that we

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never could succeed in forcing a passage through it; and they might have been strengthened in this belief by the unlucky and incautiously-expressed opinions of the overseer. It was natural enough, under such circumstances, that they should wish to leave the party. Having come to that determination, and knowing from previous experience, that they could not subsist upon what they could procure for themselves in the bush, they had resolved to take with them a portion of the provisions we had remaining, and which they might look upon, perhaps, as their share by right. Nor would Europeans, perhaps, have acted better. In desperate circumstances men are ever apt to become discontented and impatient of restraint, each throwing off the discipline and control he had been subject to before, and each conceiving himself to have a right to act independently when the question becomes one of life and death.

Having decided upon leaving the party, and stealing a portion of the provisions, their object would be to accomplish this as effectually and as safely as they could; and in doing this, they might, without having had the slightest intention originally, of injuring either myself or the overseer, have taken such precautions, and made such previous arrangements as led to the fatal tragedy which occurred. All three of the natives were well aware, that as long as they were willing to accompany us, they would share with us whatever we had left; or that, if resolutely bent upon leaving us, no restriction, save that of friendly advice, would be imposed to prevent their doing so; but at the same time they were aware that we would not have consented to divide our little stock of food for the purpose of enabling any one portion of the party to separate from the other, but rather that we would forcibly resist any attempts to effect such a division, either openly or by stealth. They knew that they never could succeed in their plans openly, and that to do so by stealth effectually and safely, it would first be necessary to secure all the fire-arms, that they might incur no risk from our being alarmed before their purpose was completed. No opportunity had occurred to bring their intentions into operation until the evening in question, when the scrubby nature of the country, the wildness of the night, the overseer's sound sleeping, and my own protracted absence, at a distance with the horses, had all conspired to favour them. I have no doubt, that they first extinguished the fires, and then possessing themselves of the fire-arms, proceeded to plunder the baggage and select such things as they required. In doing this they must have come across the ammunition, and loaded the guns preparatory to their departure, but this might have been without any premeditated intention of making use of them in the way they did. At this unhappy juncture it would seem that the overseer must have awoke, and advanced towards them to see what was the matter, or to put a stop to their proceedings,

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when they fired on him, to save themselves from being caught in their act of plunder. That either of the two should have contemplated the committal of a wilful, barbarous, cold-blooded murder, I cannot bring myself to believe—no object was to be attained by it; and the fact of the overseer having been pierced through the breast, and many yards in advance of where he had been sleeping, in a direction towards the sleeping-place of the natives, clearly indicated that it was not until he had arisen from his sleep, and had been closely pressing upon them, that they had fired the fatal shot. Such appeared to me to be the most plausible and rational explanation of this melancholy affair—I would willingly believe it to be the true one.

Wylie and I moved on in the evening, with the horses for two miles, and again pitched our camp among the sand-drifts, at a place where the natives were in the habit of digging wells for water, and where we procured it at a very moderate depth below the surface. Pigeons were here in great numbers, and Wylie tried several times with the rifle to shoot them, but only killed one, the grooved barrel not being adapted for throwing shot with effect.

At midnight we arose and moved onwards, following along the beach. I intended to have made a long stage, as I no longer had any fears about not finding water; but at nine miles one of the horses knocked up, and could proceed no farther, I was compelled, therefore, to turn in among the sand-drifts, and halt at five in the morning of the 7th. We were again fortunate in procuring water by digging only two feet under the sand-hills, which were here very high, and were a continuation of those in which we had first found water on the 3rd. In the afternoon, I again tried to advance upon our journey, but after proceeding only four miles, the jaded horse was again unable to move further, and there was no alternative but to halt and search for water. This was found among the sand-hills, but we could procure nothing but the coarse grass growing upon the drifts for the animals to eat.

May 8.—About two hours before daylight, rain began to fall, and continued steadily though lightly for three hours, so that enough had fallen to deposit water in the ledges or holes of the rocks. The day was wild and stormy, and we did not start until late. Even then we could only get the tired horse along for three miles, and were again compelled to halt. Water was still procured, by digging under the sand-hills, but we had to sink much deeper than we had lately found occasion to do. It was now plain, that the tired horse would never be able to keep pace with the others, and that we must either abandon him, or proceed at a rate too slow for the present state of our commissariat. Taking all things into consideration, it appeared to me that it would be better to kill him at once for food, and then remain here in camp for a time, living upon the flesh, whilst the other horses were recruiting, after



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which I hoped we might again be able to advance more expeditiously. Upon making this proposal to Wylie, he was quite delighted at the idea, and told me emphatically that he would sit up and eat the whole night. Our decision arrived at, the sentence was soon executed. The poor animal was shot, and Wylie and myself were soon busily employed in skinning him. Leaving me to continue this operation, Wylie made a fire close to the carcase, and as soon as he could get at a piece of the flesh he commenced roasting some, and continued alternately, eating, working and cooking. After cutting off about 100 pounds of the best of the meat, and hanging it in strips upon the trees until our departure, I handed over to Wylie the residue of the carcase, feet, entrails, flesh, skeleton, and all, to cook and consume as he pleased, whilst we were in the neighbourhood. Before dark he had made an oven, and roasted about twenty pounds, to feast upon during the night. The evening set in stormy, and threatened heavy rain, but a few drops only fell. The wind then rose very high, and raged fiercely from the south-west. At midnight it lulled, and the night became intensely cold and frosty, and both Wylie and myself suffered severely, we could only get small sticks for our fire, which burned out in a few minutes, and required so frequently renewing, that we were obliged to give it up in despair, and bear the cold in the best way we could. Wylie, during the night, made a sad and dismal groaning, and complained of being very ill, from pain in his throat, the effect he said of having to work too hard. I did not find that his indisposition interfered very greatly with his appetite, for nearly every time I awoke during the night, I found him up and gnawing away at his meat, he was literally fulfilling the promise he had made me in the evening, "By and bye, you see, Massa, me 'pta' (eat) all night."

May 9.—The day was cold and cloudy, and we remained in camp to rest the horses, and diminish the weight of meat, which was greater than our horses could well carry in their present state. On getting up the horses to water them at noon, I was grieved to find the foal of my favourite mare (which died on the 28th March) missing; how we had lost it I could not make out, but as its tracks were not any where visible near the camp, it was evident that it had never come there at all. In leaving our last halting place my time and attention had been so taken up with getting the weak horse along, that I had left it entirely to Wylie to bring up the others, and had neglected my usual precaution of counting to see if all were there before we moved away. The little creature must have been lying down behind the sand-hills asleep, when we left, or otherwise it would never have remained behind the others. Being very desirous not to lose this foal, which had now accompanied me so far and got through all the worst difficulties, I saddled the strongest of the horses, and mounting



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Wylie, I set off myself on foot with him to search for it. We had not gone far from the camp, when Wylie wished me to go back, offering to go on by himself; and as I was loth to leave our provisions and ammunition to the mercy of any native that might chance to go that way, I acceded to his request, and delivering to him the rifle, returned to the encampment. Wylie had pledged himself to the due execution of this errand, and I had some confidence that he would not deceive me. Hour after hour passed away without his return, and I began to be uneasy at his long delay, and half repented that I had been so foolish as to trust the rifle in his hands. At last, a little after dark, I was delighted to see him return, followed by the foal, which he had found six miles away and still travelling backwards in search of the horses. Having given him an extra allowance of bread as a reward for his good conduct, we took our tea and lay down for the night.

During the day, whilst Wylie was absent, I had employed my time in collecting firewood from the back of the sand-hills. In this occupation I was pleased to meet with the silver-bark tea-tree, another change in the vegetation, which still further convinced me that we were rapidly advancing into a more practicable country.

May 10.—The morning was spent in washing my clothes, cooking meat, and preparing to move on in the afternoon. Wylie, who knew that this was his last opportunity, was busy with the skeleton of the horse, and never ceased eating until we moved on in the afternoon. As we took away with us nearly a hundred pounds of the flesh, the poor horses were heavily laden for the condition they were in. The scrubby and swampy nature of the country behind the shore compelled us too to keep the beach, where the sands were loose and heavy. Our progress was slow, and at eight miles I halted. Here we found a little dry grass not far from the sea, and as the horses did not require water, they fared tolerably well. This was the first grass we had met with since we descended the cliffs on the 3rd instant. The horses having entirely subsisted since then on the wiry vegetation which binds the sand-drifts together. Although we had water in the canteens for ourselves, and the horses did not require any, I was curious to know whether fresh water could be procured where we were encamped—a long, low and narrow tongue of sandy land, lying between the sea on one side and extensive salt swamps on the other, and in no part elevated more than a few feet above the level of the sea itself. After tea I took the spade and commenced digging, and to my great surprise at six feet I obtained water, which though brackish was very palatable. This was very extraordinary, considering the nature of the position we were in, and that there were not any hills from which the fresh water could drain.

The night was again bitterly cold and frosty, and we suffered severely. Now the winter had set in, and we were sadly unprepared to meet its inclemency, the cold at nights became so intense as to occasion me agonies of pain; and the poor native was in the same predicament.

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May 11.—Upon moving away this morning, I kept behind the sea shore along the borders of the salt swamp, steering for some sand-hills which were seen a-head of us. A hill was now visible in the distance, a little south of west, rising above the level bank behind the shore,—this was the first hill, properly so called, that we had met with for many hundreds of miles, and it tended not a little to cheer us and confirm all previous impressions relative to the change and improvement in the character of the country. Our horses were dreadfully fatigued and moved along with difficulty, and it was as much as we could do to reach the sand-hills we had seen, though only seven miles away. In our approach to them we passed through a fine plain full of grass, and of a much better description than we had met with since leaving Fowler's Bay. Not only was it long and in the greatest abundance, but there were also mixed with the old grass many stalks of new and green, the whole forming a rich and luxurious feast for our horses, such as they had not enjoyed for many a long day. Nearer to the sand-hills we obtained excellent water by digging, at a depth of five feet, and only half a mile away from the grass. This place was too favourable not to be made the most of, and I determined to halt for a day or two to give our horses the benefit of it, and to enable us to diminish the weight of meat they had to carry. Whilst here I gave Wylie free permission to eat as much as he could,—a privilege which he was not long in turning to account. Between last night's supper and this morning's breakfast he had got through six-and-a-half pounds of solid cooked flesh, weighed out and free from bone, and he then complained, that as he had so little water (the well had fallen in and he did not like the trouble of cleaning it out again), he could hardly eat at all. On an average he would consume nine pounds of meat per day. I used myself from two to three when undergoing very great exertions. After dinner I ascended one of the sand-hills, and set the hill I had seen in the morning at W. 17 degrees S.

May 12.—I intended this morning to have walked down to the beach, but was suddenly taken ill with similar symptoms to those I had experienced on the 19th, and 21st of April; and, as formerly, I attributed the illness entirely to the unwholesome nature of the meat diet. Wylie was ill too, but not to so great a degree; nor was I surprised at his complaining; indeed, it would have been wonderful if he had not, considering the enormous quantity of horse flesh that he daily devoured. After his feasts, he would lie down, and roll and groan, and say he was "mendyt" (ill) and nothing would induce him to get up, or to do any thing. There were now plenty of sting-ray fish along the beach again, and I was desirous, if possible, to get one for a change of diet; my friend, however, had so much to eat, that though he said he should like fish too, I could not get him to go about a mile to the back of the sand-hills, to cut a stick from the scrub, to make a spear for catching them.

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May 13.—After breakfast, Wylie said he thought he could catch some bandicoots, by firing the scrub near the sand-hills, and went out for an hour or two to try, but came back as he went. During his absence, I was employed in repairing my only two pair of socks now left, which were sadly dilapidated, but of which I was obliged to be very careful, as they were the only security I had against getting lame. In the afternoon I walked down to the beach, to try to spear sting-ray, but the sea was rough, and I saw none. In my ramble, I found plenty of the beautiful white clematis, so common both to the north and south of Sydney.

May 14.—I was again seized with illness, though I had been particularly careful in the quantity of flesh which I had used. For many hours I suffered most excruciating pains; and after the violence of the attack was over, I was left very weak, and incapable of exertion. Wylie was also affected. It was evident that the food we were now living upon, was not wholesome or nutritious. Day after day we felt ourselves getting weaker and more relaxed, whilst the least change of weather, or the slightest degree of cold, was most painfully felt by both of us. What we were to do in the wet weather, which might daily be expected, I knew not, suffering as we did from the frosts and dews only. In the state we now were in, I do not think that we could have survived many days' exposure to wet.

May 15.—I intended to have proceeded early on our journey this morning, but was so ill again, that for some hours I could not stir. The boy was similarly situated. About ten we got a little better, and packing up our things, moved away, but had scarcely gone more than a couple of miles along the beach, when I discovered that the horse-hobbles had been left behind. It was Wylie's duty always to take these off, and strap them round the horses necks, whilst I was arranging the saddles, and fixing on them our arms, provisions, *etc.*; he had forgotten to do this, and had left them lying on the ground. As we could not possibly do without the hobbles, I sent Wylie back for them, telling him I would drive on the horses slowly for a few miles, and then halt to wait for him.

After proceeding eleven miles along the coast, I halted, and Wylie came up a little before dark, bringing the hobbles with him. We were both very hungry; and as we had suffered so much lately from eating the horse flesh, we indulged to-night in a piece of bread, and a spoonful of flour boiled into a paste, an extravagance which I knew we should have to make up for by and bye. I had dug for water, and procured it at a depth of five feet; but it was too brackish either to drink, or give to our horses; we used it, however, in boiling up our flour into paste. The afternoon was exceedingly dark and stormy looking, but only a few light showers fell. The night then set in cold, with a heavy dew.

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May 16.—We commenced our journey at daylight, travelling along the beach, which was very heavy for nine miles, and then halting, at a very low part of the coast, to rest the horses. Whilst here, I dug for water, and getting it of very fair quality, though with an effluvia very like Harrowgate water, I decided upon remaining for the day. We were very much fatigued, being weak and languid, and like our horses, scarcely able to put one foot before the other. From our present encampment, some islands were visible at a bearing of S. 18 degrees E. The tops of the hills, also, to the back, were visible above the level bank, which formed the continuation of the singular table land extending round the Bight, but which was now gradually declining in elevation, and appeared as if it would very shortly cease altogether, so that we might hope to have an unobstructed view of the country inland.

A jagged peak, which I named Mount Ragged, bore W. 10 degrees N., and a round topped one W. 30 degrees N. We were now actually beyond those hills; but the level bank, under which we had been travelling, prevented our seeing more of them than the bare outline of their lofty summits. The whole of the intervening country, between the level bank and the hills, consisted of heavy sandy ridges, a good deal covered with scrub; but we now found more grass than we had seen during the whole journey before. In the night I was taken ill again, with violent pains, accompanied by cold clammy sweats; and as the air was cold and raw, and a heavy dew falling, I suffered a great deal.

May 17.—This morning I felt rather better, but very weak, and wishing to give the horses an opportunity of drinking, which they would not do very early on a cold morning, I did not break up the camp until late. Upon laying down last night Wylie had left the meat on the ground at some distance from our fire, instead of putting it up on a bush as I had directed him, the consequence was that a wild dog had stolen about fourteen pounds of it whilst we slept, and we were now again reduced to a very limited allowance.

After travelling about five miles we found a great and important change in the basis rock of the country; it was now a coarse imperfect kind of grey granite, and in many places the low-water line was occupied by immense sheets of it. Other symptoms of improvement also gradually developed themselves. Mountain ducks were now, for the first time, seen upon the shore, and the trunk of a very large tree was found washed up on the beach: it was the only one we had met with during the whole course of our journey to the westward, and I hailed it with a pleasure which was only equalled by finding, not far beyond, a few drops of water trickling down a huge graniterock abutting on the sea-shore. This was the only approximation to running water which we had found since leaving Streaky Bay, and though it hardly deserved that name, yet it imparted to me as much hope, and almost as much satisfaction, as if I had found a river. Continuing our course around a small bay for about five miles, we turned into some sand-drifts behind a rocky point of the coast. from which the islands we had seen yesterday bore E. 47 degrees S., Cape Pasley, S. W., Point Malcolm, S. 33 degrees W.,

and Mount Ragged W. 32 degrees N. Several reefs and breakers were also seen at no great distance from the shore.



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Our stage to-day was only twelve miles, yet some of our horses were nearly knocked up, and we ourselves in but little better condition. The incessant walking we were subject to, the low and unwholesome diet we had lived upon, the severe and weakening attacks of illness caused by that diet, having daily, and sometimes twice a day, to dig for water, to carry all our fire-wood from a distance upon our backs, to harness, unharness, water, and attend to the horses, besides other trifling occupations, making up our daily routine, usually so completely exhausted us, that we had neither spirit nor energy left. Added to all other evils, the nature of the country behind the sea-coast was as yet so sandy and scrubby that we were still compelled to follow the beach, frequently travelling on loose heavy sands, that rendered our stages doubly fatiguing: whilst at nights, after the labours of the day were over, and we stood so much in need of repose, the intense cold, and the little protection we had against it, more frequently made it a season of most painful suffering than of rest, and we were glad when the daylight relieved us once more. On our march we felt generally weak and languid—it was an effort to put one foot before the other, and there was an indisposition to exertion that it was often very difficult to overcome. After sitting for a few moments to rest—and we often had to do this—it was always with the greatest unwillingness we ever moved on again. I felt, on such occasions, that I could have sat quietly and contentedly, and let the glass of life glide away to its last sand. There was a dreamy kind of pleasure, which made me forgetful or careless of the circumstances and difficulties by which I was surrounded, and which I was always indisposed to break in upon. Wylie was even worse than myself, I had often much difficulty in getting him to move at all, and not unfrequently was compelled almost forcibly to get him up. Fortunately he was very good tempered, and on the whole had behaved extremely well under all our troubles since we had been travelling together alone.

### Chapter III.

Heavy road—A young kangaroo shot—grassy country—point Malcolm—traces of its having been visited by Europeans—grass trees met with—A kangaroo killed—catch fish—get another kangaroo—crab hunting—renew the journey—casuarinae met with—cross the level bank—low country behind it—Cape arid—salt water creek—Xamia seen—cabbage tree of the sound—fresh water lake—more salt streams—opossums caught—flag reeds found—fresh water streams—boats seen—meet with A whaler.

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May 18.—*This* morning we had to travel upon a soft heavy beach, and moved slowly and with difficulty along, and three of the horses were continually attempting to lie down on the road. At twelve miles, we found some nice green grass, and although we could not procure water here, I determined to halt for the sake of the horses. The weather was cool and pleasant. From our camp Mount Ragged bore N. 35 degrees W., and the island we had seen for the last two days, E. 18 degrees S. Having seen some large kangaroos near our camp, I sent Wylie with the rifle to try and get one. At dark he returned bringing home a young one, large enough for two good meals; upon this we feasted at night, and for once Wylie admitted that his belly was full. He commenced by eating a pound and a half of horse-flesh, and a little bread, he then ate the entrails, paunch, liver, lights, tail, and two hind legs of the young kangaroo, next followed a penguin, that he had found dead upon the beach, upon this he forced down the whole of the hide of the kangaroo after singeing the hair off, and wound up this meal by swallowing the tough skin of the penguin; he then made a little fire, and laid down to sleep, and dream of the pleasures of eating, nor do I think he was ever happier in his life than at that moment.

May 19.—The morning set in very cold and showery, with the wind from the southward, making us shiver terribly as we went along; luckily the country behind the sea-shore was at this place tolerably open, and we were for once enabled to leave the beach, and keep a little inland. The soil was light and sandy, but tolerably fertile. In places we found low brush, in others very handsome clumps of tea-tree scattered at intervals over some grassy tracts of country, giving a pleasing and park-like appearance we had long been strangers to. The grass was green, and afforded a most grateful relief to the eye, accustomed heretofore to rest only upon the naked sands or the gloomy scrubs we had so long been travelling amongst. Anxious if possible to give our horses a day or two's rest, at such a grassy place, and especially as the many kangaroos we saw, gave us hope of obtaining food for ourselves also, I twice dug for water, but did not find any of such quality as we could use. I was compelled therefore to turn in among the sand-hills of Point Malcolm, where I found excellent water at three and a half feet, and halted for the day, after a stage of five miles. Unfortunately we were now beyond all grass, and had to send the horses by a long and difficult road to it, over steep sandy ridges, densely covered by scrub. Upon halting, one of our horses lay down, appearing to be very ill, for two hours I could not get him to rise, and was sadly afraid he would die, which would have been a serious loss to us, for he was the strongest one we had left. A little inside Point Malcolm, I found traces of Europeans who had slept on shore near the beach, and upon one of the tea-trees, I found cut "Ship Julian,



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1840," "Haws, 1840," "C. W." and some few other letters, which I did not copy. The forenoon continued very wild and stormy, with occasional showers of rain, and as we could get neither firewood nor shelter at our camp, and the sand eddied around us in showers, we were very miserable. After dinner, I sent Wylie out with the rifle, to try to shoot a kangaroo, whilst I took a walk round, to look for grass, and to ascertain whether water could not be procured in some place nearer the horses, and better provided with firewood and shelter. My efforts were without success, nor did I meet with better fortune, in examining Point Malcolm, to see if there was any place where we could fish from the shore, the point itself was of granite, but on the sheltered side the water was very shoal, close to the shore, whilst on the outer side the waves were breaking with frightful violence, and the spray curling and rising from the rocks in one perpetual and lofty jet. In the evening Wylie returned without a kangaroo.

The night turned out showery, wild, and cold, making us keenly alive to the bleak, shelterless position we were encamped in.

May 20.—The sick horse was better to-day, and as they had all found their way back to the best grass, I determined to remain in camp. Wylie took the rifle, and again went out kangarooing, whilst I took a long walk to examine the country, and look out for a line of road to proceed by, when we left our present position. I was anxious, if possible, to give over travelling along the beach where the sands were so loose and heavy, not only causing great extra fatigue to the horses, but adding also considerably to the distance we should otherwise have to travel. For some distance I passed over steep ridges, densely covered with large tea-trees or with other scrub, after which I emerged upon open sandy downs, covered with low shrubs or bushes, and frequently having patches of good grass interspersed; the grass-tree was here met with for the first time, but not very abundantly. This description of country continued between the coast and the low level bank which still shut out all view of the interior, though it had greatly decreased in elevation as we advanced to the west, and appeared as if it would soon merge in the level of the country around. The day was tolerably fine, but windy, and a few slight showers fell at intervals. At dusk I got up the horses, watered them, and was preparing to remove the baggage to a more sheltered place, when Wylie made his appearance, with the gratifying intelligence that he had shot one kangaroo, and wounded another; the dead one he said was too far away for us to get it to-night, and we, therefore, (very unwillingly,) left it until the morning, and at present only removed our baggage nearer to the grass, and among thick clumps of tea-trees where we had shelter and firewood in abundance. The only inconvenience being that we were obliged to be economical of water, having to



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bring it all from the sand-drifts, and our kegs only carrying a few quarts at a time. In the prospect of a supply of kangaroo, we finished the last of our horse-flesh to-night. It had lasted us tolerably well, and though we had not gained above sixty-five miles of distance, since we commenced it, yet we had accomplished this so gradually, that the horses had not suffered so much as might have been expected, and were improving somewhat in strength and appearance every day. It was much to have got them to advance at all, considering the dreadful sufferings they had endured previous to our arrival at water on the 3rd of May.

Getting up one of the horses early on the 21st, we took some water with us and proceeded to where Wylie had left the kangaroo, to breakfast. Fortunately it had not been molested by the wild dogs during the night. Though not of a large species, it was a full grown animal, and furnished us with a grateful supply of wholesome food. Once more Wylie enjoyed as much as he could eat, and after breakfast, I took the horse back to the camp, carrying with me about thirty-two pounds weight of the best and most fleshy parts of the kangaroo. Wylie remained behind with the rifle, to return leisurely and try to shoot another; but early in the afternoon he returned, not having seen one. The truth, I suspect was, that he had eaten too much to breakfast, and laid down to sleep when I was gone, coming back to the camp as soon as he felt hungry again. The rest of the day was taken up in attending to the horses and bringing a supply of water up for ourselves. The weather was mild and pleasant, and a few slight showers fell at night, but we were now so well protected among the tea-trees, and had so much firewood, that we were not inconvenienced by the rain.

As I still intended to remain in camp to recruit the horses, I wished Wylie to go out again on the 22nd, to try for another kangaroo; but the other not being yet all used, he was very unwilling to do so, and it was only upon my threatening to move on if he did not, that I could get him out. As soon as he was gone, I went down to Point Malcolm to try to fish, as the weather was now so much more moderate. Unfortunately, my tackling was not strong, and after catching three rock-fish, weighing together three pounds and a half; a large fish got hooked, and took great part of my line, hook and all, away.

It was very vexing to lose a line when I had not many, but still more so to miss a fine fish that would have weighed fifteen or sixteen pounds. Being obliged to come back, I spent the remainder of the afternoon in preparing lines for the morrow.

Towards evening Wylie returned gloomy and sulky, and without having fired a shot; neither had he brought the horses up with him to water as I had requested him to do, and now it was too late to go for them, and they would have to be without water for the night. I was vexed at this, and gave him a good scolding for his negligence, after which I endeavoured to ascertain what had so thoroughly put him out of humour, for ordinarily

he was one of the best tempered natives I had met with: a single sentence revealed the whole—"The——dogs had eaten the skin."

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This observation came from the very bottom of his soul, and at once gave me an idea of the magnitude of the disappointment he had sustained; the fact was, upon leaving the camp in the morning he had taken a firestick in his hand, and gone straight back to where we skinned the kangaroo on the 21st, with the intention of singeing off the hair and eating the skin, which had been left hanging over a bush. Upon his arrival he found it gone: the wild dogs had been beforehand with him and deprived him of the meal he expected; hence his gloomy, discontented look upon his return. As yet I had not told him that I had been fishing; but upon showing him what I had brought home, and giving him the two largest for supper, his brow again cleared, and he voluntarily offered to go out again to try to get a kangaroo to-morrow.

May 23.—Leaving Wylie asleep at the camp, I set off early to fish at Point Malcolm. After catching four rock-fish, weighing five pounds, and losing several hooks, I commenced hunting about among the rocks for crabs, of which I procured about a dozen. They were quite different from the English crab, being very small, not more than three or four inches in diameter, and without any meat in the inside of the shell; but the chine and claws afforded very fair pickings. Upon returning to the camp, I learnt from Wylie with great satisfaction that he had shot another kangaroo as he went to bring up the horses. The latter were now at the camp; so sending him to water them, I remained behind to dry my clothes, which had got thoroughly wetted in catching the crabs.

Upon Wylie's return I mounted him on one of the horses, and accompanying him on foot, proceeded to where he had left the kangaroo; as it was only one mile and a half away we brought it back upon the horse, entire, that we might skin it more leisurely at the camp. It was a larger one than the last, and promised an abundant supply of food for some days; added to this we had five pounds of fish and a dozen crabs, so that our larder was well and variously stocked. Upon skinning the kangaroo, Wylie carefully singed, folded up, and put away the skin for another day, fully determined that this time he would lose no part of the precious prize. Having taken the paunch and emptied it, he proceeded to make a kind of haggis (rather a dirty one to be sure), by putting into it the liver, lights, heart, and small intestines, and then tying it up, thrust it into the fire to be roasted whole. This seemed to be a favourite dish with him, and he was now as happy as a king, sleeping and eating alternately the whole night long; his only complaint now being that the water was so far off, and that as we had to carry it all up from the sand-hills to our camp, he could not drink so much as he should like, and in consequence, could not eat so much either, for it required no small quantity of liquid to wash down the enormous masses of meat that he consumed whenever he had an opportunity.

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May 24.—Leaving Wylie to continue his feast and attend to the horses, I went down to the beach to hunt again for crabs, of which I procured about three dozen, but still of the same small size as before; a few larger ones were seen in the deeper clefts of the rocks, but I could not get at them; indeed, as it was, I was very nearly terminating my crab hunting and expedition at the same time. The places where these animals were obtained, were the clefts and holes among large masses and sheets of rock close to the sea, and which were covered by it at high water; many of these were like platforms, shelving to the sea, and terminating abruptly in deep water. Whilst busily engaged upon one of them, in trying to get some crabs out from its clefts, I did not notice that the surf sometimes washed over where I stood, until whilst stooping, and in the act of fishing out a crab, a roller came further than usual and dashing over me, threw me down and took both me and my crabs to some distance, nearly carrying us down the steep into the sea, from which nothing could have rescued me, as I should soon have been dashed to pieces by the breakers against the rocks. Having gathered up the crabs I had collected, I set off homewards in a sad cold uncomfortable plight, with the skin scraped off my hands and one of my heels, and with my shoes in such a state from scrambling about among the rocks and in the wet, as strongly to indicate to me the propriety of never attempting to go crab hunting again with my shoes on, unless I wished to be placed altogether “hors du combat” for walking. Wylie I found had got up the horses and watered them, and had brought up a supply of water for the camp, so that we had nothing to do in the afternoon but boil crabs and eat them, at which occupation I found him wonderfully more skilful than I was, readily getting through two to my one.

On the 25th we still remained in camp to take advantage of the abundant supply of food we had for ourselves, and by giving the horses a long rest, enable them also to recruit a little upon the excellent grass which grew in this neighbourhood. Wylie took the rifle out to try to get another kangaroo, but did not succeed. I remained at home to mend my boots, and prepare for advancing again to-morrow. In the afternoon we filled our kegs, and brought away the bucket and spade from the sand-hills, that we might be ready to move without going again to the water. For the first time since we left Fowler’s Bay we were troubled with musquitoes.

May 26.—Up early, and Wylie, who had been eating the whole night, was so thirsty, that he actually walked all the way through the dew and cold of the morning to the water to drink, as I could only afford him one pint out of the kegs. We had now been in camp six clear days, at this most favourable position; we had got an abundant and wholesome supply of provisions for ourselves, and had been enabled to allow our horses to enjoy a long unbroken interval of rest, amidst

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the best of pasturage, and where there was excellent water. Now that we were again going to continue our route, I found that the horses were so much improved in appearance and in strength, that I thought we might once again venture, without oppression to the animals, occasionally to ride; I selected therefore, the strongest from among them for this purpose, and Wylie and myself walked and rode alternately; after passing the scrubby sand-ridges, and descending to the open downs behind them, I steered direct for Cape Arid, cutting off Cape Pasley, and encamping after a stage of eighteen miles, where it bore south-east of us. We halted for the night upon a ridge timbered with casuarinae, and abounding in grass. Once more we were in a country where trees were found, and again we were able at night to make our fires of large logs, which did not incessantly require renewing to prevent their going out. We had now crossed the level bank which had so long shut out the interior from us; gradually it had declined in elevation, until at last it had merged in the surrounding country, and we hardly knew where it commenced, or how it ended. The high bluff and craggy hills, whose tops we had formerly seen, stood out now in bold relief, with a low level tract of country stretching to their base, covered with dwarf brush, heathy plants and grass-tree, with many intervals of open grassy land, and abounding in kangaroos. I named these lofty and abrupt mountain masses the "Russell Range," after the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies—Lord John Russell. They constitute the first great break in the character and appearance of the country for many hundreds of miles, and they offer a point of great interest, from which future researches may hereafter be made towards the interior. Nearer to the coast, and on either side of Cape Pasley were sand-drifts, in which I have no doubt that water might have been procured. We found none where we were encamped, but had sufficient in the kegs for our own use, and the horses were not thirsty; many and recent tracks of natives were observed, but the people themselves were not seen.

The morning of the 27th was exceedingly cold; and as we left our encampments early, neither I nor Wylie were inclined to ride for the first few miles; it was as much as we could do to keep ourselves from shivering whilst walking; the dews were so heavy, that we were soon wet through by the spangles from the shrubs and grass, whilst the pace at which we travelled was not sufficiently rapid to promote a quick circulation, and enable us to keep ourselves warm.



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At six miles we passed some sand hills, where there was every indication of water, but I did not think it worth while delaying to try the experiment in digging, and pushed on for four miles further, round a bight of the coast, encamping on the east side of Cape Arid, where a small salt water creek entered the bight. The mouth of this was closed by a bar of sand, quite dry; nor did the salt water continue for any great distance inland. Following it up, in the hope of finding fresh water near its source, I found that there was none now, but that after rains considerable streams must be poured into it from the gorges of Cape Arid. The rocks here were all of granite; and in some of the ledges we were fortunate enough to find abundance of water deposited by the rains, at which we watered our horses. This being the first time we had ever been able to do so on our whole journey without making use of the spade and bucket. After putting the horses out upon the best grass we could find, Wylie and I went to try our luck at fishing; the sea was boisterous, and we caught none; but in returning, got about eight or nine crabs a-piece, which, with some of the kangaroo that was still left, enabled us to make our fare out tolerably.

May 26.—In the latter part of the night the rain set in moderately, but steadily, and both Wylie and myself were very wet and miserable. The morning still continued showery, and I was anxious to have remained in camp for the sake of the horses; but as we had consumed at breakfast the last of our kangaroo, it became necessary to find some means of renewing our resources, or else lose no time in making the best of our way onwards. Having sent Wylie to try and get crabs, I went out with the rifle, but could see nothing to shoot; and upon returning to the camp, I found Wylie had been equally unsuccessful among the rocks, the sea being too rough; there was no alternative, therefore, but to move on, and having got up the horses, we proceeded behind Cape Arid for ten miles, at a course of W. 15 degrees N., and encamped at night amid a clump of tea-trees, and bastard gums, where we got good grass for our horses, but no water. The day had been intensely cold, and I could not persuade Wylie to ride at all. At night we had abundance of firewood, and a few of the long narrow yams were also found at this encampment, the first vegetable food we had yet procured. Grass trees had been abundant on our line of route to-day, and for the first time we met with the Xamia. In the evening, the kangaroo fly (a small brown fly) became very troublesome, annoying us in great numbers, and warning us that rain was about to fall. At night it came in frequent though moderate showers. We got very much wetted, but our fire was good, and we did not suffer so much from the cold as the damp, which affected me with cramp in the limbs, and rheumatism.

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May 29.—After breakfasting upon a spoonful of flour a-piece, mixed with a little water and boiled into a paste, we again proceeded. At ten miles we came to a small salt water stream, running seawards; in passing up it to look for a crossing place, Wylie caught two opossums, in the tops of some tea-trees, which grew on the banks. As I hoped more might be procured, and perhaps fresh water, by tracing it higher up, I took the first opportunity of crossing to the opposite side, and there encamped; Wylie now went out to search for opossums, and I traced the stream upwards. In my route I passed several very rich patches of land in the valleys, and on the slopes of the hills enclosing the watercourse. These were very grassy and verdant, but I could find no fresh water, nor did I observe any timber except the tea-tree. After tracing the stream until it had ceased running, and merely became a chain of ponds of salt water, I returned to the camp a good deal fatigued; Wylie came in soon after, but had got nothing but a few yams. The general character of the country on either side the watercourse, was undulating, of moderate elevation, and affording a considerable extent of sheep pasturage. The cockatoos of King George's Sound, (without the yellow crest) were here in great numbers. Kangaroos also abounded; but the country had not brush enough to enable us to get sufficiently near to shoot them.

During the day Wylie had caught two opossums, and as these were entirely the fruit of his own labour and skill, I did not interfere in their disposal; I was curious, moreover, to see how far I could rely upon his kindness and generosity, should circumstances ever compel me to depend upon him for a share of what he might procure. At night, therefore, I sat philosophically watching him whilst he proceeded to get supper ready, as yet ignorant whether I was to partake of it or not. After selecting the largest of the two animals, he prepared and cooked it, and then put away the other where he intended to sleep. I now saw that he had not the remotest intention of giving any to me, and asked him what he intended to do with the other one. He replied that he should be hungry in the morning, and meant to keep it until then. Upon hearing this I told him that his arrangements were very good, and that for the future I would follow the same system also; and that each should depend upon his own exertions in procuring food; hinting to him that as he was so much more skilful than I was, and as we had so very little flour left, I should be obliged to reserve this entirely for myself, but that I hoped he would have no difficulty in procuring as much food as he required. I was then about to open the flour-bag and take a little out for my supper, when he became alarmed at the idea of getting no more, and stopped me, offering the other opossum, and volunteering to cook it properly for me. Trifling as this little occurrence was, it read me a lesson of caution, and taught me what value was to be placed upon the assistance or kindness of my companion, should circumstances ever place me in a situation to be dependent upon him; I felt a little hurt too, at experiencing so little consideration from one whom I had treated with the greatest kindness, and who had been clothed and fed upon my bounty, for the last fifteen months.



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May 30.—In commencing our journey this morning, our route took us over undulating hills, devoid of timber, but having occasionally small patches of very rich land in the valleys and upon some of the slopes. This continued to a salt-water river, broad, and apparently deep near the sea. As I was doubtful whether it would have a bar-mouth to seawards, I thought it more prudent to trace it upwards, for the purpose of crossing. At no very great distance it contracted sufficiently to enable me to get over to the other side. But in doing so the ground proved soft and boggy, and I nearly lost one of the horses. Four miles beyond this river we came to another channel of salt water, but not so large as the last. In valleys sloping down to this watercourse we met, for the first time, clumps of a tree called by the residents of King George's Sound the cabbage-tree, and not far from which were native wells of fresh water; there were also several patches of rich land bordering upon the watercourse.

Travelling for two miles further, we came to a very pretty fresh-water lake, of moderate size, and surrounded by clumps of tea-tree. It was the first permanent fresh water we had found on the surface since we commenced our journey from Fowler's Bay—a distance of nearly seven hundred miles. I would gladly have encamped here for the night, but the country surrounding the lake was sandy and barren, and destitute of grass. We had only made good a distance of eleven miles from our last camp, and I felt anxious to get on to Lucky Bay as quickly as I could, in order that I might again give our horses a rest for a few days, which they now began to require. From Captain Flinders' account of Lucky Bay I knew we should find fresh water and wood in abundance. I hoped there would also be grass, and in this case I had made up my mind to remain a week or ten days, during which I intended to have killed the foal we had with us, now about nine months old, could we procure food in no other way. After leaving Lucky Bay, as we should only be about three hundred miles from the Sound, and our horses would be in comparatively fresh condition, I anticipated we should be able to progress more rapidly. Indeed I fully expected it would be absolutely necessary for us to do so, through a region which, from Flinders' description as seen from sea, and from his having named three different hills in it Mount Barrens, we should find neither very practicable nor fertile.

Six miles beyond the fresh-water lake we came to another salt-water stream, and finding, upon following up a little way, that it was only brackish, we crossed and halted for the night. Wylie went out to search for food, but got nothing, whilst I unharnessed and attended to the horses, which were a good deal fagged, and then prepared the camp and made the fires for the night: I could get nothing but grass-tree for this purpose, but it was both abundant and dry. Owing to its very resinous nature, this tree burns



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with great heat and brilliancy, emitting a grateful aromatic odour. It is easily lit up, makes a most cheerful fire, and notwithstanding the fervency with which it burns, does not often require renewing, if the tree be large. Our whole journey to-day had been over undulations of about three hundred feet in elevation; the country rose a little inland, and a few occasional bluffs of granite were observed in the distance, but no timber was seen any where. At night the flies and mosquitoes were very troublesome to us.

May 31.—The morning showery, and bitterly cold, so that, for the first two hours after starting, we suffered considerably. After travelling for seven miles and a half, through an undulating and bare country, we came to a salt-water river, with some patches of good land about it. Having crossed the river a little way up where it became narrower, we again proceeded for five miles farther, through the same character of country, and were then stopped by another salt stream, which gave us a great deal of trouble to effect a crossing. We had traced it up to where the channel was narrow, but the bed was very deep, and the water running strongly between banks of rich black soil. Our horses would not face this at first, and in forcing them over we were nearly losing two of them. After travelling only a quarter of a mile beyond this stream I was chagrined to find we had crossed it just above the junction of two branches, and that we had still one of them to get over; the second was even more difficult to pass than the first, and whilst I was on the far side, holding one of the horses by a rope, with Wylie behind driving him on, the animal made a sudden and violent leap, and coming full upon me, knocked me down and bruised me considerably. One of his fore legs struck me on the thigh, and I narrowly escaped having it broken, whilst a hind leg caught me on the shin, and cut me severely.

As soon as we were fairly over I halted for the night, to rest myself and give Wylie an opportunity of looking for food. The water in both branches of this river was only brackish where we crossed, and at that which we encamped upon but slightly so.

There were many grass-trees in the vicinity, and as several of these had been broken down and were dead they were full of the white grubs of which the natives are so fond. From these Wylie enjoyed a plentiful, and to him, luxurious supper. I could not bring myself to try them, preferring the root of the broad flag-reed, which, for the first time, we met with at this stream, and which is an excellent and nutritious article of food. This root being dug up, and roasted in hot ashes, yields a great quantity of a mealy farinaceous powder interspersed among the fibres; it is of an agreeable flavour, wholesome, and satisfying to the appetite. In all parts of Australia, even where other food abounds, the root of this reed is a favourite and staple article of diet among the aborigines. The proper season of the year for procuring it in full perfection, is after the floods have receded, and the leaves have died away and been burnt off. It is that species of reed of which the leaves are used by coopers for closing up crevices between the staves of their casks.

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June 1.—Upon getting up this morning I found myself very stiff and sore from the bruises I had received yesterday, yet I felt thankful that I had escaped so well; had any of my limbs been broken, I should have been in a dreadful position, and in all probability must have perished. After Wylie had dug up some of the flag-roots for breakfast, and a few to take with us, we proceeded on our journey. I was anxious to have made a long stage, and if possible, to have reached Thistle Cove by night; but the country we had to pass over was heavy and sandy, and after travelling fifteen miles, the horses became so jaded, that I was obliged to turn in among some sand-drifts near the coast, and halt for the night. The course we had been steering for the last few days towards Lucky Bay, had gradually brought us close to the coast again, and during a part of our journey this afternoon we were travelling upon the sea-shore. At ten miles after starting, we crossed a strong stream of fresh water running through some sandy flats into the sea; a mile and a half beyond this we crossed a second stream; and half a mile further a third, all running strongly, with narrow channels, into the sea, and quite fresh. Fresh water was also laying about every where on our road in large pools; a proof of the very heavy rains that had lately fallen. We were, therefore, enjoying the advantages of a wet season without having been subject to its inclemency, and which, in our present weak, unprotected state, we could hardly have endured. The country to the back was sandy and undulating, covered principally with low shrubs, and rising inland; there were also several granite bluffs at intervals, from among which, the streams I had crossed, probably took their rise; but there were no trees to be seen any where, except a few of the tea of cabbage-trees. I do not think that any of the three fresh-water streams we had crossed would be permanent, their present current being owing entirely to the recent rains; but when they are running, and the weather is moderately fair, they afford an admirable opportunity of watering a vessel with very little trouble, the water being clear and pure to its very junction with the sea.

At night we made our supper of the flag-roots we had brought with us, and a spoonful of flour a-piece, boiled into a paste. The night was very cold and windy, and having neither shelter nor fire-wood at the sand-drifts where we were, we spent it miserably.

June 2.—As we had made a shorter stage yesterday than I intended to have done, and the quantity of flour we had now remaining was very small, I did not dare to make use of any this morning, and we commenced our journey without breakfast. Being now near Thistle Cove, where I intended to halt for some time, and kill the little foal for food, whilst the other horses were recruiting, and as I hoped to get there early this afternoon, I was anxious to husband our little stock of flour in the hope, that at the little

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fresh-water lake described by Flinders, as existing there, we should find abundance of the flag-reed for our support. Keeping a little behind the shore for the first hour, we crossed over the sandy ridge bounding it, and upon looking towards the sea, I thought I discovered a boat sailing in the bay. Upon pointing this object out to Wylie, he was of the same opinion with myself, and we at once descended towards the shore, but on our arrival were greatly disappointed at not being able again to see the object of our search. In the course of half an hour, however, whilst resting ourselves and watching the surface of the ocean, it again became visible, and soon after a second appeared. It was now evident that both these were boats, and that we had noticed them only when standing off shore, and the light shone upon their sails, and had lost them when upon the opposite tack. It was equally apparent they were standing out from the main land for the islands. I imagined them to be sealers, who having entered the bay to procure water or firewood, were again steering towards the islands to fish. Having hastily made a fire upon one of the sand-hills, we fired shots, shouted, waved handkerchiefs, and made every signal we could to attract attention, but in vain. They were too far away to see, or too busy to look towards us. The hopes we had entertained were as suddenly disappointed as they had been excited, and we stood silently and sullenly gazing after the boats as they gradually receded from our view.

Whilst thus occupied and brooding over our disappointment, we were surprised to see both boats suddenly lower their sails, and apparently commence fishing. Watching them steadily we now perceived that they were whale boats, and once more our hearts beat with hope, for I felt sure that they must belong to some vessel whaling in the neighbourhood. We now anxiously scanned the horizon in every direction, and at last were delighted beyond measure to perceive to the westward the masts of a large ship, peeping above a rocky island which had heretofore concealed her from our view. She was apparently about six miles from us, and as far as we could judge from so great a distance, seemed to be at anchor near the shore.

Poor Wylie's joy now knew no bounds, and he leapt and skipped about with delight as he congratulated me once more upon the prospect of getting plenty to eat. I was not less pleased than he was, and almost as absurd, for although the vessel was quietly at anchor so near us, with no sails loose and her boats away, I could not help fearing that she might disappear before we could get to her, or attract the notice of those on board. To prevent such a calamity, I mounted one of the strongest horses and pushed on by myself as rapidly as the heavy nature of the sands would allow, leaving Wylie at his own especial request to bring on the other horses. In a short time I arrived upon the summit of a rocky cliff, opposite to a fine large barque lying at anchor in a well sheltered

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bay, (which I subsequently named Rossiter Bay, after the captain of the whaler,) immediately east of Lucky Bay, and at less than a quarter of a mile distant from the shore. The people on board appeared to be busily engaged in clearing their cables which were foul, and did not observe me at all. I tied up my horse, therefore, to a bush, and waited for Wylie, who was not long in coming after me, having driven the poor horses at a pace they had not been accustomed to for many a long day. I now made a smoke on the rock where I was, and hailed the vessel, upon which a boat instantly put off, and in a few moments I had the inexpressible pleasure of being again among civilized beings, and of shaking hands with a fellow-countryman in the person of Captain Rossiter, commanding the French Whaler “Mississippi.”

Our story was soon told, and we were received with the greatest kindness and hospitality by the captain.

### Chapter IV.

Go on board the Mississippi—wet weather—visit lucky bay—interview with natives—*Wylie understands their language—get the horses shod—prepare to leave the vessel—kindness and liberality of captain Rossiter—renew journey to the westward—fossil formation still continues—salt water streams and lakes—A large salt river—character of the country.*

June 2.—*After* watering the horses at a deposit left by the rains, in the sheets of granite near us, and turning them loose, we piled up our little baggage, and in less than an hour we were comfortably domiciled on board the hospitable Mississippi,—a change in our circumstances so great, so sudden, and so unexpected, that it seemed more like a dream than a reality; from the solitary loneliness of the wilderness, and its attendant privations, we were at once removed to all the comforts of a civilised community.

After we had done ample justice to the good cheer set before us, by our worthy host, he kindly invited us to remain on board as long as we pleased, to recruit our horses, and told us, that when we felt refreshed sufficiently to renew the journey, he would supply us with such stores and other articles as we might require. I learnt that the Mississippi had but recently arrived from France, and that she had only been three weeks upon the ground she had taken up for the season’s whaling. As yet no whales had been seen, and the season was said not to commence before the end of June or beginning of July. The boats I saw in the morning belonged to her, and had been out chasing what they thought to be a whale, but which proved to be only a fin-back, a species which was not thought to repay the trouble of trying out.

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Early in the evening the whalers retired to rest, and I had a comfortable berth provided for me in the cabin, but could not sleep; my thoughts were too much occupied in reflecting upon the great change which the last few hours had wrought in the position of myself and my attendant. Sincerely grateful to the Almighty for having guided us through so many difficulties, and for the inexpressible relief afforded us when so much needed, but so little expected, I felt doubly thankful for the mercy we experienced, when, as I lay awake, I heard the wind roar, and the rain drive with unusual wildness, and reflected that by God's blessing, we were now in safety, and under shelter from the violence of the storm, and the inclemency of the west season, which appeared to be setting in, but which, under the circumstances we were in but a few short hours ago, we should have been so little able to cope with, or to endure.

June 3.—I arose at day-break, as I found the whalers breakfasted betimes, to enable them to send their boats away to look out, at an early hour. In fact, during the season, I was informed, that it was not unusual to send them to their posts before the break of day, and especially so, if other vessels were in company, or there was any competition. After breakfast I landed with the Captain, to get up and inspect the horses; poor animals they had not gone far and were doubtless glad at not being required to march away to-day. I was only sorry that the country did not abound more in grass. Plenty of water left by the rains was procurable, in the ledges of the granite rocks, but the vegetation was scanty, the soil being very sandy, and covered principally with small shrubs, heathy plants, *etc.*

Leaving the horses to enjoy their respite from labour, I accompanied the Captain to see a garden made by the sailors, in which peas and potatoes had already been planted, and appeared to be growing well. A rich piece of land had been selected on a slope, bordering upon a salt water creek, which here wound through the level country towards the sea. The water in this creek, was brackish in the upper part, but seaward it was quite salt, it had a bar mouth of sand, which was quite dry. Unfortunately, the Captain had no garden seeds but the peas and potatoes, so that their labours were confined to cultivating these; otherwise during the many months spent by them in bay whaling, they might have abundantly supplied themselves with a variety of vegetables, at once an agreeable and wholesome addition to the ordinary diet on board ship. After dinner I went with the Captain to visit an island near, upon which he kept his live stock, such as pigs, sheep, and tortoises; the two latter had been procured from the west side of the island of Madagascar; the sheep were strange looking animals, more like goats than sheep, of all colours, and with fat tails, like the Cape sheep. Their cost at Madagascar had been a tumbler full of powder a piece; a bullock would have cost ten bottles full, and other things could have been procured at proportionable prices. The principal articles in request among the Madagases, were said to be powder, brass headed trunk nails, muskets, gun-flints, clear claret bottles, looking-glasses, and cutlery.

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The greater part of the day was very cold and showery, and I remained quietly on board, reading some old English papers. Wylie was as happy as he could be. It was true he did not understand a word spoken by those around him (for not a soul on board spoke English but the Captain), but he had as much to eat as he desired; and to do him justice, I believe he made the most of the opportunity. On the other hand, his capacity for eating entertained the Frenchmen, with the exception, perhaps, of his first meal on board, and then, I believe, that the immense number of biscuits he devoured, and the amazing rapidity with which they disappeared, not only astounded, but absolutely alarmed them. Fish were caught in great numbers from the ship's side, mackarel and baracoota being obtained every day. Other varieties might have been procured off the rocks near the shore, from which there were many places well adapted for fishing. Periwinkles abounded, and crabs were numerous among the crevices of the rocks. Altogether, this seemed to be a most favourable place; and had we not met with the vessel, it would have held out to us the prospect of obtaining as abundant a supply of food for ourselves as we had got at Point Malcolm, without the necessity of destroying the poor foal. The night again set in very wild, cold, and wet.

June 4.—This morning the weather appeared tolerably fine, and I landed with the French doctor for the purpose of walking across to Thistle Cove. After travelling four miles over a sandy heathy country, we arrived at the pretty little fresh water lake, so accurately described by Captain Flinders, and which I had so anxiously looked forward to attaining, that we might halt to rest, and recruit the horses. There is no timber around the lake, beyond a few xamias, grass trees, and some stunted tea-trees; neither was there much grass. In other respects, I could not have pitched upon a more favourable place to have halted at: for near the lake abounded the flag reed, of which the root was so valuable for food. This one article would have supported us well during our stay here, whilst the many bluff rocks, with deep calm water close to them, extending all around the promontory which projected into the sea, and round the bay, held out great promise that fish could readily have been caught. Ducks were also numerous in the lake, and kangaroos on shore. The day turned out very bleak and wet, and we both got thoroughly soaked through before we got back to the vessel, which was not until about two in the afternoon; I was then obliged to borrow a dry suit from the Captain, whilst my own clothes were drying.

June 5.—From this time until the fourteenth of June I remained on board the Mississippi, enjoying the hospitality of Captain Rossiter. Wylie went out once or twice to try to shoot a kangaroo for the ship, but he never succeeded; he had so much to eat on board that he had no stimulus to exertion, and did not take the trouble necessary to insure success. During almost the whole of the time that I remained on board the Mississippi, the weather was exceedingly boisterous, cold, and wet, and I could not but feel truly thankful that I had not been exposed to it on shore; even on board the ship, with shelter and extra clothing, I felt very sensibly the great change which had taken place in the temperature.



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I regretted greatly that during my stay I had not the opportunity of seeing a whale caught. There was only once an attempt at a chase. In this instance three boats were sent out, commanded by the Captain and the two mates, but after a considerable lapse of time, and a long interval of suspense and anxiety, the fish chased turned out to be a hump-back, and as this was not deemed worth catching, the boats returned to the ship. The life led by the whalers, as far as I was able to judge, from the short time I was with them, seemed to be one of regularity, but of considerable hardship. At half-past six or seven in the evening they invariably went to bed, but were up at the first dawn of day, and sometimes even before it, the boats were then usually sent to a distance from the ship to look out for whales, and whether fortunate or otherwise, they would always have a pretty hard day's work before they returned. They were, however, well fed, being apparently even better dieted than the generality of merchant-ships; the bread was of a better quality, and the allowance of butter, cheese, beans, and other little luxuries much more liberal. In the Mississippi the crew were generally young men, and with few exceptions all were complete novices at sea; this I was told was in consequence of an expected war between England and France, and the prohibition of able seamen from leaving their country. Captain Rossiter assured me that he had not been allowed for a considerable length of time to sail at all from France, as the war was daily expected to break out. He was still ignorant as to what had been done in this respect, and naturally felt very anxious at being, as he might imagine, on an enemy's coast.

During the time I remained on board the vessel, a party of natives once or twice came down to the beach, and as I was anxious to enter into commucation with them, two were induced to get into the boat and come on board; as I expected, my boy Wylie fully understood the language spoken in this part of the country, and could converse with them fluently. Through him I learnt that they had never seen white people before the Mississippi anchored here, which was somewhat singular, considering the frankness with which they visited us, and the degree of confidence they appeared to repose in us. Of the interior I could gain no satisfactory account, they said that as far inland as they were acquainted with the country, it was similar to what we saw, that there was an abundance of water in the valleys in small wells, that there was a lake and fresh water river, but that there was little or no wood anywhere. In turn they were curious to know where we had come from, or where we were going; but Wylie, who in this respect, at least, was prudent and cautious, told them that we had come from the eastward to join the ship, and were now going to remain. Finding I could gain no further useful information, presents of fish and biscuits were made to them, and they were put on shore, highly pleased with their visit. During the remainder of my stay, I had no further opportunity of entering into conversation with these people, as the weather was generally wild, and they could not procure much shelter or fire-wood on the coast, had they come down to see us.

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A few days before I contemplated commencing the renewal of my journey, I requested the Captain to allow a blacksmith he had on board to shoe my horses, and to this he kindly consented, but as a scarcity of iron prevailed, some old harpoons and lances had to be worked up for this purpose. The blacksmith who was a Frenchman, made his shoes and nails in so different, and apparently in so much more clumsy manner than I was accustomed to, that I was almost afraid of letting him put them on, and tried hard, but in vain, to get him to imitate the English shoe and nail in ordinary use.

Finding that I was likely to derive no advantage from my officious interference, I determined to let him have his own way, and was surprised and delighted to find that he performed his work well and skilfully, the only unusual part of the operation to me, being the necessity he appeared to be under, of always having a man to hold up the leg of the horse whilst he put the shoe on, instead of holding the foot up himself, as an English blacksmith does; such however, he assured me was the practice always in France, and he appeared to think it the best too. Having had my horses shod, I got some canvass from the Captain, to make bags for carrying my provisions, and then giving him a list of stores that I wished to take with me, I commenced preparations for leaving my hospitable entertainer. Every thing that I wished for, was given to me with a kindness and liberality beyond what I could have expected; and it gives me unfeigned pleasure, to have it now in my power to record thus publicly the obligations I was under to Captain Rossiter.

On the 14th, I landed the stores, to arrange and pack them ready for the journey. They consisted of forty pounds of flour, six pounds of biscuit, twelve pounds of rice, twenty pounds of beef, twenty pounds of pork, twelve pounds of sugar, one pound of tea, a Dutch cheese, five pounds of salt butter, a little salt, two bottles of brandy, and two tin saucepans for cooking; besides some tobacco and pipes for Wylie, who was a great smoker, and the canteens filled with treacle for him to eat with rice. The great difficulty was now, how to arrange for the payment of the various supplies I had been furnished with, as I had no money with me, and it was a matter of uncertainty, whether the ship would touch at any of the Australian colonies. Captain Rossiter however, said that he had some intention of calling at King George's Sound, when the Bay whaling was over, and as that was the place to which I was myself going, I gave him an order upon Mr. Sherratt, who had previously acted as my agent there in the transaction of some business matters in 1840. To this day, however, I have never learnt whether Captain Rossiter visited King George's Sound or not.



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In arranging the payment, I could not induce the Captain to receive any thing for the twelve days' that we had been resident in the ship, nor would he allow me to pay for some very comfortable warm clothing, which he supplied me with, both for myself and Wylie. Independently too of the things which I had drawn from the ship's stores, Captain Rossiter generously and earnestly pressed me to take any thing that I thought would be serviceable to me from his own private stock of clothes. The attention and hospitality shewn me, during my stay on board the vessel, and the kindness and liberality which I experienced at my departure, will long be remembered by me with feelings of gratitude. In the evening I slept on shore, and got every thing ready for commencing my labours again in the morning.

June 15.—Early this morning the boat came on shore for me, and I went on board to take a farewell breakfast, in the Mississippi, and to wish good bye to her kind-hearted people. At eight I landed with the Captain, got up my horses and loaded them, a matter of some little time and trouble, now my stock of provisions and other things was so greatly augmented; in addition too to all I had accumulated before, the Captain insisted now upon my taking six bottles of wine, and a tin of sardines.

Having received a few letters to be posted at Albany for France, I asked the Captain if there was anything else I could do for him, but he said there was not. The only subject upon which he was at all anxious, was to ascertain whether a war had broken out between France and England or not. In the event of this being the case, he wished me not to mention having seen a French vessel upon the coast, and I promised to comply with his request.

After wishing my kind host good bye, and directing Wylie to lead one of the horses in advance, I brought up the rear, driving the others before me. Once again we had a long and arduous journey before us, and were wending our lonely way through the unknown and untrodden wilds. We were, however, in very different circumstances now, to what we had been in previous to our meeting with the French ship. The respite we had had from our labours, and the generous living we had enjoyed, had rendered us comparatively fresh and strong. We had now with us an abundance, not only of the necessaries, but of the luxuries of life; were better clothed, and provided against the inclemency of the weather than we had been; and entered upon the continuation of our undertaking with a spirit, an energy, and a confidence, that we had long been strangers to.

From the great additional weight we had now to carry upon the horses, we were again obliged to give up riding even in turn, and had both to walk. This was comparatively of little consequence, however, now we were so well provided with every thing we could require, and the country appeared to be so well watered, that we could arrange our stages almost according to our own wishes.



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Steering to the north-west we passed over a sandy country, covered with low heathy plants, and grasstrees, and having granite elevations scattered over its surface at intervals. Under these hills fresh water swamps and native wells were constantly met with, and at one of them we encamped for the night, after a stage of about four miles.

During the day, we passed a variety of beautiful shrubs, and among them were many different kind of Banksias, one was quite new to me, and had a scarlet flower, which was very handsome. The fossil formation still constituted the geological character of the country, most of the lower ridges of rock intervening between the various hills of granite, exhibiting shells in great abundance. In the more level parts, the surface was so coated over with sand, that nothing else could be seen. I have no doubt, however, that the whole of the substrata would have been found an uninterrupted continuation of the tertiary deposit.

At night I observed native fires about a mile from us, in a direction towards the sea; but the natives did not come near us, nor was I myself anxious to come into communication with them whilst my party was so small.

The evening had set in with steady rain, which continuing with little intermission during the night, wet us considerably.

June 16.—This morning, I found I had caught cold, and was very unwell. Upon leaving the encampment, we steered N. 30 degrees W. to clear a rocky hill, passing which, on our left at six miles, we changed the course to W. 10 degrees N. Three miles from the hill, we crossed a small stream of brackish water running very strongly towards the sea, and then halted for the day upon it, after a short stage. The country we had traversed in our route, still consisted of the same sandy plains and undulations, covered with low shrubs, heathy plants, grass and cabbage-trees, with here and there elevations of granite, and fresh water swamps: in and around which, the soil was black and very rich; very little wood was to be met with anywhere, and nothing that deserved the appellation of trees.

The country, inland, appeared to rise gradually, but did not seem to differ in character and features from that we were traversing.

June 17.—A little before daylight it commenced raining, and continued showery all day, and though we got wet several times, we experienced great comfort from the warm clothing we had obtained from Captain Rossiter. Upon ascending the hills, above our camp, which confined the waters of the little stream we were upon, we could trace its course south-west by south, to a small lake lying in the same direction, and which it appeared to empty into. A second small lake was observable to the north-west of the first. Two and a half miles from our camp, we passed a granite elevation, near which, were many fresh swamps, permanently, I think, abounding in water and having much rich and grassy land around, of which

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the soil was a deep black, and but little mixed with sand. For the next three miles and a half, our route lay over a rich swampy grassy land, and we were literally walking all the way in water left by the rains; besides crossing in that distance two fresh water streams, running strongly towards the sea, and both emptying into small lakes seen under the coast ridges. The largest of these two was one yard and a half wide and a foot deep, and appeared of a permanent character. We now ascended an undulating and rather more elevated tract of country of an oolitic limestone formation, most luxuriantly clothed with the richest grass, and having several lakes interspersed among the hollows between the ridges. Near this we halted for the night under some of the coast sand-hills, after a day's stage of twelve miles. We had splendid feed for our horses, but were without any water for ourselves, being unable to carry any with us, as the canteens were full of treacle. From our camp, a peak, near Cape le Grand, bore E. 33 degrees S.

June 18.—During the night heavy showers had fallen, and in the oilskins we caught as much water as sufficed for our tea. After breakfast we proceeded onwards, and at a little more than three miles came to the borders of a large salt lake, lying southwest and north-east, and being one of two noted by Captain Flinders as having been copied into his map from a French chart. Following the borders of the lake for a mile we found abundance of fresh water under the banks by which it was inclosed, and which, judging from the rushes and grasses about it, and the many traces of native encampments, I imagine to be permanent. The lake itself was in a hollow sunk in the fossil formation, which was now very clearly recognisable in the high banks surrounding the lake, and which varied from sixty to a hundred and fifty feet in elevation, and were generally pretty steep towards the shore. The day being fine I halted at this place to re-arrange the loads of the horses and take bearings.

A year had now elapsed since I first entered upon the Northern Expedition. This day twelve months ago I had left Adelaide to commence the undertaking, cheered by the presence and good wishes of many friends, and proudly commanding a small but gallant party—alas, where were they now? Painful and bitter were the thoughts that occupied my mind as I contrasted the circumstances of my departure then with my position now, and when I reflected that of all whose spirit and enterprise had led them to engage in the undertaking, two lone wanderers only remained to attempt its conclusion.

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June 19.—The dew was very heavy this morning, and we did not start until rather late, travelling through a very grassy country, abounding in fresh swamps of a soft peaty soil, and often with the broad flag-reed growing in them. All these places were boggy and impassable for horses. In attempting to cross one a horse sunk up to his haunches, and we had much difficulty in extricating him. At five miles from our camp we ascended some high ridges of an oolitic limestone formation, which were partially covered by drift-sand, and in the distance looked like the ridge of a sea shore. From their summit Cape le Grand bore E. 27 degrees S., the peak called by the French the “Chapeau,” E. 23 degrees S., and the head of the salt-water lake E. 10 degrees S. We had now a succession of barren, sandy and stony ridges for more than three miles, and as there was but little prospect of our finding permanent water in such a miserable region, I took the opportunity of halting at a little rain water deposited in a hole of the rocks; here we procured enough for ourselves, but could not obtain any for the horses. Our camp not being far from the coast, I walked after dinner to the sand-hills to take bearings. Several islands were visible, of which the centres were set at S. 10 degrees W., S. 26 degrees W., E. 41 degrees S., E. 44 degrees S. and S. 33 degrees E. respectively; the west point of a bay bore S. 51 degrees W. the eastern point E. 36 degrees S. Upon digging for water under the sand-hills it was found to be salt.

June 20.—Rain fell lightly but steadily until one P.M., making it very disagreeable travelling through the rugged and stony ridges we had to encounter, and which were a good deal covered with scrub and brush. About four miles from our camp of last night we crossed high stony ridges, and immediately beyond came to some steep sand-drifts, among the hollows of which I dug for water, but at five feet was stopped by rock. The scrubby, hilly, and rugged nature of the back country, generally about three hundred feet above the level of the sea, now compelled me to keep the beach for five miles, from which I was then again driven by the hills terminating abruptly towards the sea, and forcing me to scale a steep stony range, which for four miles and a half kept us incessantly toiling up one rugged ascent after another. We then came to an extensive hollow, being a partial break in the fossil formation, and having two large lakes and many smaller ones interspersed over its surface. Around the margins of the lakes we again found timber—the tea-tree and the bastard gum. The water in the lakes was salt, but some slight elevations of granite afforded us in their hollows an abundance of water for ourselves and horses. The traces of natives were numerous and recent, but yet we saw none. Swans, ducks, and wild fowl of various kinds were in great numbers, and kept up an unceasing noise at night whilst passing from one lake to the other. Our stage had been twelve miles and a half, but the hilly and rugged nature of the road had made it severe upon the horses, whilst the wet overhead and the wet grass under our feet made it equally harassing to ourselves. From our encampment some white drifts in the coast line bore S. 35 degrees E., and probably were the “white streak in the sand-hills” of Flinders.

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June 21.—We did not get away until late, but the dew had been so heavy during the night that even then the shrubs and bushes wet us completely through, and made our journey cold and miserable. After travelling a short distance we lost all symptoms of grass, and the country was again sandy and barren, and covered with shrubs and heathy plants. In this region we passed two native women and a boy, within gun-shot of us; but as they were so intent upon their occupation of digging roots, and did not notice us, I was unwilling to alarm them, and we passed silently by. At six miles we came to a fine deep hole of excellent water about thirty yards in circumference. It was situated in a narrow, short, but steep and rocky gorge, and is, I think, permanent. Four miles beyond this we crossed a chain of salt ponds, trending seawards, towards an apparent gap in the coast-line; and six miles further another. Upon the latter we halted for the night, as there was good grass for the horses, and brackish water was procurable a little way up the stream, where it divided into branches. The constant travelling in the wet for the last few days began now to affect our limbs considerably, and upon halting at nights we found our feet always much swollen, and our legs generally stiff and cramped.

June 22.—A very heavy dew fell in the night, and we were again condemned to wade for three hours up to our middle among the wet brush; after which the day became fine, and we got our clothes dried. Travelling for two and a half miles, we crossed another small brackish chain of ponds, and then ascending rather higher ground, obtained a view of a large lake under the sand-hills, into which the channel we encamped upon last night emptied itself. The lake appeared as if it were deep, and its dark blue colour led me to imagine there might be a junction with the sea towards the south-west, where the low appearance of the coast ridge indicated a gap or opening of some kind. At four miles from our last night's encampment we were stopped by a large salt-water river, fully a hundred yards wide, and increasing to three or four times that size as it trended to its junction with the large lake, and which was visible from the hills above the river. This river was deep where we first struck upon it, but appeared to be much more so towards the lake, where the water was of a dark blue colour, as was that also of the lake itself. This confirmed me in my opinion that there must be a junction with the sea; but unfortunately I was obliged to trace its course upwards, for the purpose of crossing, and the circumstances under which I was travelling precluded me from delaying, or going so far back out of my way to examine its mouth. I dared not leave Wylie in charge of the camp for the time necessary for me to have gone alone; and to take the horses such a distance, and through a rough or heavy country, on the uncertainty of procuring for them either grass or water, would have been a risk which, in their condition, I did not think myself justified in incurring.

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After tracing the river northerly for two miles and a half, I found it divided into two branches, and though these were still of considerable size, yet a ledge of rocks extending across the channels enabled us to effect a passage to the other side. At the place where we crossed, the stream running over the rocks was only slightly brackish, and we watered our horses there; had we traced it a little further it might possibly have been quite fresh, but we had no time for this, for Wylie having taken charge of the horses but for a few moments, whilst I had been examining the river for a crossing place, contrived to frighten them all in some way or other, and set them off at a gallop; the result was, that our baggage was greatly disturbed, and many things knocked off and damaged, whilst it took us some time again to get our horses and re-arrange the loads.

The valley through which the river took its course, was rocky, with sheets of granite extending in many places to the water's edge. There was abundance of good grass, however, and in its upper branches, probably, there might have been some considerable extent of pasturage. The trees growing upon the margin, were the paper-barked tea-tree, and the bastard gum.

Leaving the river, and proceeding over an undulating sandy country, without timber, but covered with shrubs, we passed at six miles between two small lakes, and in three more descended to a deep valley among granite rocks; here we encamped after a stage of sixteen miles, with plenty of fresh water in pools, and very fair grass for the horses, about a mile and a half before we halted, we had obtained a view to seawards, and I set the "Rocky Islets" at a bearing of S. 25 degrees W.

The character of the country generally, through which we travelled to-day, was very similar to that we had so long been traversing. Its general elevation above the level of the sea, was about three hundred feet, and to a distant observer, it seemed to be a perfect table land, unbroken to the horizon, and destitute of all timber or trees, except occasionally a few cabbage-trees, grass-trees, or minor shrubs; it was also without grass. Upon crossing this region deep gorges or valleys are met with, through which flow brackish or salt-water streams, and shading these are found the tea-tree and the bastard gum. The steep banks which inclose the valleys, through which the streams take their course, and which until lately we had found of an oolitic limestone, now exhibited granite, quartz, sandstone or iron-stone.

June 23.—Our horses having rambled some distance back upon our yesterday's tracks, it was late when they were recovered, and we did not get away until eleven. After travelling a mile and a half, we crossed a stream of most excellent water running over a bed of granite, in which were some large deep pools with reeds growing around their margins. A branch of this watercourse was crossed a little further on, but was quite dry where we passed it.



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Nine miles from our last night's camp a view of the "Rocky Islets" was obtained from a hill, and set at due south. Immediately on descending from the hill we crossed a salt chain of ponds in a bed of sandstone and ironstone, and nine miles beyond this we came to another, also of salt water; here we halted for the night as there was tolerable grass for the horses, and we were fortunate enough to discover fresh water in a granite rock.

In the course of the afternoon I obtained a view of a very distant hill bearing from us W.8 degrees S. This I took to be the east Mount Barren of Flinders; but it was still very far away, and the intervening country looked barren and unpromising. During the day our route had still been over the same character of country as before, with this exception, that it was more stony and barren, with breccia or iron-stone grit covering the surface. The streams were less frequently met with, and were of a greatly inferior character, consisting now principally of only chains of small stagnant ponds of salt water, destitute of grass, and without any good soil in the hollows through which they took their course. Many of these, and especially those we crossed in the latter part of the day, were quite dry, and appeared to be nothing more than deep gutters washed by heavy rains between the undulations of the country.

The rock formation, where it was developed, was exclusively sandstone or ironstone, with inferior granite; and even the higher levels, which had heretofore been of a sandy nature, were now rugged and stony, and more sterile than before; the grasstrees, which generally accommodate themselves to any soil, were stunted and diminutive, and by no means so abundant as before. The general elevation of the country still appeared to be the same. I estimated it at about three hundred feet.

One circumstance, which struck me as rather singular, with regard to the last forty miles of country we had traversed, was, that it did not appear to have experienced the same weather as there had been to the eastward. The little water we found deposited in the rocks, plainly indicated that the late rains had either not fallen here at all, or in a much less degree than they had, in the direction we had come from; whilst the dry and withered state of any little grass that we found, convinced me that the earlier rains had still been more partial, so great was the contrast between the rich luxuriance of the long green grass we had met with before, and the few dry withered bunches of last year's growth, which we fell in with now.

## Chapter V.



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Large watercourse—lake of fresh water—heavy rains—reach mount barren—salt lakes and streams—barren scrubby country—ranges behind king George's sound are seen—brackish ponds—pass Cape Riche—A large salt river—chains of ponds—good land—heavily timbered country—cold weather—fresh lake—the Candiup river—King's river—excessive rains—arrival at king George's sound and termination of the expedition—reception of Wylie by the natives.

June 24.—Upon moving on early this morning, we crossed the bed of a considerable watercourse, containing large deep pools of brackish water, but unconnected at present by any stream. The late hour at which we halted last night had prevented us from noticing this larger chain of ponds, and of which, that we were encamped upon formed only a branch. The country we now passed through, varied but little in character, except that the shrubs became higher, with a good deal of the *Eucalyptus dumosa* intermingled with them, and were entangled together by matted creepers or vines, which made it extremely difficult and fatiguing to force a way through. The whole was very sterile, and without grass.

After travelling nine miles, we passed on our right a small lake of fresh water; and two miles beyond this another, about a mile in circumference, but deep, and evidently of a permanent character. Close to this fresh water lake was another, divided from it by only a narrow neck of land, and yet the latter was as salt as the sea. We had only made a short stage as yet; but as there was a little food for the horses near the lake, I thought it more prudent to halt there than run the risk of being left without in the wretched looking country before us,

The Mount Barren ranges were observed again, but the weather was cloudy, so that I could make nothing out distinctly. In the afternoon, Wylie shot three teal, of which there were numbers on the lake. At night, our baggage and clothes had nearly all been destroyed by fire, a spark having been carried by the wind to the tarpaulin which covered them, and which, as it had been but newly tarred, was soon in a blaze. I was fortunate enough, however, to observe the accident in time to save our other effects.



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June 25.—We commenced our journey early, but had not gone far before the rain began to fall, and continued until ten o'clock. Occasionally the showers came down in perfect torrents, rendering us very cold and miserable, and giving the whole country the appearance of a large puddle. We were literally walking in water; and by stooping down, almost any where as we went along, could have dipped a pint pot half full. It was dreadful work to travel thus in the water, and with the wet from the long brush soaking our clothes for so many hours; but there was no help for it, as we could not find a blade of grass for our horses, to enable us to halt sooner. The surface of the whole country was stony and barren in the extreme. A mile from our camp, we passed a small salt lake on our left; and at fifteen miles more, came to a valley with some wiry grass in it. At this I halted, as there was no prospect of getting better grass, and the water left by the rains was abundant. The latter, though it had only fallen an hour or two, was in many places quite salt, and the best of it brackish, so thoroughly saline was the nature of the soil upon which it had been deposited.

As the afternoon proved fine, I traced down the valley we were upon to its junction with a stream flowing over a granite bed, about a mile from our camp. In this the pools of water were large, deep, and brackish, but there was plenty of fresh water left by the rains in holes of the rocks upon its banks. As, however, there did not appear to be better grass upon the larger channel, than in the valley where we were, I did not think it worth while to remove our camp.

June 26.—I determined to remain in camp today to rest the horses, and to enable me to arrange their loads, so that Wylie and I might again ride occasionally. We had both walked for the last eleven days, during which we had made good a distance of 134 miles from Rossiter Bay, and as I calculated we ought under ordinary circumstances to reach the Sound in ten days more, I thought that we might occasionally indulge in riding, and relieve ourselves from the great fatigue we had hitherto been subject to, especially as the horses were daily improving in strength and condition.

Whilst I was engaged in making the necessary preparations, and throwing away some things which I thought we could dispense with, such as our bucket, some harness, ammunition, cooking utensils, and sundry other things, Wylie took the rifle, and went down to the watercourse to shoot. On his return in the afternoon he produced four teal and a black swan, as the produce of his day's sport; he had, however, shot away every charge of shot from the belt, which had been filled on board the Mississippi, and held three pounds and a half, besides three ball cartridges; how often he fired at the swan before he got it I could never discover, but I heard shot after shot as fast as he could load and fire for some time, and he himself acknowledged to firing at it seven times, but I suspect it to have been nearer twice seven.

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To-day we were obliged to fetch up what water we required for our own use, from the holes in the granite rocks near the river, that lying on the ground near our camp being too salt for use.

June 27.—Upon moving on this morning we passed towards the Mount Barren ranges for ten miles through the same sterile country, and then observing a watercourse coming from the hills, I became apprehensive I should experience some difficulty in crossing it near the ranges, from their rocky and precipitous character, and at once turned more southerly to keep between the sea and a salt lake, into which the stream emptied itself. After getting nearly half round the lake, our progress was impeded by a dense and most difficult scrub of the *Eucalyptus dumosa*. Upon entering it we found the scrub large and strong, and growing very close together, whilst the fallen trees, dead wood, and sticks lying about in every direction, to the height of a man's breast, rendered our passage difficult and dangerous to the horses in the extreme. Indeed, when we were in the midst of it, the poor animals suffered so much, and progressed so little, that I feared we should hardly get them either through it or back again. By dint of great labour and perseverance we passed through a mile of it, and then emerging upon the beach followed it for a short distance, until steep rocky hills coming nearly bluff into the sea, obliged us to turn up under them, and encamp for the night not far from the lake. Here our horses procured tolerable grass, whilst we obtained a little fresh water for ourselves among the hollows of the rocks.

Our stage had been about thirteen miles, and our position was S. 30 degrees E. from East Mount Barren, the hills under which we were encamped being connected with that range. Most properly had it been called Mount Barren, for a more wretched aridlooking country never existed than that around it. The Mount Barren ranges are of quartz or reddish micaceous slate, the rocks project in sharp rugged masses, and the strata are all perpendicular.

June 28.—Upon getting up this morning we saw the smoke of native fires along the margin of the lake, at less than a mile from us. They had already noticed our fire, and called out repeatedly to us, but as I did not wish to come into communication with them at all, I did not reply. Soon afterwards we saw them in the midst of the lake carrying boughs, and apparently fishing. Three miles from the lake we crossed a small salt stream, and a mile further another. Four miles beyond the latter we came to a very deep narrow salt lake, swarming with swans, pelicans, and ducks. As the passage between the lake and the sea appeared to be scrubby, and very similar to that we had found so much difficulty in passing yesterday, I turned to the north-west to head it inland; but had not proceeded far before I found our progress stopped by a large salt-water stream, which joined the lake, and whose course was through steep precipitous ravines. By following the river upwards I came to a place where we could descend into its basin, and as the water there, though brackish, was still drinkable, I halted for the night after a stage of fourteen miles. The horses were a good deal tired with the rough

hilly road they had passed over, and having been without water last night, stood greatly in need of rest.

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In the afternoon Wylie took the rifle to shoot some of the swans and ducks around us, but was not successful. I remained at the camp, breaking down and clearing a passage amongst the shrubs and trees which grew in the rocky bed of the watercourse, to enable us to get our horses readily across to-morrow. Our position bore S. W. from East Mount Barren, E. from a bluff range three miles from us, and N. 55 degrees E. from some high hills in the direction of Middle Mount Barren. The course of the stream we were encamped upon being nearly north and south.

June 29.—Having found so much difficulty in keeping between the hills and the sea, I determined now to keep more inland, and steering W. 20 degrees N., headed all ranges in four miles. From this point East Mount Barren bore E. 20 degrees N., and as I was now clear of hills in front, I changed my course to W. 20 degrees S., passing through a barren worthless country for eleven miles, and encamping upon a deep ravine, in which we procured brackish water. Our horses were greatly fagged. From our camp West Mount Barren bore S. 41 degrees W.

June 30.—For the first ten miles to-day we had a very bad road, over steep stony ridges and valleys, covered for the most part with dense gum scrub. The surface was strewn over with rough pebbles or ironstone grit, and was broken a good deal into steep-faced ridges and deep hollows, as if formed so by the action of water. The formation of these precipitous banks appeared to be an ochre of various colours—red and yellow, and of a soft friable description. At ten miles we crossed a watercourse with many pools of brackish water in it, trending to a lake visible under the coast ridge. There was good grass near this, and many kangaroos were seen, but as no fresh water could be obtained, we passed on, and at three miles further came to a hole of rain-water in a rocky gorge, but here there was not a blade of grass. Hoping to meet with more success further on, we still advanced for twelve miles, until night compelled us at last to encamp without either grass or water, both ourselves and our horses being greatly fatigued.

In the evening we obtained a view of some high rugged and distant ranges, which I at once recognised as being the mountains immediately behind King George's Sound. At last we could almost say we were in sight of the termination of our long, harassing, and disastrous journey. Early in the morning I had told Wylie that I thought we should see the King George's Sound hills before night, but he at the time appeared rather sceptical; when, however, they did break upon our view, in picturesque though distant outline, his joy knew no bounds. For the first time on our journey he believed we should really reach the Sound at last. The cheering and not-to-be-mistaken view before him had dissipated all his doubts. Once more he gazed upon objects that were familiar to him; the home of his childhood was before him, and already almost in fancy he was there, and amongst his friends; he could think, or talk of nothing else, and actually complimented me upon the successful way in which I had conducted him to the end of his journey. From our camp the distant ranges bore W. 5 degrees S., and West Mount Barren E. 5 degrees S.

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July 1.—After travelling three miles we came to a chain of large ponds of brackish water, but with excellent grass around them, and as the horses had nothing to eat or drink last night we halted for three hours. The water was bad, but they drank it, and we were obliged to do so too, after an ineffectual search for better. At noon we again moved on, and after proceeding about five miles, came to a large watercourse where the water was excellent, and the feed abundant. Here we halted for the night, to make our horses amends for the bad fare and hard work of yesterday. From the hill above our camp West Mount Barren bore E. 8 degrees N., Middle Mount Barren E. 21 degrees N., and Rugged Mountains behind the Sound, W. 4 degrees S. The watercourse we were upon, like all those we had lately crossed, had perpendicular cliffs abutting upon it, either on one side or the other, and the channel through which it wound looked almost like a cut made through the level country above it. A few casuarinae were observed in parts of the valley, being the first met with since those seen near Cape Arid.

July 2.—Our route to-day lay through a country much covered with gum-scrub, banksias, and other shrubs, besides occasionally a few patches of stunted gum-trees growing in clumps in small hollows, where water appeared to lodge after rains. At two miles we crossed a small watercourse, and at fifteen further, came to a deep valley with fine fresh-water pools in it, and tolerable feed around; here we halted for the night. The valley we were upon (and one or two others near) led to a much larger one below, through which appeared to take its course the channel of a considerable watercourse trending towards a bight in the coast at S. 17 degrees W.

Some high land, seen to the southward and westward of us, I took to be Cape Riche, a point I should like greatly to have visited, but did not think it prudent to go so far out of my direct course, in the circumstances I was travelling under.

July 3.—Upon commencing our journey to-day I found our route was much intersected by deep ravines and gorges, all trending to the larger valley below, and where I had no doubt a large chain of ponds, and probably much good land, would have been found. After proceeding four miles and a half, we were stopped by a large salt-water river, which seemed to be very deep below where we struck it, and trended towards a bight of the coast where it appeared to form a junction with the sea.

Many oyster and cockle shells were on its shore. This was the largest river we had yet come to, and it gave us much trouble to cross it, for, wherever it appeared fordable, the bed was so soft and muddy, that we dared not venture to take our horses into it. By tracing it upwards for eight miles, we at last found a rocky shelf extending across, by which we were enabled to get to the other side. At the point where we crossed, it had become only a narrow rocky channel; but there was a strong stream running,

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and I have no doubt, higher up, the water might probably have been quite fresh. Its waters flowed from a direction nearly of west-north-west, and appeared to emanate from the high rugged ranges behind King George's Sound. The country about the lower or broad part of this river, as far as I traced it, was rocky and bad; but higher up, there was a good deal of grass, and the land appeared improving. In the distance, the hills seemed less rocky and more grassy, and might probably afford fair runs for sheep. Upon the banks of the river were a few casuarinae and more of the tea-tree, and bastard gum, than we had seen before upon any other watercourse.

Upon crossing the river, we found the country getting more wooded, with a stunted-looking tree, apparently of the same species as the stringy bark, with bastard gums, and large banksias, the intervals being filled up with grass-trees and brush, or shrubs, common at King George's Sound. At dark we could find no water, and I therefore pushed on by moonlight, making Wylie lead one of the horses whilst I drove the rest after him. At nine o'clock, we came to a deep valley with plenty of water and grass in it, and here we halted for the night, after a stage of full thirty miles. The early part of the morning had been very wet, and it continued to rain partially for the greatest part of the day, rendering us very cold and uncomfortable. At night it was a severe frost.

July 4.—Our horses having been a good deal fagged yesterday, I did not disturb them early, and it was nearly noon when we moved away from our encampment, crossing the main watercourse, of which the ponds we were upon last night were only a branch. In the larger channel, there were many fine pools of water, connected by a strongly running stream in a deep narrow bed, and which wound at a course of E. 25 degrees S. through a valley of soft, spongy, peaty formation, and over which we had much trouble in getting our horses, one having sunk very deep, and being with difficulty extricated. After travelling two miles and a half, we obtained a view of Bald Island, bearing S. 15 degrees W.; and in two miles and a half more, we crossed a fine chain of ponds, taking its course through narrow valleys between hills of granite; these valleys and the slopes of the hills were heavily timbered; the soil was very rich, either a reddish loam, or a light black mixed with sand, and the grass interspersed among the trees was abundant and luxuriant. After ascending the range, we passed principally over stony hills, and valleys heavily timbered, and with brush or underwood, filling up the interstices of the trees.

Ten miles from our last night's camp we crossed the tracks of horses, apparently of no very old date, this being the first symptom we had yet observed of our approach towards the haunts of civilised man. The day was cold with heavy squalls of rain, and as the night appeared likely to be worse, I halted early, after a stage of thirteen miles. After dark the rain ceased, and the night cleared up, but was very cold.

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July 5.—Another rainy day, and so excessively cold that we were obliged to walk to keep ourselves at all warm; we spent a miserable time, splashing through the wet underwood, and at fifteen miles we passed a fresh water lake, in a valley between some hills. This Wylie recognised as a place he had once been at before, and told me that he now knew the road well, and would act as guide, upon which I resigned the post of honour to him, on his promising always to take us to grass and water at night. Two miles and a half beyond the lake, we came to a fresh water swamp, and a mile beyond that to another, at which we halted for the night, with plenty of water, but very little grass. During the day, we had been travelling generally through a very heavily timbered country.

At night the rain set in again, and continued to fall in torrents at intervals; we got dreadfully drenched, and suffered greatly from cold and want of rest, being obliged to stand or walk before the fire, nearly the whole night.

July 6.—The morning still very wet and miserably cold. With Wylie acting as guide, we reached in eight miles, the Candiup river, a large chain of ponds, connected by a running stream, and emptying into a wide and deep arm of the sea, with much rich and fertile land upon its banks. The whole district was heavily timbered, and had good grass growing amongst the trees. From the very heavy rains that had fallen, we had great trouble in crossing many of the streams, which were swollen by the floods into perfect torrents. In the Candiup river I had to wade, cold and chill as I was, seven times through, with the water breast high, and a current that I with difficulty could keep my feet against, in order to get the horses over in safety; the only fordable place was at a narrow ledge of rocks, and with so strong a stream, and such deep water below the ledge, I dared not trust Wylie to lead any of them, but went back, and took each horse across myself. The day was bitterly cold and rainy, and I began to suffer severely from the incessant wettings I had been subject to for many days past.

Four miles beyond the Candiup river, we came to King's river, a large salt arm of Oyster Harbour, here my friend Wylie, who insisted upon it that he knew the proper crossing place, took me into a large swampy morass, and in endeavouring to take the horses through, three of them got bogged and were nearly lost, and both myself and Wylie were detained in the water and mud for a couple of hours, endeavouring to extricate them. At last we succeeded, but the poor animals were sadly weakened and strained, and we were compelled to return back to the same side of the river, and encamp for the night, instead of going on to King George's Sound as I had intended!



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Fortunately there was tolerable grass, and fresh water lay every where about in great abundance, so that the horses would fare well, but for ourselves there was a cheerless prospect. For three days and nights, we had never had our clothes dry, and for the greater part of this time, we had been enduring in full violence the pitiless storm—whilst wading so constantly through the cold torrents in the depth of the winter season, and latterly being detained in the water so long a time at the King's river, had rendered us rheumatic, and painfully sensitive to either cold or wet. I hoped to have reached Albany this evening, and should have done so, as it was only six miles distant, if it had not been for the unlucky attempt to cross King's river. Now we had another night's misery before us, for we had hardly lain down before the rain began to fall again in torrents. Wearied and worn-out as we were, with the sufferings and fatigues of the last few days, we could neither sit nor lie down to rest; our only consolation under the circumstances being, that however bad or inclement the weather might be, it was the last night we should be exposed to its fury.

July 7.—Getting up the horses early, we proceeded up the King's river, with a view of attempting to cross, but upon sounding the depths in one or two places, I found the tide, which was rising, was too high; I had only the alternative, therefore, of waiting for several hours until the water ebbed, or else of leaving the horses, and proceeding on without them. Under all the circumstances, I decided upon the latter; the rain was still falling very heavily, and the river before us was so wide and so dangerous for horses, from its very boggy character, that I did not think it prudent to attempt to force a passage, or worth while to delay to search for a proper crossing place. There was good feed for the horses where they were, and plenty of water, so that I knew they would fare better by remaining than if they were taken on to the Sound; whilst it appeared to me more than probable that I should have no difficulty, whenever I wished to get them, to procure a guide to go for and conduct them safely across, at the proper crossing place.

Having turned our horses loose, and piled up our baggage, now again greatly reduced, I took my journals and charts, and with Wylie forded the river about breast high. We were soon on the other side, and rapidly advancing towards the termination of our journey; the rain was falling in torrents, and we had not a dry shred about us, whilst the whole country through which we passed, had, from the long-continued and excessive rains, become almost an uninterrupted chain of puddles. For a great part of the way we walked up to our ankles in water. This made our progress slow, and rendered our last day's march a very cold and disagreeable one. Before reaching the Sound, we met a native, who at once recognised Wylie, and greeted him most cordially. From him we learnt that we had been



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expected at the Sound some months ago, but had long been given up for lost, whilst Wylie had been mourned for and lamented as dead by his friends and his tribe. The rain still continued falling heavily as we ascended to the brow of the hill immediately overlooking the town of Albany—not a soul was to be seen—not an animal of any kind—the place looked deserted and uninhabited, so completely had the inclemency of the weather driven both man and beast to seek shelter from the storm.

For a moment I stood gazing at the town below me—that goal I had so long looked forward to, had so laboriously toiled to attain, was at last before me. A thousand confused images and reflections crowded through my mind, and the events of the past year were recalled in rapid succession. The contrast between the circumstances under which I had commenced and terminated my labours stood in strong relief before me. The gay and gallant cavalcade that accompanied me on my way at starting—the small but enterprising band that I then commanded, the goodly array of horses and drays, with all their well-ordered appointments and equipment were conjured up in all their circumstances of pride and pleasure; and I could not restrain a tear, as I called to mind the embarrassing difficulties and sad disasters that had broken up my party, and left myself and Wylie the two sole wanderers remaining at the close of an undertaking entered upon under such hopeful auspices.

Whilst standing thus upon the brow overlooking the town, and buried in reflection, I was startled by the loud shrill cry of the native we had met on the road, and who still kept with us: clearly and powerfully that voice rang through the recesses of the settlement beneath, whilst the blended name of Wylie told me of the information it conveyed. For an instant there was a silence still almost as death—then a single repetition of that wild joyous cry, a confused hum of many voices, a hurrying to and fro of human feet, and the streets which had appeared so shortly before gloomy and untenanted, were now alive with natives—men, women and children, old and young, rushing rapidly up the hill, to welcome the wanderer on his return, and to receive their lost one almost from the grave.

It was an interesting and touching sight to witness the meeting between Wylie and his friends. Affection's strongest ties could not have produced a more affecting and melting scene—the wordless weeping pleasure, too deep for utterance, with which he was embraced by his relatives, the cordial and hearty reception given him by his friends, and the joyous greeting bestowed upon him by all, might well have put to the blush those heartless calumniators, who, branding the savage as the creature only of unbridled passions, deny to him any of those better feelings and affections which are implanted in the breast of all mankind, and which nature has not denied to any colour or to any race.

Upon entering the town I proceeded direct to Mr. Sherrats', where I had lodged when in King George's Sound, in 1840. By him and his family I was most hospitably received, and every attention shewn to me; and in the course of a short time, after taking a glass

of hot brandy and water, performing my ablutions and putting on a clean suit of borrowed clothes, I was enabled once more to feel comparatively comfortable, and to receive the many kind friends who called upon me.

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I feel great pleasure in the opportunity now afforded me of recording the grateful feelings I entertain towards the residents at Albany for the kindness I experienced upon this occasion. Wet as the day was, I had hardly been two hours at Mr. Sherratts before I was honoured by a visit from Lady Spencer, from the Government-resident, Mr. Phillips, and from almost all the other residents and visitors at the settlement,—all vying with each other in their kind attentions and congratulations, and in every offer of assistance or accommodation which it was in their power to render.

Finding that a vessel would shortly sail for Adelaide, I at once engaged my passage, and proceeded to make arrangements for leaving King George's Sound.

To the Governor of the Colony, Mr. Hutt, I wrote a brief report of my journey, which was forwarded, with a copy both of my own and Wylie's depositions, relative to the melancholy loss of my overseer on the 29th April. I then had my horses got up from the King's river, and left them in the care of Mr. Phillips, who had in the most friendly manner offered to take charge of them until they recovered their condition and could be sold.

Wylie was to remain at the Sound with his friends, and to receive from the Government a weekly allowance of provisions, [Note 29: This was confirmed by Governor Hutt.] by order of Mr. Phillips; who promised to recommend that it should be permanently continued, as a reward for the fidelity and good conduct he had displayed whilst accompanying me in the desert.

On the 13th July I wished my friends good bye, and in the afternoon went on board the Truelove to sail for Adelaide; whilst working out of harbour we were accompanied as long as any of the shore boats remained, by some of the natives of the place, who were most anxious to have gone with me to Adelaide. Wylie had given them so flattering an account of South Australia and its pleasures, that he had excited the envy and curiosity of the whole tribe; dozens applied to me to take them, and I really think I could have filled the ship had I been disposed; one or two, more persevering than the rest, would not be denied, and stuck close to the vessel to the last, in the hope that I might relent and take them with me before the pilot boat left, but upon this occurring, to their great discomforture, they were compelled to return disappointed.

On the afternoon of the 26th of July I arrived in Adelaide, after an absence of one year and twenty-six days.

## Chapter VI.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS.



Having now brought to a close the narrative of my explorations in 1840-1, it may not be out of place to take a brief and cursory review of the whole, and to state generally what have been the results effected. In making this summary, I have no important rivers to enumerate, no fertile regions to point out for the future spread of colonization and civilization, or no noble ranges to describe from which are washed the debris that might form a rich and fertile district beneath them; on the contrary, all has been arid and barren in the extreme.

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Such, indeed, has been the sterile and desolate character of the wilderness I have traversed, and so great have been the difficulties thereby entailed upon me, that throughout by far the greater portion of it, I have never been able to delay a moment in my route, or to deviate in any way from the line I was pursuing, to reconnoitre or examine what may haply be beyond. Even in the latter part of my travels, when within the colony of Western Australia, and when the occasionally meeting with tracts of a better soil, or with watercourses appearing to have an outlet to the ocean, rendered the country one of much greater interest, I was quite unable, from the circumstances under which I was placed, the reduced and worn-out state of my horses, and the solitary manner in which I was travelling, ever to deviate from my direct line of route, either to examine more satisfactorily the character of the country, or to determine whether the watercourses, some of which occasionally bore the character of rivers (though of only short course), had embouchures opening to the sea or not.

In a geographical point of view, I would hope the result of my labours has not been either uninteresting, or incommensurate with the nature of the expedition placed under my command, and the character of the country I had to explore. By including in the summary I am now making, the journeys I undertook in 1839, as well as those of 1840-1 (for a considerable portion of the country then examined was recrossed by the Northern Expedition), it will be seen that I have discovered and examined a tract of country to the north of Adelaide, which was previously unknown, of about 270 miles in length, extending between the parallels of 33 degrees 40 minutes and 29 degrees S. latitude. In longitude, that part of my route which was before unknown, extends between the parallels of 138 degrees E., and 118 degrees 40 minutes E., or about 1060 miles of direct distance. These being connected with the previously known portions of South-western, South-eastern, and part of Southern Australia, complete the examination of the whole of the south line of the coast of this continent. Indeed, I have myself (at various times) crossed over the whole of this distance from east to west, from Sydney to Swan River. In the early part of the Expedition, 1840, the continuation of Flinders range, from Mount Arden, was traced and laid down to its termination, near the parallel of 29 degrees S. It was ascertained to be hemmed in by an impassable barrier, consisting of the basin of an immense lake, which I named Lake Torrens, and which, commencing from the head of Spencer's Gulf, increased in width as it swept to the north-west, but subsequently bent round again to the north-east, east and south-east, in correspondence with the trend of Flinders range, the northern extremity of which it completely surrounded in the form of a horse-shoe. The shores of this lake I visited to the westward of Flinders range, at three different points, from

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eighty to ninety miles apart from each other, and on all these occasions I found the basin to consist, as far as I could penetrate, of a mass of mud and sand, coated on the surface with a crust of salt, but having water mixed with it beneath. At the most north-westerly point attained by me, water was found in an arm of the main lake, about two feet deep, clear, and salt as the sea; it did not extend, however, more than two or three hundred yards, nor did it continue to the bed of the main lake, which appeared, from a rise that I ascended near the arm, to be of the same character and consistency as before. The whole course of the lake, to the farthest point visited by me, was bounded by a steep, continuous, sandy ridge, exactly like a sea-shore ridge; those parts of its course to the north, and to the east of Flinders range, which I did not go down to, were seen and laid down from various heights in that mountain chain. Altogether, the outline of this extraordinary feature, as thus observed and traced, could not have extended over a circuit of less than 400 miles.

It is singular enough that all the springs found near the termination of Flinders range should have been salt, and that these were very nearly in the same latitude in which Captain Sturt had found brine springs in the bed of the Darling in 1829, although our two positions were so far separated in longitude. My furthest position to the north-west was also in about the same latitude, as the most inland point gained by any previous exploring party, viz. that of Sir Thomas Mitchell's in 1832, about the parallel of 149 degrees E. longitude; but by my being about 600 miles more to the westward, I was consequently much nearer to the centre of New Holland. It is, to say the least, remarkable that from both our positions, so far apart as they are, the country should present the same low and sterile aspect to the west and north-west. Since my return from the expedition, a party has been sent out under Captain Frome, the Surveyor-General, in South Australia, to examine the south-east extremity of Lake Torrens; the following is the report made by that officer upon his return.

"The most northern point at which I found water last year, was near the top of a deep ravine of the Black Rock Hills, in lat. 32 degrees 45 minutes 25 seconds, where I left the dray and the larger portion of my party on the 20th July, taking on only a light spring cart, the bottom filled entirely with kegs containing sufficient water for our horses for nearly three days, and provisions for one month, which was as much as the cart would contain.

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"My object being to ascertain the boundaries of the southern termination of the eastern branch of Lake Torrens, as laid down by Mr. Eyre, and also the nature of the country between Flinders range, as high as the parallel of Mount Hopeless, and the meridian of 141 degrees, (the eastern limits of the province), I kept at first a course as near N.N.E. as the nature of the ground would admit, to ensure my not passing to the east of this extremity of the lake; from whence I intended, if possible, to pursue a line nearly north-east, as far as my time and the means at my disposal would allow me, hoping to reach the high land laid down by Sir Thomas Mitchell, on the right banks of the Darling, to the north of Mount Lyell, and thus ascertain if any reasonable hope existed of penetrating at some future time towards the interior from thence. The continued heavy rains which had fallen for more than three weeks before my departure from Adelaide, on the 8th July, and for nearly a fortnight afterwards, had left the surface water in pools on the scrubby plains, and in some of the ravines; but on proceeding north, it was evident that these rains had not been there so general or so heavy, though by steering from point to point of the hills, after crossing the Black Rock Range at Rowe's Creek, I was able to find sufficient water for the horses, and to replenish the kegs every second or third day. From this spot, the plains, as well as the higher land, appeared evidently to dip away to the north-east, the barren hills all diminishing in elevation, and the deep watercourses from Flinders range all crossing the plains in that direction. In one of these watercourses, the Siccus (lat. about 31 degrees 55 minutes), whose section nearly equals that of the Murray, there were indications of not very remote floods having risen to between twenty and thirty feet above its bed, plainly marked by large gum-trees lodged in the forks of the standing trees, and lying high up on its banks, on one of which I remarked dead leaves still on the branches; and in another creek (Pasmore River), lat. 31 degrees 29 minutes, a strong current was running at the spot where we struck it (owing, I suppose, to recent heavy rains among the hills from whence it has its source), but below this point the bed was like that of all the other creeks, as dry as if no rain had ever fallen, and with occasional patches of various shrubs, and salt water tea-tree growing in it. After crossing the low ridge above Prewitt's Springs, lat. 31 degrees 45 minutes, forming the left bank of the basin of the Siccus, the plain extended between the north and east as far as the eye could reach, and the lurid glare of the horizon, as we advanced northward, plainly indicated the approach of Lake Torrens, which, from the direction I had followed, I expected to turn about this point. I was obliged, however, to continue a northerly course for the sake of water, which I could only hope to find in the ravines of the hills on our left, as high as the parallel of 30 degrees

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59 minutes, where the lake was visible within fifteen or sixteen miles, and appeared from the high land to be covered with water, studded with islands, and backed on the east by a bold rocky shore. These appearances were, however, all deceptive, being caused solely by the extraordinary refraction, as on riding to the spot the following day, not a drop of water was to be seen in any direction. The islands turned out to be mere low sandy ridges, very scantily clothed with stunted scrub on their summits, and no distant land appeared any where between the north and south-east, though from the hills above our camp of the previous night, I could discern, with the aid of a very powerful telescope, a ridge of low land, either on the eastern side of the lake, or rising out of it, distant at least seventy miles, rendered visible at that distance by the excessive refractive power of the atmosphere on the horizon. A salt crust was seen at intervals on the surface of the sand at the margin of the lake, or as it might more properly be called, the Desert; but this appearance might either be caused by water brought down by the Siccus, and other large watercourses spreading over the saline soil in times of flood, or by rain, and appeared to me no proof of its ever being covered with water for any period of time. A few pieces of what appeared drift timber were also lying about its surface. The sand, as we advanced farther east, became more loose and drifting, and not a blade of grass, or any species of vegetation, was visible, rendering hopeless any attempt to cross it with horses. This point of the lake shore, being by Mr. Eyre's chart about thirty miles to the westward of where I found it, I thought it advisable to push further north, in the direction of the highest point of the range, which I imagined was probably his Mount Serle; for though it was not to be expected that Mr. Eyre, whose principal and almost sole object was to discover a road to the interior, would, at the same time, have been able to lay down the position of his route with the same accuracy that might have been expected from a surveyor; this difference of longitude prevented my being certain of the identity of the spot, or that the range on our left, might not after all, be another long promontory running to the north, similar to that on the western side of which was Mr. Eyre's course. The appearance of the country, however, from the hills close under Mount Serle (for the perpendicular cliffs on the east side of this range of hills prevented my ascending to their summit without turning them among the ranges, for which I had not time), convinced me at once, from its perfect accordance with the description given by Mr. Eyre, that his eastern arm of Lake Torrens was the sandy desert I had left, its surface being about three hundred feet above the level of the sea; and our two converging lines having thus met at Mount Serle, I knew it was useless to advance further in the same direction to a spot which he had named, from the impossibility of proceeding beyond it, "Mount Hopeless."



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"I was thus forced to return to Pasmore River, as the nearest point from whence I could cross to the low hills to the eastward, south of Lake Torrens; and from thence I sent back to the depot two men of the party, and three horses—the former for the sake of their rations, and the latter on account of the probable difficulty I should have in procuring water—taking on with me only Mr. Henderson and Mr. Hawker on foot, with the light cart and one policeman. The second evening I made the most northern of these hills, but could not find a drop of water in any of them; and having unluckily lost the policeman, who had crossed in front of the dray and got entangled in the dense scrub, I was detained three days riding upon his tracks, until I had traced them to our dray tracks from the depot at the Black Rock Hill, which he reached in safety, after being out five days without food. The cart, in the mean time, had been obliged to leave the spot where I left it, for want of water—having been out six days without obtaining any but what we carried in the kegs; and when I overtook it, we had not sufficient provisions for another attempt, the period of one month, for which they were intended to last, having already nearly expired.

"I very much regret not having been able to reach, at all events, within sight of Mount Lyell; but where I turned I could plainly see the whole country within fifty or sixty miles of the boundaries of the province, and can speak with almost as much confidence of its absolute sterility as if I had actually ridden over it. It would certainly be possible in the wet season to take a small party from Prewitt's Springs across to this hill of Sir Thomas Mitchell (distant about one hundred and sixty miles), by carrying on water for eight or ten days; but no further supply might be found short of the Darling (eighty miles beyond Mount Lyell), on which river it would be madness to attempt anything without a considerable force, on account of the natives; and the same point might be reached in nearly as short a time, and with much more certainty, with any number of men that might be considered necessary, by ascending the Murray as high as the Laidley Ponds, and proceeding north from thence.

"On returning to the depot, I moved the party down to Mount Bryan, and made another attempt on the 25th August, with Mr. Henderson, and one man leading a pack-horse, to the north-east, hoping, from the heavy rains which had fallen during the past two months, to find sufficient water in the ravines to enable me to push on for several days. The second day, I crossed the high range I had observed from the Black Rock Hills and Mount Bryan, for the southern termination of which Colonel Gawler steered when he left the northern bend of the Murray in December, 1839; but though these hills had an elevation of twelve hundred or fourteen hundred feet above the plain, there was no indication of rain having fallen there since the deluge. This want of water prevented my proceeding further to the north-east; but from the summit of the highest of these hills (Mount Porcupine,) I had a clear view of the horizon in every direction, and a more barren, sterile country, cannot be imagined.

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"The direction of the dividing ridge between the basin of the Murray and the interior desert plain was generally about north-east from the Black Rock Hills (the highest point north of Mount Bryan,) gradually decreasing in elevation, and, if possible, increasing in barrenness. The summits of those hills I found invariably rock—generally sandstone—the lower slopes covered with dense brush, and the valleys with low scrub, with occasional small patches of thin wiry grass. I was obliged to return on the third day, and reached the foot of Mount Bryan on the fourth evening, at the southern extremity of which hill the horses were nearly bogged in the soft ground, though only fifty miles distant from land where the dust was flying as if in the midst of summer.

"It appears to me certain, from the result of these different attempts, that there is no country eastward of the high land extending north from Mount Bryan, as far as Mount Hopeless, a distance of about three hundred miles, as far as the meridian of 141 degrees (and probably much beyond it), available for either agricultural or pastoral purposes; and that, though there may be occasional spots of good land at the base of the main range on the sources of the numerous creeks flowing from thence towards the inland desert, these must be too limited in extent to be of any present value.

"The nature of the formation of the main range I found generally iron-stone, conglomerate and quartz, with sandstone and slate at the lower elevation. At the points of highest elevation from Mount Bryan northward, igneous rocks of basaltic character protruded from below, forming rugged and fantastic outlines.

"At one spot, particularly, about 30 degrees, there were marked indications of volcanic action, and several hollows resembling small craters of extinct volcanoes, near one of which we found a small spring of water, maintaining always a temperature of about 76 degrees Farenheit, when the thermometer standing in water in the kegs stood at 52 degrees, and in the atmosphere at 54 degrees.

"The accompanying sketch of the country from Mount Bryan northwards, will probably explain its character better than any written description. The altitudes marked at the different spots where they were observed, were obtained by the temperature of boiling water, as observed by two thermometers; but as they were not graduated with sufficient minuteness for such purposes, the results can only be considered approximate."

E. C. *Frome*,  
Capt. Royal Engineers,  
Surveyor-General.  
September 14th, 1843.

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In the above report it will be observed, that there are some apparent discrepancies between my account and Captain Frome's. First, with respect to the position of the south-east extremity of Lake Torrens. Captain Frome states that he found that point thirty miles more to the east than I had placed it in my chart. Now the only sketch of my course under Flinders range, and that a rough one, which I furnished to the Colonial Government, was sent from Port Lincoln, and is the same which was subsequently published with other papers, relative to South Australia, for the House of Commons, in 1843. This sketch was put together hastily for his Excellency the Governor, that I might not lose the opportunity of forwarding it when I sent from Port Lincoln to Adelaide for supplies early in October, 1840. It was constructed entirely, after I found myself compelled to return from the northern interior, and could only be attended to, in a hurried and imperfect manner, during the brief intervals I could snatch from other duties, whilst travelling back from the north to Port Lincoln (nearly 400 miles,) during which time my movements were very rapid, and many arrangements, consequent upon dividing my party at Baxter's range, had to be attended to; added to this were the difficulties and embarrassments of conducting myself one division of the party to Port Lincoln, through 200 miles of a desert country which had never been explored before, and which, from its arid and sterile character, presented impediments of no ordinary kind.

Upon my return to Adelaide in 1841, after the Expedition had terminated, other duties engrossed my time, and it was only after the publication of Captain Frome's report, that my attention was again called to the subject. Upon comparing my notes and bearings with the original sketch I had made, I found that in the hurry and confusion of preparing it, whilst travelling, I had laid down all the bearings and courses magnetic, without allowing for the variation; nor can this error, perhaps, be wondered at, considering the circumstances under which the sketch was constructed.

At Mount Hopeless the variation was 4 degrees E., at Mount Arden it was 7 degrees 24 minutes E. Now if this variation be applied proportionably to all the courses and bearings as marked down in the original chart, commencing from Mount Arden, it will be found that Mount Serle will be brought by my map very nearly in longitude to where Captain Frome places it. [Note 30 at end of para.] Our latitudes appear to agree exactly. The second point upon which some difference appears to exist between Captain Frome's report and mine is the character of Lake Torrens itself, which Captain Frome thought might more properly be called a desert. This, it will be observed, is with reference to its south-east extremity—a point I never visited, and which I only saw once from Mount Serle; a point, too, which from the view I then had of it, distant although it was, even at that time seemed to me to be "apparently dry," and is marked as such in Arrowsmith's chart, published from the sketch alluded to.

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[Note 30: This has been done by Arrowsmith in the map which accompanies these volumes;—to which Mr. Arrowsmith has also added Captain Frome's route from the original tracings.]

There is, however, a still greater, and more singular difference alluded to in Captain Frome's report, which it is necessary to remark; I mean that of the elevation of the country. On the west side of Flinders range, for 200 miles that I traced the course of Lake Torrens, it was, as I have observed, girded in its whole course by a steep ridge, like a sea-shore, from which you descended into a basin, certainly not above the level of the sea, possibly even below it (I had no instruments with me to enable me to ascertain this,) the whole bed consisted of mud and water, and I found it impossible to advance far into it from its boggy nature. On the east side of Flinders range, Captain Frome found the lake a desert, 300 feet above the level of the sea, [Note 31: By altitude deduced from the temperature of boiling water.] and consisting of "loose and drifting sand," and "low sandy ridges, very scantily clothed with stunted scrub on their summits." Now, by referring to Captain Frome's chart and report, it appears that the place thus described was nearly thirty miles south of Mount Serle, and consequently twenty miles south of that part of the bed of Lake Torrens which I had seen from that hill. It is further evident, that Captain Frome had not reached the basin of Lake Torrens, and I cannot help thinking, that if he had gone further to the north-east, he would have come to nearly the same level that I had been at on the western side of the hills. There are several reasons for arriving at this conclusion. First, the manner in which the drainage is thrown off from the east side of Flinders range, and the direction which the watercourses take to the north-east or north; secondly, because an apparent connection was traceable in the course of the lake, from the heights in Flinders range, nearly all the way round it; thirdly, because the loose sands and low sandy ridges crowned with scrub, described by Captain Frome, were very similar to what I met with near Lake Torrens in the west side, before I reached its basin.

After the Northern Expedition had been compelled to return south, (being unable to cross Lake Torrens,) the peninsula of Port Lincoln was examined, and traversed completely round, in all the three sides of the triangle formed by its east and west coasts, and a line from Mount Arden to Streaky Bay. A road overland from Mount Arden was forced through the scrub for a dray; but the country travelled through was of so inhospitable a character as to hold out no prospect of its being generally available for overland communication. One unfortunate individual has since made an attempt to take over a few head of cattle by this route, but was unable to accomplish it, and miserably perished with his whole party from want of water. [Note 32: Vide note to page 154, Vol. I. (Note 11)]

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On the northern side of the triangle I have alluded to, or on the line between Mount Arden and Streaky Bay, a singularly high and barren range, named the Gawler Range after His Excellency the Governor, was found consisting of porphoritic granite, extending nearly all the way across, and then stretching out to the north-west in lofty rugged outline as far as the eye could reach; the most remarkable fact connected with this range, was the arid and sterile character of the country in which it was situated, as well as of the range itself, which consisted entirely of rugged barren rocks, without timber or vegetation. There was not a stream or a watercourse of any kind emanating from it; we could find neither spring nor permanent fresh water, and the only supply we procured for ourselves was from the deposits left by very recent rains, and which in a few days more, would have been quite dried up. The soil was in many places saline, and wherever water had lodged in any quantity (as in lakes of which there were several) it was quite salt.

[Note 33: A small exploring party, under a Mr. Darke, was sent from Port Lincoln in August, 1844, but after getting as far as the Gawler Range were compelled by the inhospitable nature of the country to return. The unfortunate leader was murdered by the natives on his route homewards.]

Continuing the line of coast to the westward, the expedition passed through the most wretched and desolate country imaginable, consisting almost entirely of a table-land, or of undulating ridges, covered for the most part with dense scrubs, and almost wholly without either grass or water. The general elevation of this country was from three to five hundred feet, and all of the tertiary deposit, with primary rocks protruding at intervals.

The first permanent fresh water met with on the surface was a small fresh-water lake, beyond the parallel of 123 degrees E.; but from Mount Arden to that point, a distance of fully 800 miles in a direct line, none whatever was found on the surface (if I except a solitary small spring sunk in the rock at Streaky Bay). During the whole of this vast distance, not a watercourse, not a hollow of any kind was crossed; the only water to be obtained was by digging close to the sea-shore, or the sand-hills of the coast, and even by that means it frequently could not be procured for distances of 150 to 160 miles together. With the exception of the Gawler Range, which lies between Streaky Bay and Mount Arden, this dreary waste was one almost uniform table-land of fossil formation, with an elevation of from three to five hundred feet, covered for the most part by dense impenetrable scrubs, and varied only on its surface by occasional sandy or rocky undulations.

What then can be the nature of that mysterious interior, bounded as it is by a table-land without river or lakes, without watercourses or drainage of any kind, for so vast a distance? Can it be that the whole is one immense interminable desert, or an alternation of deserts and shallow salt lakes like Lake Torrens? Conjecture is set at

defiance by the impenetrable arrangements of nature; where, the more we pry into her secrets, the more bewildered and uncertain become all our speculations.

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It has been a common and a popular theory to imagine the existence of an inland sea, and this theory has been strengthened and confirmed by the opinion of so talented, so experienced, and so enterprising a traveller as my friend Captain Sturt, in its favour. That gentleman, with the noble and disinterested enthusiasm by which he has ever been characterised, has once more sacrificed the pleasure and quiet of domestic happiness, at the shrine of enterprise and science. With the ardour of youth, and the perseverance and judgment of riper years, he is even now traversing the trackless wilds, and seeking to lift up that veil which has hitherto hung over their recesses. May he be successful to the utmost of his wishes, and may he again rejoin in health and safety his many friends, to forget in their approbation and admiration the toils he has encountered, and to enjoy the rewards and laurels which will have been so hardly earned, and so well deserved.

It was in August, 1844, that Captain Sturt set out upon his arduous undertaking, with a numerous and well equipped party, and having provisions calculated to last them for eighteen months. I had the pleasure of accompanying the expedition as far as the Rufus (about 240 miles from Adelaide), to render what assistance I could, in passing up, on friendly terms among the more distant natives of the Murray. Since my return, Captain Sturt has been twice communicated with, and twice heard from, up to the time I left the Colony, on the 21st December, 1844. The last official communication addressed to the Colonial Government will be found in Chapter IX. of Notes on the Aborigines. The following is a copy of a private letter to John Morphett, Esq M.C., and published in the Adelaide Observer of the 9th November, 1844:—

“14th October, 1844.

“I left Lake Victoria, as I told you in a former letter, on the 18th of September, and again cut across the country to the Murray. As we travelled along we saw numerous tracks of wild cattle leading from the marshes to the river, and we encamped at the junction of the river and a lagoon (one of the most beautiful spots you ever saw), just where these tracks were most numerous. In the night therefore we were surrounded by lowing herds, coming to the green pastures of which we had taken possession. In the morning I sent Messrs. Poole and Brown, with Flood my stockman, and Mark to drive in some bullocks, as I was anxious to secure one or two workers. The brush however was too thick, and in galloping through it after a bull, Flood's carbine exploded, and blew off three of the fingers of his right hand. This accident obliged me to remain stationary for two days, notwithstanding my anxiety to get up to the lagoon at Williorara, to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the report I had heard of the massacre of a party of overlanders there.



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“On the 23rd I reached the junction of the Ana branch with the Murray, discovered by Eyre, and then turned northwards. Running this Ana branch up, I crossed it where the water ceased, and went to the Darling, striking it about fifteen miles above its junction with the Murray. The unlooked-for course of the Darling however kept me longer on its banks than I had anticipated; but you can form no idea of the luxuriant verdure of its flats. They far surpass those of the Murray, both in quantity and quality of soil; and extended for many miles at a stretch along the river side. We have run up it at a very favourable season, and seen the commencement of its floods; for, two days after we reached it, and found it with scarcely any water in its bed, we observed a fresh in it, indicated by a stronger current. The next morning to our surprise the waters were half-bank high. They had risen six feet during the night, and were carrying everything before them; now they are full sixteen feet above their level, and a most beautiful river it is. Over this said mysterious river, as Major Mitchell calls it, the trees drooped like willows, or grew in dark clusters at each turn; the sloping banks were of a vivid green, the flats lightly timbered, and the aspect of the whole neighbourhood cheerful.

“I had hoped that we should have been able to approach the ranges pretty closely along the line of Laidley’s Ponds; but fancy our disappointment when we arrived on its banks to find that instead of a mountain stream it was a paltry creek, connecting a lake, now dry, with the river, and that its banks were quite bare. I was therefore obliged to fall back upon the Darling, and have been unable to stir for the last four days by reason of heavy rain.

“On Tuesday I despatched Mr. Poole to the ranges, which are forty miles distant from us, to ascertain if there is water or feed under them; but I have no hope of good tidings, and believe I shall ultimately be obliged to establish myself on the Darling.

“You will be glad to hear, and so ought every body, that we have maintained a most satisfactory intercourse with the natives. The report we had heard referred to Major Mitchell’s affray with them, and you will not be surprised at their reverting to it, when I tell you that several old men immediately recognized me as having gone down the Murray in a boat, although they could have seen me for an hour or two only, and fifteen years have now elapsed since I went down the river. I suppose we misunderstood the story; but most assuredly I fully anticipated we should, sooner or later, come on some dreadful scene or other, and I came up fully prepared to act; but the natives have been exceedingly quiet, nor have we seen a weapon in the hands of any of them: in truth I have been quite astonished at the change in the blacks; for instead of collecting in a body, they have visited us with their wives and children, and have behaved in the most quiet manner. We



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may attribute this in part to our own treatment of the natives, and in part to Eyre's influence over them, which is very extensive, and has been productive of great good. The account the natives give of the distant interior is very discouraging. It is nothing more however than what I expected. They say that beyond the hills it is all sand and rocks; that there is neither grass or water, or wood; and that it is awfully hot. This last feature appears to terrify them. They say that they are obliged to take wood to the hills for fire, and that they clamber up the rocks on the hills; that when there is water there, it is in deep holes from which they are obliged to sponge it up and squeeze it out to drink. I do not in truth think that any of the natives have been beyond the hills, and that the country is perfectly impracticable.

"We are now not more than two hundred and fifteen feet above the sea, with a declining country to the north-west, and the general dip of the continent to the south-west. What is the natural inference where there is not a single river emptying itself upon the coast, but that there is an internal basin? Such a country can only be penetrated by cool calculation and determined perseverance. I have sat down before it as a besieger before a fortress, to make my approaches with the same systematic regularity. I must cut hay and send forage and water in advance, as far as I can. I have the means of taking sixteen days' water and feed for two horses and three men; and if I can throw my supplies one hundred miles in advance, I shall be able to go two hundred miles more beyond that point, at the rate of thirty miles a-day, one of us walking whilst two rode. Surely at such a distance some new feature will open to reward our efforts! My own opinion is, that an inland sea will bring us up ere long—then how shall we get the boat upon it? 'Why,' you will say, 'necessity is the mother of invention.' You will find some means or other, no doubt; and so we will. However, under any circumstances, depend upon it I will either lift up or tear down the curtain which hides the interior from us, so look out for the next accounts from me as of the most interesting kind, as solving this great problem, or shutting the door to discovery from this side the continent for ever.

"P.S. Poole has just returned from the ranges. I have not time to write over again. He says that there are high ranges to N. and N.W. and water,—a sea extending along the horizon from S.W. by W., to ten E. of N. in which there are a number of islands and lofty ranges as far as the eye can reach. What is all this? Are we to be prosperous? I hope so; and I am sure you do. To-morrow we start for the ranges, and then for the waters, —the strange waters on which boat never swam, and over which flag never floated. But both shall be long. We have the heart of the interior laid open to us, and shall be off with a flowing sheet in a few days. Poole says that the sea was a deep blue, and that in the midst of it there was a conical island of great height. When will you hear from me again?"

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From this communication, Captain Sturt appears to be sanguine of having realized the long hoped for sea, and at last of having found a key to the centre of the continent. Most sincerely do I hope that this may be the case, and that the next accounts may more than confirm such satisfactory intelligence.

My own impressions were always decidedly opposed to the idea of an inland sea, nor have I changed them in the least, now that circumstances amounting almost to proof, seem to favour that opinion.

Entertaining, as I do, the highest respect for the opinion of one so every way capable of forming a correct judgment as Captain Sturt, it is with considerable diffidence that I advance any conjectures in opposition to his, and especially so, as I may be thought presumptuous in doing so in the face of the accounts received. Until these accounts, however, are further confirmed, the question still remains as it was; and it may perhaps not be out of place to allude to some of the reasons which have led me to form an opinion somewhat different from that entertained by Captain Sturt, and which I have been compelled to arrive at after a long personal experience, a closer approach to the interior, and a more extensive personal examination of the continent, than any other traveller has hitherto made. In the course of that experience, I have never met with the slightest circumstance to lead me to imagine that there should be an inland sea, still less a deep navigable one, and having an outer communication with the ocean. I can readily suppose, and, in fact, I do so believe, that a considerable portion of the interior consists of the beds or basins of salt lakes or swamps, as Lake Torrens, and some of which might be of great extent. I think, also, that these alternate, with sandy deserts, and that probably at intervals, there are many isolated ranges, like the Gawler range, and which, perhaps, even in some places may form a connection of links across the continent, could any favourable point be obtained for commencing the examination.

It is very possible that among these ranges, intervals of a better or even of a rich and fertile country might be met with.

The suggestion thrown out by Captain Sturt a few years ago, that Australia might formerly have been an Archipelago of islands, appears to me to have been a happy idea, and to afford the most rational and satisfactory way of accounting for many of the peculiarities observable upon its surface or in its structure. That it has only recently (compared with other countries) obtained its present elevation, is often forcibly impressed upon the traveller, by the appearance of the country he is traversing, but nowhere have I found this to be the case in a greater degree, than whilst exploring that part of it, north of Spencer's Gulf, where a great portion of the low lands intervening, between the base of Flinders range, and the bed of Lake Torrens, presents the appearance of a succession

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of rounded undulations of sand or pebbles washed perfectly smooth and even, looking like waves of the sea, and seeming as if they had not been very many centuries deserted by the element that had moulded them into their present form. In this singular district I found scattered at intervals throughout the whole area inclosed by, but south of, Lake Torrens, many steep-sided fragments of a table land, [Note 34 at end of para.] which had evidently been washed to pieces by the violent action of water, and which appeared to have been originally, of nearly the same general elevation as the table lands to the westward. It seems to me, that these table lands have formerly been the bed of the ocean, and this opinion is fully borne out by the many marine remains, fossil shells, and banks of oyster shells, [Note 35 at end of para.] which are frequently to be met with embedded in them. What are now the ranges of the continent would therefore formerly have been but rocks or islands, and if this supposition be true, there are still hopes that some other islands are scattered over the immense space occupied by Australia, and which may be of as rich and fertile a character, as any that are yet known. Thus if the intervening extent of desert lying between any of the known portions of Australia, and what may be considered as having been the next island, can be ascertained and crossed over, new and valuable regions may yet be offered for the extension of the pastoral interest of our Colonies, and for the general spread of civilization and improvement.

[Note 34: "An hundred miles above this, I passed a curious feature, called the "Square Hills" (plate 123 ). I landed my canoe and went ashore, and to their tops to examine them. Though they appeared to be near the river, I found it half a day's journey to travel to and from them; they being several miles from the river. On ascending them I found them to be two or three hundred feet high, and rising on their sides at an angle of 45 deg. and on their tops, in some places for half a mile in length perfectly level, with a green turf, and corresponding exactly with the tabular hills spoken of above the Mandans, in plate 39, vol. 1. I therein said that I should visit these hills on my way down the river; and I am fully convinced from close examination, that they are a part of the same original superstratum, which I therein described, though 7 or 800 miles separated from them. They agree exactly in character, and also in the materials of which they are composed; and I believe that some unaccountable gorge of waters has swept away the intervening earth, leaving these solitary and isolated, though incontrovertible evidences, that the summit level of all this great valley, has at one time been where the level surface of these hills now is, two or three hundred feet above what is now denominated the summit level."—Catlin's American Indians, Vol. 2. pp. 11 and 12.]

[Note 35: Similar banks of fossil shells and oyster beds, are found in the Arkansas.—Vide Catlin, Vol. 2. p. 85. At page 86, Mr. Catlin describes banks of gypsum and salt, extending through a considerable extent of country, and which apparently was of a very similar formation to some of the localities I was in to the north of Spencer's Gulf.]

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I have already observed that several circumstances connected with my own personal experience have led me to the conclusion, that there is no inland sea now occupying the centre of New Holland; it will be sufficient to name three of the most important of these.

First. I may mention the hot winds which in South Australia, or opposite the centre of the continent, always blow from the north, to those, who have experienced the oppressive and scorching influence of these winds, which can only be compared to the fiery and withering blasts from a heated furnace, I need hardly point out that there is little probability that such winds can have been wafted over a large expanse of water.

Secondly. I may state that between the Darling river and the head of the Great Australian Bight, I have at various points come into friendly communication with the Aborigines inhabiting the outskirts of the interior, and from them I have invariably learnt that they know of no large body of water inland, fresh or salt; that there were neither trees nor ranges, but that all was an arid waste so far as they were accustomed to travel.

Thirdly. I infer the non-existence of an inland sea, from the coincidence observable in the physical appearance, customs, character, and pursuits of the Aborigines at opposite points of the continent, whilst no such coincidence exists along the intervening lines of coast connecting those points.

With respect to the first consideration, it is unnecessary to add further remark; as regards the second, I may state, that although I may sometimes not have met with natives at those precise spots which might have been best suited for making inquiry, or although I may sometimes have had a difficulty in explaining myself to, or in understanding a people whose language I did not comprehend; yet such has not always been the case, and on many occasions I have had intercourse with natives at favourable positions, and have been able, quite intelligibly, to carry on any inquiries. One of these opportunities occurred in the very neighbourhood of the hill from which Mr. Poole is said to have seen the inland sea, as described in Captain Sturt's despatch.

There are several reasons for supposing Mr. Poole to have been deceived in forming an opinion of the objects which he saw before him from that elevation: first, I know, from experience, the extraordinary and deceptive appearances that are produced in such a country as Mr. Poole was in, by mirage and refraction combined. I have often myself been very similarly deceived by the semblance of hills, islands, and water, where none such existed in reality. Secondly, in December 1843, I was within twenty-five miles of the very spot from which Mr. Poole thought he looked upon a sea, and I was then accompanied by natives, and able, by means of an interpreter, to communicate with those who were acquainted with the country to the north-west. My inquiries upon this point were particular; but

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they knew of no sea. They asserted that there was mud out in that direction, and that a party would be unable to travel; from which I inferred either that some branch of the Darling spread out its waters there in time of flood, or that Lake Torrens itself was stretching out in the direction indicated. Thirdly, I hold it physically impossible that a sea can exist in the place assigned to it, in as much as during an expedition, undertaken by the Surveyor-general of the Colony, in September, 1843, that officer had attained a position which would place himself and Mr. Poole at two opposite points, upon nearly the same parallel of latitude; but about 130 miles of longitude apart, in a low level country, and in which, therefore, the ranges of their respective vision from elevations would cross each other, and if there was a sea, Captain Frome must have seen it as well as Mr. Poole; again, I myself had an extensive and distant view to the north-east and east from Mount Hopeless, a low hill, about ninety miles further north than Captain Frome's position, but a little more east; yet there was nothing like a sea to be seen from thence, the dry and glazed-looking bed of Lake Torrens alone interrupting the monotony of the desert.

There are still some few points connected with our knowledge of the outskirts of the interior which leave great room for speculation, and might lead to the opinion that it is not altogether a low or a desert region. The facts which have more immediately come under my own observation, are connected, first with the presence of birds belonging to a higher and better country in the midst of a desert region, and secondly, with the line of route taken by the Aborigines in spreading over the continent, as deduced from a coincidence or dissimilarity of the manners, customs, or languages of tribes remotely apart from one another.

With respect to the presence of birds in a region such as they do not usually frequent, I may state that at Mount Arden, near the head of Spencer's Gulf, swans were seen taking their flight high in the air, to the north, as if making for some river or lake they were accustomed to feed at. At the Frome river, where it spreads into the plains to the north of Flinders range; four white cockatoos were found flying about among the trees, although those birds had not been met with for 200 miles before I attained that point. [Note 36: Vide Vol. I. July 4, Aug 31, and March 19.] And about longitude 128 degrees 20 minutes E., when crossing over towards King George's Sound, large parrots were found coming from the north-east, to feed upon the berries of a shrub growing on the sea coast, although no parrots were seen for two or three hundred miles on either side, either to the east or to the west, they must, therefore, have come from the interior. Now the parrot is a bird that often frequents a mountainous country, and always inhabits one having timber of a better description and larger growth than the miserable shrubs met with along the coast; it is a bird too that always lives within reach of permanent fresh-water, as rivers, lakes, creeks, pools, etc. Can there then be such in the interior, with so barren and arid a region, bounding it? and how are we to commence an examination with so many difficulties and embarrassments attending the very outset?

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The second series of facts which have attracted my attention, relate to the Aborigines. It is a well known circumstance that the dialects, customs, and pursuits in use among them in the various parts of the continent, differ very much from each other in some particulars, and yet that there is such a general similarity in the aggregate as to leave no room to doubt that all the Aborigines of Australia have had one common origin, and are in reality one and the same race. If this then is really the case, they must formerly have spread over the continent from one first point, and this brings me to the

Third reason I have mentioned as being one, from which I infer, that there is not an inland sea, *viz.*, the coincidence observable in the physical appearance, customs, character, and pursuits of the Aborigines, at opposite points of the continent, whilst no such coincidence exists along the intervening lines of coast connecting those two points, and which naturally follows from the circumstances connected with the present location of the various tribes in which this is observable, and with the route which they must have taken to arrive at the places they now occupy on the continent. [Note 37 at end of para.] I believe that the idea of attempting to deduce the character of the continent, and the most probable line for crossing it, from the circumstances and habits of the natives inhabiting the coast line is quite a novel one. It appears to me, however, to be worth consideration; and if it is true that the natives have all one common origin, and have spread over the continent from one first point, I think it may reasonably be inferred that there is a practicable route across the centre of New Holland, and that this line lies between the 125th and 135th degrees of east longitude. It further appears that there must still be a second route, other than the coast line, in the direction between Port Jackson in New South Wales and the south-east corner of the Gulf of Carpentaria on the north coast.

[Note 37: Vide Chapter VII. of Notes on the Aborigines, where this subject will be found fully discussed, and the reasons given for supposing the conclusions here assumed.]

If then we have reasonable grounds for believing that such lines of route actually do exist, it becomes a matter of much interest and importance to determine the most favourable point from which to explore them. My own experience has pointed out the dreadful nature of the southern coast, and the very great and almost insuperable difficulties that beset the traveller at the very commencement—in his efforts even to establish a single depot from which to enter upon his researches. The northern coast may, probably, afford greater facilities, but in a tropical climate, where the heat and other circumstances render ordinary difficulties and impediments still more embarrassing and dangerous, it is a matter of deep moment that the expedition for interior exploration should commence at the right point, and this can only be ascertained by a previous examination.



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I have myself always been most anxious to attempt to cross from Moreton Bay on the N. E. coast to Port Essington on the N. W. I believe that this journey is quite practicable, and I have no doubt that if judiciously conducted, and the country to the south of the line of route always examined, as far as that could be done, it would completely develop, in connection with what is already known, the character and formation of Australia, and would at once point out the most proper place from which subsequent expeditions ought to start in order finally to accomplish the passage across its interior—from the north to the south.

### MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE ABORIGINES OF AUSTRALIA.

#### CHAPTER I.

Preliminary remarks—unjust opinions generally entertained of the *character of the native—difficulties and disadvantages he labours under in his relations with Europeans—aggressions and injuries on the part of the latter in great degree extenuate his crimes.*

Upon bringing to a close the narrative of an Expedition of Discovery in Australia, during the progress of which an extensive portion of the previously unknown parts of that continent were explored, I have thought it might not be uninteresting to introduce a few pages on the subject of the Aborigines of the country.

It would afford me much gratification to see an interest excited on their behalf proportioned to the claims of a people who have hitherto been misjudged or misrepresented.

For the last twelve years I have been personally resident in one or other of the Australian Colonies, and have always been in frequent intercourse with the aboriginal tribes that were near, rarely being without some of them constantly with me as domestics.

To the advantages of private opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of their character were added, latterly, the facilities afforded by my holding a public appointment in South Australia, in the midst of a district more densely populated by natives than any in that Colony, where no settler had ventured to locate, and where, prior to my arrival in October 1841, frightful scenes of bloodshed, rapine, and hostility between the natives and parties coming overland with stock, had been of frequent and very recent occurrence.

As Resident Magistrate of the Murray District, I may almost say, that for the last three years I have lived with the natives. My duties have frequently taken me to very great



distances up the Murray or the Darling rivers, when I was generally accompanied only by a single European, or at most two, and where, if attacked, there was no possibility of my receiving any human aid. I have gone almost alone among hordes of those fierce and blood-thirsty savages, as they were then considered, and have stood singly amongst them in the remote and trackless wilds, when hundreds were congregated around, without ever receiving the least injury or insult.



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In my first visits to the more distant tribes I found them shy, alarmed, and suspicious, but soon learning that I had no wish to injure them, they met me with readiness and confidence. My wishes became their law; they conceded points to me that they would not have done to their own people, and on many occasions cheerfully underwent hunger, thirst, and fatigue to serve me.

Former habits and prejudices in some respects gave way to the influence I acquired. Tribes that never met or heard of one another before were brought to mingle in friendly intercourse. Single individuals traversed over immense distances and through many intervening tribes, which formerly they never could have attempted to pass, and in accomplishing this the white man's name alone was the talisman that proved their safeguard and protection.

During the whole of the three years I was Resident at Moorunde, not a single case of serious injury or aggression ever took place on the part of the natives against the Europeans; and a district, once considered the wildest and most dangerous, was, when I left it in November 1844, looked upon as one of the most peaceable and orderly in the province.

Independently of my own personal experience, on the subject of the Aborigines, I have much pleasure in acknowledging the obligations I am under to M. Moorhouse, Esq. Protector of Aborigines in Adelaide, for his valuable assistance, in comparing and discussing the results of our respective observations, on matters connected with the natives, and for the obliging manner in which he has furnished me with many of his own important and well-arranged notes on various points of interest in their history.

By this aid, I am enabled, in the following pages, to combine my own observations and experience with those of Mr. Moorhouse, especially on points connected with the Adelaide Tribes. In some cases, extracts from Mr. Moorhouse's notes, will be copied in his own words, but in most I found an alteration or rearrangement to be indispensable to enable me to connect and amplify the subjects: I wish it to be particularly understood, however, that with any deductions, inferences, remarks, or suggestions, that may incidentally be introduced, Mr. Moorhouse is totally unconnected, that gentleman's notes refer exclusively to abstract matters of fact, relating to the habits, customs, or peculiarities of the people treated of, and are generally confined to the Adelaide Tribes.

[Note 38: Some few of these notes were printed in the Colony, in a detached form, as Reports to the Colonial Government, or in the Vocabularies of the Missionaries, and since my return to England I find others have been published in papers, ordered to be printed by the House of Commons, in August 1844. From the necessity, however, of altering in some measure the phraseology, to combine Mr. Moorhouse's remarks with my own, and to preserve a uniformity in the descriptions, it has not been practicable or desirable in all cases, to separate or distinguish by inverted commas, those observations which I have adopted. I have, therefore, preferred making a general

acknowledgment of the use I have made of the notes that were supplied to me by Mr. Moorhouse.]

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In the descriptions given in the following pages, although there may occasionally be introduced, accounts of the habits, manners, or customs of some of the tribes inhabiting different parts of Australia I have visited, yet there are others which are exclusively peculiar to the natives of South Australia. I wish it, therefore, to be understood, that unless mention is made of other tribes, or other parts of the continent, the details given are intended to apply to that province generally, and particularly to the tribes in it, belonging to the districts of Adelaide and the Murray river.

As far as has yet been ascertained, the whole of the aboriginal inhabitants of this continent, scattered as they are over an immense extent of country, bear so striking a resemblance in physical appearance and structure to each other; and their general habits, customs, and pursuits, are also so very similar, though modified in some respects by local circumstances or climate, that little doubt can be entertained that all have originally sprung from the same stock. The principal points of difference, observable between various tribes, appear to consist chiefly in some of their ceremonial observances, and in the variations of dialect in the language they speak; the latter are, indeed, frequently so great, that even to a person thoroughly acquainted with any one dialect, there is not the slightest clue by which he can understand what is said by a tribe speaking a different one.

The only account I have yet met with, which professed to give any particular description of the Aborigines of New Holland, is that contained in the able papers upon this subject, by Captain Grey, in the second volume of his travels. When it is considered, that the material for that purpose was collected by the author, during a few months interval between his two expeditions, which he spent at Swan River, and a short time subsequently passed at King George's Sound, whilst holding the appointment of Government Resident there; it is perfectly surprising that the amount of information amassed should be so great, and so generally correct, on subjects where so many mistakes are liable to be made, in all first inquiries, when we are ignorant of the character and habits of the people of whom information is to be sought, and unacquainted with the language they speak.

The subject, however, upon a portion of which Captain Grey so successfully entered, is very extensive, and one which no single individual, except by the devotion of a life-time, could hope fully to discuss. The Continent of Australia is so vast, and the dialects, customs, and ceremonies of its inhabitants so varied in detail, though so similar in general outline and character, that it will require the lapse of years, and the labours of many individuals, to detect and exhibit the links which form the chain of connection in the habits and history of tribes so remotely separated; and it will be long before any one can attempt to give to the world a complete and well-drawn outline of the whole.

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It is not therefore to satisfy curiosity, or to interrupt the course of inquiry, that I enter upon the present work; I neither profess, nor could I attempt to give a full or matured account of the Aborigines of New Holland. Captain Grey's descriptions on this subject are limited to the races of South-western, as mine are principally directed to those of Southern Australia, with occasionally some remarks or anecdotes relating to tribes in other parts of the Continent with whom I have come in contact.

The character of the Australian native has been so constantly misrepresented and traduced, that by the world at large he is looked upon as the lowest and most degraded of the human species, and is generally considered as ranking but little above the members of the brute creation. Savages have always many vices, but I do not think that these are worse in the New Hollanders, than in many other aboriginal races. It is said, indeed, that the Australian is an irreclaimable, unteachable being; that he is cruel, blood-thirsty, revengeful, and treacherous; and in support of such assertions, references are made to the total failure of all missionary and scholastic efforts hitherto made on his behalf, and to many deeds of violence or aggression committed by him upon the settler.

[Note 39: I cannot adduce a stronger proof in support of the position I assume, in favour of the natives, than by quoting the clear and just conclusions at which the Right Honourable Lord Stanley, the present Secretary of State for the Colonies, arrived, when considering the case of some collisions with the natives on the Ovens River, and after a full consideration of the various circumstances connected with the occurrence. In a despatch to Governor Sir G. Gipps, dated 5th October, 1841, Lord Stanley says, "Contrasting the accounts of the Aborigines given by Mr. Docker with those given by Mr. Mackay, and the different terms on which those gentlemen appear to be with them in the same vicinity, I cannot divest myself of the apprehension that the fault in this case lies with the colonists rather than with the natives. It was natural, that conduct so harsh and intemperate as that of the Messrs. Mackay should be signally visited on them, and probably also on wholly unoffending persons, by a race of uninstructed and ignorant savages. At the same time the case of Mr. Docker affords a most satisfactory instance of natives entering into permanent service with white men, and working, as they appear to do, steadily for wages."]

With respect to the first point, I consider that an intimate knowledge of the peculiar habits, laws, and traditions, by which this people are governed, is absolutely necessary, before any just opinion can be formed as to how far the means hitherto pursued, have been suitable, or adapted to counteract the influence of custom and the force of prejudice. Until this knowledge is attained, we have no right to brand them as either irreclaimable, or unteachable. My own impression, after long experience, and an attentive consideration of the subject, is, that in the present anomalous state of our relations with the Aborigines, our measures are neither comprehensive enough for, nor is our system sufficiently adapted to, the singular circumstances they are in, to enable us successfully to contend with the difficulties and impediments in the way of their rising in the scale of civilization.

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Upon the second point it is also necessary to make many inquiries before we arrive at our conclusions; and I have no doubt, if this be done with calmness, and without prejudice, it will be generally found that there are many extenuating circumstances which may be brought to modify our judgment. I am anxious, if possible, to place a few of these before the public, in the hope, that by lessening in some degree the unfavourable opinion heretofore entertained of the Aborigines, they may be considered for the future as more deserving our sympathy and benevolence.

Without assuming for the native a freedom from vice, or in any way attempting to palliate the many brutalising habits that pollute his character, I would still contend that, if stained with the excesses of unrestrained passions, he is still sometimes sensible to the better emotions of humanity. Many of the worst traits in his character are the result of necessity, or the force of custom—the better ones are implanted in him as a part of his nature. With capabilities for receiving, and an aptness for acquiring instruction, I believe he has also the capacity for appreciating the rational enjoyments of life.

Even in his present low and debased condition, and viewed under every disadvantages, I do not imagine that his vices would usually be found greater, or his passions more malignant than those of a very large proportion of men ordinarily denominated civilised. On the contrary, I believe were Europeans placed under the same circumstances, equally wronged, and equally shut out from redress, they would not exhibit half the moderation or forbearance that these poor untutored children of impulse have invariably shewn.

It is true that occasionally many crimes have been committed by them, and robberies and murders have too often occurred; but who can tell what were the provocations which led to, what the feelings which impelled such deeds? Neither have they been the only or the first aggressors, nor has their race escaped unscathed in the contest. Could blood answer blood, perhaps for every drop of European's shed by natives, a torrent of their, by European hands, would crimson the earth.

[Note 40: "The whites were generally the aggressors. He had been informed that a petition had been presented to the Governor, containing a list of nineteen murders committed by the blacks. He could, if it were necessary, make out a list of five hundred blacks who had been slaughtered by the whites, and that within a short time."—Extract from speech of Mr. Threlkeld to the Auxiliary Aborigines' Protection Society in New South Wales. Abstract of a "Return of the number of homicides committed respectively by blacks and whites, within the limits of the northwestern district (of Port Phillip), since its first occupation by settlers—"]

"Total number of white people killed by Aborigines 8 "Total number of Aborigines killed by white people 43."

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This is only in one district, and only embraces such cases as came to the knowledge of Mr. Protector Parker. For particulars vide Papers on Aborigines of Australian Colonies, printed for the House of Commons, August 1844, p. 318.]

Let us now inquire a little, upon whose side right and justice are arrayed in palliation (if any such there can be) of deeds of violence or aggression on the part of either.

It is an undeniable fact, that wherever European colonies have been established in Australia, the native races in that neighbourhood are rapidly decreasing, and already in some of the elder settlements, have totally disappeared. It is equally indisputable that the presence of the white man has been the sole agent in producing so lamentable an effect; that the evil is still going on, increased in a ratio proportioned to the number of new settlements formed, or the rapidity with which the settlers overrun new districts. The natural, the inevitable, but the no less melancholy result must be, that in the course of a few years more, if nothing be done to check it, the whole of the aboriginal tribes of Australia will be swept away from the face of the earth. A people who, by their numbers, have spread around the whole of this immense continent, and have probably penetrated into and occupied its inmost recesses, will become quite extinct, their name forgotten, their very existence but a record of history.

It is a popular, but an unfair and unwarranted assumption, that these consequences are the result of the natural course of events; that they are ordained by Providence, unavoidable, and not to be impeded. Let us at least ascertain how far they are chargeable upon ourselves.

Without entering upon the abstract question concerning the right of one race of people to wrest from another their possessions, simply because they happen to be more powerful than the original inhabitants, or because they imagine that they can, by their superior skill or acquirements, enable the soil to support a denser population, I think it will be conceded by every candid and right-thinking mind, that no one can justly take that which is not his own, without giving some equivalent in return, or deprive a people of their ordinary means of support, and not provide them with any other instead. Yet such is exactly the position we are in with regard to the inhabitants of Australia.

[Note 41: "The invasion of those ancient rights (of the natives) by survey and land appropriations of any kind, is justifiable only on the ground, that we should at the same time reserve for the natives an *ample sufficiency* for *their present* and future use and comfort, under the new style of things into which they are thrown; a state in which we hope they will be led to live in greater comfort, on a small space, than they enjoyed before it occurred, on their extensive original possessions."—Reply of His Excellency Colonel Gawler, to the gentlemen who objected to sections of land being appropriated for the natives, before the public were allowed to select.]

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Without laying claim to this country by right of conquest, without pleading even the mockery of cession, or the cheaterly of sale, we have unhesitatingly entered upon, occupied, and disposed of its lands, spreading forth a new population over its surface, and driving before us the original inhabitants.

To sanction this aggression, we have not, in the abstract, the slightest shadow of either right or justice—we have not even the extenuation of endeavouring to compensate those we have injured, or the merit of attempting to mitigate the sufferings our presence inflicts.

It is often argued, that we merely have taken what the natives did not require, or were making no use of; that we have no wish to interfere with them if they do not interfere with us, but rather that we are disposed to treat them with kindness and conciliation, if they are willing to be friends with us. What, however, are the actual facts of the case; and what is the position of a tribe of natives, when their country is first taken possession of by Europeans.

It is true that they do not cultivate the ground; but have they, therefore, no interest in its productions? Does it not supply grass for the sustenance of the wild animals upon which in a great measure they are dependent for their subsistence?—does it not afford roots and vegetables to appease their hunger?—water to satisfy their thirst, and wood to make their fire?—or are these necessities left to them by the white man when he comes to take possession of their soil? Alas, it is not so! all are in turn taken away from the original possessors. The game of the wilds that the European does not destroy for his amusement are driven away by his flocks and herds. [Note 42 at end of para.] The waters are occupied and enclosed, and access to them is frequently forbidden. The fields are fenced in, and the natives are no longer at liberty to dig up roots—the white man claims the timber, and the very firewood itself is occasionally denied to them. Do they pass by the habitation of the intruder, they are probably chased away or bitten by his dogs, and for this they can get no redress. [Note 43 at end of para.] Have they dogs of their own, they are unhesitatingly shot or worried because they are an annoyance to the domestic animals of the Europeans. Daily and hourly do their wrongs multiply upon them. The more numerous the white population becomes, and the more advanced the stage of civilization to which the settlement progresses, the greater are the hardships that fall to their lot and the more completely are they cut off from the privileges of their birthright. All that they have is in succession taken away from them—their amusements, their enjoyments, their possessions, their freedom—and all that they receive in return is obloquy, and contempt, and degradation, and oppression. [Note 44 appears after note 43, below]

[Note 42: “But directly an European settles down in the country, his constant residence in one spot soon sends the animals away from it, and although he may in no other way interfere with the natives, the mere circumstance of his residing there, does the man on

whose land he settles the injury of depriving him of his ordinary means of subsistence.”—*Grey’s travels*, vol. ii. p. 298.



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“The great question was, were we to give them no equivalent for that which we had taken from them? Had we deprived them of nothing? Was it nothing that they were driven from the lands where their fathers lived, where they were born and which were endeared to them by associations equally strong with the associations of more civilised people? He believed that their affections were as warm as the Europeans.” “Perhaps he obtained his subsistence by fishing, and occupied a slip of land on the banks of a river or the margin of a lake. Was he to be turned off as soon as the land was required, without any consideration whatever?” “Had any proper attempt been made for their civilization? They had not yet had fair play—they had been courted by the missionaries with the Bible on the one hand, and had at the sametime been driven away and destroyed by the stock-keepers on the other. He thought that they might be reclaimed if the proper course was adopted.”—*Extracts from the speech of Sydney Stephen, Esq., At A meeting on behalf of the aborigines in Sydney, October 19, 1838.*

I have myself repeatedly seen the natives driven off private lands in the vicinity of Adelaide, and their huts burned, even in cold wet weather. The records of the Police Office will shew that they have been driven off the Park lands, or those belonging to Government, or at least that they have been brought up and punished for cutting wood from the trees there. What are they to do, when there is not a stick or a tree within miles of Adelaide that they can legally take?]

[Note 43: I have known repeated instances of natives in Adelaide being bitten severely by savage dogs rushing out at them from the yards of their owners, as they were peaceably passing along the street. On the other hand I have known a native imprisoned for throwing his waddy at, and injuring a pig, which was eating a melon he had laid down for a moment in the street, and when the pig ought not to have been in the street at all. In February 1842, a dog belonging to a native was shot by order of Mr. Gouger, the then Colonial Secretary, and the owner as soon as he became aware of the circumstance, speared his wife for not taking better care of it, although she could not possibly have helped the occurrence. If natives then revenge so severely such apparently trivial offences among themselves, can we wonder that they should sometimes retaliate upon us for more aggravated ones.]

[Note 44: The following are extracts from an address to a jury, when trying some aboriginal natives, by Judge Willis. They at least shew some of the *blessings* the Aborigines experience from being made British subjects, and placed under British laws: —“I have, on a recent occasion, stated my opinion, which I still entertain, that the proprietor of a run, or, in other words, one who holds a lease or license from

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the Crown to depasture certain Crown lands, may take all lawful means to prevent either natives or others from entering or remaining upon it." "The aboriginals of Van Diemen's Land were strictly commanded, by Governor Arthur's proclamation of the 15th of April 1828 (a proclamation of which His Majesty King George the Fourth, through the Right honourable the then Secretary of State, by a dispatch of the 2nd of February, 1829, under the circumstances, signified his approval,) "to retire and depart from, and for no reason, and no pretence, save as therein provided, (viz. travelling annually to the sea coast in quest of shellfish, under certain regulations,) to re-enter the settled districts of Van Diemen's Land, or any portions of land cultivated and occupied by any person whomsoever, under the authority of Her Majesty's Government, on pain of forcible expulsion therefrom, and such consequences as might be necessarily attendant on it, and all magistrates and other persons by them authorized and deputed, were required to conform themselves to the directions and instructions of this proclamation, in effecting the retirement and expulsion of the Aborigines from the settled districts of that territory."]

What are they to do under such circumstances, or how support a life so bereft of its wonted supplies? Can we wonder that they should still remain the same low abject and degraded creatures that they are, loitering about the white man's house, and cringing, and pandering to the lowest menial for that food they can no longer procure for themselves? or that wandering in misery through a country, now no longer their own, their lives should be curtailed by want, exposure, or disease? If, on the other hand, upon the first appearance of Europeans, the natives become alarmed, and retire from their presence, they must give up all the haunts they had been accustomed to frequent, and must either live in a starving condition, in the back country, ill supplied with game, and often wanting water, or they must trespass upon the territory of another tribe, in a district perhaps little calculated to support an additional population, even should they be fortunate enough to escape being forced into one belonging to an enemy.

Under any circumstances, however, they have but little respite from inconvenience and want. The white man rapidly spreads himself over the country, and without the power of retiring any further, they are overtaken, and beset by all the evils from which they had previously fled.

Such are some of the blessings held out to the savage by civilization, and they are only some of them. The picture is neither fanciful nor overdrawn; there is no trait in it that I have not personally witnessed, or that might not have been enlarged upon; and there are often other circumstances of greater injury and aggression, which, if dwelt upon, would have cast a still darker shade upon the prospects and condition of the native.

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Enough has, however, perhaps been said to indicate the degree of injury our presence unavoidably inflicts. I would hope, also, to point out the justice, as well as the expediency of appropriating a considerable portion of the money obtained, by the sales of land, towards alleviating the miseries our occupation of their country has occasioned to the original owners.

[Note 44a: “That it appears to memorialists that the original occupants of the soil have an irresistible claim on the Government of this country for support, inasmuch as the presence of the colonists abridges their means of subsistence, whilst it furnishes to the public treasury a large revenue in the shape of fees for licences and assessments on stock, together with the very large sums paid for land seized by the Crown, and alienated to private individuals.

“That it appears to memorialists that the interests at once of the natives and the colonists would be most effectually promoted by the government reserving suitable portions of land within the territorial limits of the respective tribes, with the view of weaning them from their erratic habits, forming thereon depots for supplying them with provisions and clothing, under the charge of individuals of exemplary moral character, taking at the same time an interest in their welfare, and who would endeavour to instruct them in agricultural and other useful arts.”—Extract from Memorial of the Settlers of the County of Grant, in the district of Port Phillip, to His Excellency Sir G. Gipps, in 1840.]

Surely if we acknowledge the first principles of justice, or if we admit the slightest claims of humanity on behalf of these debased, but harshly treated people, we are bound, in honour and in equity, to afford them that subsistence which we have deprived them of the power of providing for themselves.

It may, perhaps, be replied, and at first it might seem, with some appearance of speciousness, that all is done that can be done for them, that each of the Colonial Governments annually devotes a portion of its revenue to the improvement, instruction, and maintenance of the natives. So far this is very praiseworthy, but does it in any degree compensate for the evil inflicted?

The money usually voted by the councils of Government, towards defraying expenses incurred on behalf of the Aborigines of Australia, is but a very small per centage upon the sums that have been received for the sales of lands, and is principally expended in defraying the salaries of protectors, in supporting schools, providing food or clothing for one or two head stations, and perhaps supplying a few blankets once in the year to some of the outstations. Little is expended in the daily provisioning of the natives generally, and especially in the more distant country districts least populated by Europeans, but most densely occupied by natives, and where the very thinness of the European inhabitants precludes the Aborigines from resorting

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to the same sources to supply their wants, that are open to them in a town, or more thickly inhabited district. Such are those afforded by the charity of individuals, by the rewards received for performing trifling services of work, by the obtaining vast quantities of offal, or of broken victuals, which are always abundant in a country where animal food is used in excess, and where the heat of the climate daily renders much of it unfit for consumption in the family, and by others of a similar nature.

Such resources, however humiliating and pernicious they are in their effects, are not open to the tribes living in a district almost exclusively occupied by the sheep or cattle of the settler, and where the very numbers of the stock only more completely drive away the original game upon which the native had been accustomed to subsist, and hold out a greater temptation to him to supply his wants from the superabundance which he sees around him, belonging to those by whom he has been dispossessed. The following appropriate remarks are an extract from Report of Aborigines' Protection Society, of March, 1841, (published in the South Australian Register, 4th December, 1841.)

"Under that system it is obvious to every coloured man, even the least intelligent, that the extending settlements of the Europeans involve a sentence of banishment, and eventual extermination, upon his tribe and race. Major Mitchell, in his travels, refers to this apprehension on the part of the Aborigines—"White man come, Kangaroo go away"—from which as an inevitable consequence follows—"black man famished away." If, then, this appears a necessary result of the unjust, barbarous, unchristian mode of colonization pursued in New Holland, over-looking the other incidental, and more pointedly aggravating provocations, to the coloured man, associated with that system, how natural, in his case, is an enmity which occasionally visits some of the usurping race with death! We call the offence in him *murder*; but let the occasion be only examined, and we must discover that, in so designating it, we are imposing geographical, or national restrictions, upon the virtue of patriotism; or that in the manifestations of that principle, we make no allowances for the influence on its features of the relative degradation or elevation of those among whom it is met.

"Our present colonization system renders the native and the colonizing races from necessity belligerents; and there can be no real peace, no real amity, no mutual security, so long as that system is not substituted by one reconciling the interest of both races. Colonists will fall before the spears and the waddies of incensed Aborigines, and they in return will be made the victims of 'summary justice.'

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"In cases of executive difficulty, the force of popular prejudice will be apt to be too strong for the best intentioned Governor to withstand it; Europeans will have sustained injury; the strict forms of legal justice may be found of difficult application to a race outcast or degraded, although *originally* in a condition fitted to appreciate them, to benefit by them, and reflect their benefits upon others; impatient at this difficulty, the delay it may occasion, and the shelter from ultimate punishment, the temptation will ever be strong to revert to summary methods of proceeding; and thus, as in a circle, injustice will be found to flow reciprocal injury, and from injury injustice again, in another form. The source of all these evils, and of all this injustice, is the unreserved appropriation of native lands, and the denial, in the first instance of colonization, of equal civil rights. To the removal of those evils, so far as they can be removed in the older settlements, to their prevention in new colonies, the friends of the Aborigines are invoked to direct their energy; to be pacified with the attainment of nothing less; for nothing less will really suffice."

Can it be deemed surprising that a rude, uncivilized being, driven from his home, deprived of all his ordinary means of subsistence [Note 45 at end of para.], and pressed perhaps by a hostile tribe from behind, should occasionally be guilty of aggressions or injuries towards his oppressors? The wonder rather is, not that these things do sometimes occur, but that they occur so rarely.

[Note 45: "If you can still be generous to the conquered, relieve the hunger which drives us in despair to slaughter your flocks and the men who guard them. Our fields and forests, which once furnished us with abundance of vegetable and animal food, now yield us no more; they and their produce are yours; you prosper on our native soil, and we are famishing." —*Strzelecki's N. S. Wales*, p. 356.]

In addition to the many other inconsistencies in our conduct towards the Aborigines, not the least extraordinary is that of placing them, on the plea of protection, under the influence of our laws, and of making them British subjects. Strange anomaly, which by the former makes amenable to penalties they are ignorant of, for crimes which they do not consider as such, or which they may even have been driven to commit by our own injustice; and by the latter but mocks them with an empty sound, since the very laws under which we profess to place them, by their nature and construction are inoperative in affording redress to the injured.

[Note 46: "To subject savage tribes to the penalties of laws with which they are unacquainted, for offences which they, very possibly, regard as acts of justifiable retaliation for invaded rights, is a proceeding indefensible, except under circumstances of urgent and extreme necessity."—Fourth Report of the Colonization Commissioners, presented to the House of Commons, 29th July, 1840.]

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"The late act, declaring them naturalized as British subjects, has only rendered them legally amenable to the English criminal law, and added one more anomaly to all the other enactments affecting them. This naturalization excludes them from sitting on a jury, or appearing as witnesses, and entails a most confused form of judicial proceedings; all which, taken together, has made of the Aborigines of Australia a nondescript caste, who, to use their own phraseology, are 'neither black nor white.'"—Strzelecki's N. S. Wales.]

If, in addition to the many evils and disadvantages the natives must necessarily be subject to from our presence, we take still further into account the wrongs they are exposed to from the ill feeling towards them which has sometimes existed among the settlers, or their servants, on the outskirts of the country; the annoyances they are harassed by, even where this feeling does not exist, in being driven away from their usual haunts and pursuits (and this is a practice often adopted by the remote grazier as a mere matter of policy to avoid trouble or the risk of a collision); we shall find upon the whole that they have often just causes of offence, and that there are many circumstances connected with their crimes which, from the peculiar position they are placed in, may well require from us some mitigation of the punishment that would be exacted from Europeans for the same misdeeds.

Captain Grey has already remarked the strong prejudice and recklessness of human life which frequently exist on the part of the settlers with regard to the natives. Nor has this feeling been confined to Western Australia alone. In all the colonies, that I have been in, I have myself observed that a harsh and unjust tone has occasionally been adopted in speaking of the Aborigines; and that where a feeling of prejudice does not exist against them, there is too often a great indifference manifested as to their fate. I do not wish it to be understood that such is always the case; on the contrary, I know that the better, and right thinking part of the community, in all the colonies, not only disavow such feelings, but are most anxious, as far as lies in their power, to promote the interests and welfare of the natives. Still, there are always some, in every settlement, whose passions, prejudices, interests, or fears, obliterate their sense of right and wrong, and by whom these poor wanderers of the woods are looked upon as intruders in their own country, or as vermin that infest the land, and whose blood may be shed with as little compunction as that of the wild animals they are compared to.

By those who have heard the dreadful accounts current in Western Australia, and New South Wales, of the slaughter formerly committed by military parties, or by the servants [Note 47 at end of para.] of the settlers upon the Aborigines, in which it is stated that men, women, and children have been surprised, surrounded and shot down indiscriminately, at their camps at night; or who have heard such deeds, or other similar ones, justified or boasted of, it will readily be believed to what an extent the feeling I have alluded to has occasionally been carried, and to what excesses it has led. [Note 48 appears after Note 47, below]



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[Note 47: The following extract from a reply of his Honour the Superintendent of Port Phillip to the representation made to his Honour by the settlers and inhabitants of the district of Port Fairy, in March 1842, shews that these frightful atrocities against the natives had not even then ceased.

“That the presence of a protector in your district, and other means of prevention hitherto employed, have not succeeded better than they have done in repressing aggression or retaliation, and have failed to establish a good understanding between the natives and the European settlers, is greatly to be deplored.

“As far as the local government has power, every practicable extension of these arrangements shall be made without delay; but, gentlemen, however harsh, a plain truth must be told, the destruction of European property, and even the occasional sacrifice of European life, by the hands of the savage tribes, among whom you live, if unprovoked and unrevenged, may justly claim sympathy and pity; but the feeling of abhorrence which one act of savage retaliation or cruelty on your part will rouse, must weaken, if not altogether obliterate every other, in the minds of most men; and I regret to state, that I have before me a statement presented in a form which I dare not discredit, shewing that such acts are perpetrated among you.

“It reveals a nightly attack upon a small number of natives, by a party of the white inhabitants of your district, and the murder of no fewer than three defenceless aboriginal women and a child, in their sleeping place; and this at the very time your memorial was in the act of signature, and in the immediate vicinity of the station of two of the parties who have signed it. Will not the commission of such crimes call down the wrath of God, and do more to check the prosperity of your district, and to ruin your prospects, than all the difficulties and losses under which you labour?” Mr. Sieviewright’s letter gives an account of this infamous transaction.

*“Western aboriginal establishment,  
THOLOR, 26th February, 1842.*

“Sir,—I have the honour to report that on the afternoon of the 24th instant, two aboriginal natives, named Pwe-bin-gan-nai, Calangamite, returned to this encampment, which they had left with their families on the 22nd, and reported ‘that late on the previous evening, while they with their wives, two other females, and two children, were asleep at a tea-tree scrub, called One-one-derang, a party of eight white people on horseback surrounded them, dismounted, and fired upon them with pistols; that three women and a child had been thus killed, and the other female so severely wounded as to be unable to stand or be removed by them;’ they had saved themselves and the child, named ‘Uni bicqui-ang,’ by flight, who was brought to this place upon their shoulders.

“At daybreak yesterday I proceeded to the spot indicated, and there found the dead bodies of three women, and a male child about three years of age; and also found a

fourth woman dangerously wounded by gunshot wounds, and severely scorched on the limbs by the discharge of fire-arms.



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"Having proceeded to the station of the Messrs. Osbrey and Smith, distant about 700 yards from where the bodies were found, and requested the presence of those gentlemen as witnesses, I proceeded to view the bodies, upon which were found the wounds as set forth in the accompanying report.

"All knowledge of this barbarous transaction is denied by the proprietors, overseer, and servants at the home station, so near to which the bodies were found, nor have I as yet obtained any information which may lead to the discovery of the perpetrators of these murders.

"I have, *etc.*  
(Signed) "C. W. *Sieviewright.*"  
James Croke, Esq.,  
Crown Prosecutor,"  
*etc. etc. etc.*

Description of Gun-shot Wounds upon the bodies of three Aboriginal Women and One Male Child found dead, and an Aboriginal Woman found wounded in a tea-tree scrub, near the Station of Messrs. Osbrey and Smith, Portland District, upon the 25th of February, 1842, by Assistant-Protector Sieviewright.

"No. 1. Recognised by the assistant-protector as 'Wooi-goning,' wife of an Aboriginal native 'Pui-bui-gannei;' one gun-shot wound through the chest (a ball), and right thigh broken by a gun-shot wound (a ball).

"No. 2. Child (male); one gun-shot wound through the chest (a bullet), left thigh lacerated by some animal.

"No. 3. Woman big with child; one gun-shot wound through the chest (a bullet), left side scorched.

"No. 4. Woman; gun-shot wound through abdomen (a bullet), by right hip; gun-shot wound, left arm broken, (a bullet.)

"No. 5. Woman wounded; gun-shot wound in back (a ball), gun-shot through right hand (a ball).

"(Signed)  
"C. W. *Sieviewright.*"

[Note 48: The belief on the part of the Home authorities that such deeds did occur, and their opinion, so many years ago, regarding them, may be gathered from the following extract from a despatch from Lord Glenelg to Governor Sir James Stirling, dated 23rd of July, 1835. "I perceive, with deep concern, that collisions still exist between the colonists and the natives.

"It is impossible, however, to regard such conflicts without regret and anxiety, when we recollect how fatal, in too many instances, our colonial settlements have proved to the natives of the places where they have been formed.

"It will be your duty to impress upon the settlers that it is the determination of the Government to visit any act of injustice or violence on the natives, with the utmost severity, and that in no case will those convicted of them, remain unpunished. Nor will it be sufficient simply to punish the guilty, but ample compensation must be made to the injured party, for the wrong received. You will make it imperative upon the officers of police never to allow any injustice or insult in regard to the natives to pass by unnoticed, as being of too trifling a character; and they should be charged to report to you, with punctuality, every instance of aggression or misconduct. Every neglect of this point of duty you will mark with the highest displeasure."

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Such were the benevolent views entertained by the Government in England towards the Aborigines ten years ago, and it might be readily proved from many despatches of subsequent Secretaries of State to the different Governors, that such have been their feelings since, and yet how little has been done in ten years to give a practical effect to their good intentions towards the natives.]

Were other evidence necessary to substantiate this point, it would be only requisite to refer to the tone in which the natives are so often spoken of by the Colonial newspapers, to the fact that a large number of colonists in New South Wales, including many wealthy landed proprietors and magistrates, petitioned the Local Government on behalf of a party of convicts, found guilty on the clearest testimony of having committed one of the most wholesale, cold-blooded, and atrocious butcheries of the Aborigines ever recorded [Note 49 at end of para.], and to the acts of the Colonial Governments themselves, who have found it necessary, sometimes, to prohibit fire-arms at out-stations, and have been compelled to take away the assigned servants, or withdraw the depasturing licences of individuals, because they have been guilty of aggression upon the Aborigines.

[Note 49: Seven men were hanged for this offence, on the 18th of December, 1838. In the Sydney Monitor, published on the 24th or next issue after the occurrence, is the following paragraph:—

“The following conversation between two gentlemen took place in the military barrack square, on Tuesday, just after the execution of the seven murderers of the native blacks, and while General O’Connell was reviewing the troops of the garrison.

“*Country gentleman*.—So I find they have hanged these men.

“*Town gentleman*. —They have.”

“*Country gentleman*.—Ah! hem, we are going on a safer game now.

“*Town gentleman*. —Safer game! how do you mean?”

“*Country gentleman*.—Why, we are poisoning the blacks; which is much better, and serve them right too!”

“We vouch for the truth of this conversation, and for the very words; and will prove our statement, if public justice should, in our opinion require it.”

The following letter from His Honour the Superintendent of Port Philip shews, that even in 1843, suspicions were entertained in the colony, that this most horrible and inhuman cruelty towards the Aborigines had lately been practised there.

“Melbourne, 17th March, 1843.

“*Sir*,—I have the honour to report, for his Excellency’s information, that in the month of December last, I received a letter from the Chief Protector, enclosing a communication

received from Dr. Wotton, the gentleman in charge of the Aboriginal station at Mount Rouse, stating that a rumour had reached him that a considerable number of Aborigines had been poisoned at the station of Dr. Kilgour, near Port Fairy.

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"I delayed communicating this circumstance at the time, as I expected the Chief Protector and his assistants would find it practicable to bring the crime home to the parties accused of having perpetrated it; but I regret to state, that every attempt to discover the guilty parties has hitherto proved ineffectual, and that although there may be strong grounds of suspicion that such a deed had been perpetrated, and that certain known parties in this district were the perpetrators, yet it seems nearly impossible to obtain any legal proof to bear on either one point or the other.

"I beg leave to enclose copies of two communications which I have received from Mr. Robinson on the subject.

"I have, *etc.*

"(Signed)

"C. J. Latrobe."

"The Honourable the Colonial Secretary,  
*etc. etc. etc.*"

Rumours of another similar occurrence existed in the settlements north of Sydney, about the same time. To the inquiries made on the subject, by the Government, the following letters refer.

"Moreton Bay, Zion's Hill, 14th January 1843.

"Sir,—In reply to your inquiry respecting the grounds on which I made mention in my journal, kept during a visit to the Bunga Bunga country, of a considerable number of blacks having been poisoned in the northern part of this district, I beg leave to state, that having returned from Sydney in the month of March 1842, I learnt, first, by my coadjutor, the Rev. Mr. Epper, that such a rumour was spreading, of which I have good reason to believe also his Excellency the Governor was informed during his stay at Moreton Bay. I learnt, secondly, by the lay missionaries, Messrs. Nique and Rode, who returned from an excursion to "Umpie-boang" in the first week of April, that natives of different tribes, who were collecting from the north for a fight, had related the same thing to them as a fact. Messrs. Nique and Rode have made this statement also in their diary, which is laid before our committee in Sydney. I learnt, thirdly, by the runaway Davis, when collecting words and phrases of the northern dialect from him, previous to my expedition to the Bunga Bunga country, that there was not the least doubt but such a deed had been done, and moreover that the relatives of the poisoned blacks, being in great fury, were going to revenge themselves. Davis considered it, therefore, exceedingly dangerous for us to proceed to the north, mentioning at the same time, that two white men had already been killed by blacks in consequence of poisoning. I ascertained likewise from him the number, 50 or 60.

"When inquiring of him whether he had not reported this fact to yourself, he replied, that both he, himself, and Bracewell, the other runaway, whom Mr. Petrie had brought back

from the Wide Bay, had done so, and that you had stated it fully in your report to his Excellency the Governor, respecting himself and Bracewell.

“4. The natives who had carried our provisions up to Mr. Archer’s station, made the same statement to us, as a reason why they would not accompany us any farther to the Bunga Bunga country.



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"When writing down, therefore, my journal, I considered it unnecessary to make a full statement of all that had come to my knowledge since the month of March, concerning that most horrid event, or even to relate it as something new, as it was not only known several months since to the respective authorities, but also as almost every one at Moreton Bay supposed that an investigation would take place without delay.

"I have, etc.

"(signed) *William Schmidt*,

"Missionary." "S. Simpson, Esq.,

"Commissioner of Crown Lands,

"Eagle Farm."

"WOOGAROO, *Moreton bay*, 6th may, 1843.

"Sir,—I have the honour to report, for the information of his Excellency, that during my excursion to the Bunga country, I have taken every opportunity of instituting an inquiry as to the truth of the alleged poisoning of some Aborigines at a sheep station in the north of this district. A report of the kind certainly exists among the two tribes I fell in with, namely, the Dallambarah and Coccombraral tribes, but as neither of them were present at the time, they could give me no circumstantial information whatever on the subject. The Giggabarah tribe, the one said to have suffered, I was unable to meet with. Upon inquiry at the stations to the north, I could learn nothing further than that they had been using arsenic very extensively for the cure of the scab, in which operation sheep are occasionally destroyed by some of the fluid getting down their throats; and as the men employed frequently neglect to bury the carcasses, it is very possible that the Aborigines may have devoured them, particularly the entrails, which they are very fond of, and that hence some accident of the kind alluded to may have occurred without their knowledge.

"I have, etc.

"(signed) *S. Simpson*,

"Commissioner of Crown Lands."

"The Honourable E. D. Thomson,

"Colonial Secretary."

For the sake of humanity I would hope that such unheard of atrocities cannot really have existed. That the bare suspicion even of such crimes should have originated and gained currency in more than one district of Australia, is of itself a fearful indication of the feeling among the lowest classes in the colonies, and of the harrowing deeds to which that might lead.

Extract from South Australian Registe, 10th of July, 1841, after the return of Major O'Halloran and a party of sixty-eight individuals, sent up the Murray to try and rescue

property stolen by blacks. "In the mean time we cannot but think that the *disappointment so generally expressed*, because Major O'Halloran has returned '*without firing A shot*,' is somewhat unreasonable, seeing that in his presence the natives *did nothing to warrant an extreme measure*, and that there were no means of identifying either



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the robbers of Mr. Inman, or the murderers of Mr. Langhorne's servants. It is quite clear that a legally authorised English force could not be permitted to fire indiscriminately upon the natives *as some persons think* they ought to have done, or to fire at all, save when attacked, or under circumstances in which any white subject of the Queen might be shot at. We *know* that many overland parties *have not hesitated to fire at the natives wherever they appeared*; and it is possible that the tribes now hostilely disposed may have received some provocation.”]

The following extract from a letter addressed by the Chief Protector of the Port Phillip district, Mr. Robinson, to his Honour the Superintendent at Melbourne, shews that officer's opinion of the feeling of the lower class of the settlers' servants, with regard to the Aborigines in Australia Felix.

“Anterior to my last expedition I had seen a large portion of this province; I have now seen nearly the entire, and, in addition, have made myself thoroughly acquainted with the character of its inhabitants.

“The settlers are, for the most part, a highly respectable body of men, many, to my knowledge, deeply commiserating the condition of the natives; a few have been engaged in the work of their amelioration; these, however, are but isolated instances; the majority are averse to having the natives, and drive them from their runs.

“Nothing could afford me greater pleasure than to see a reciprocity of interest established between the settler and aborigine, and it would delight me to see the settlers engaged in the great work of their amelioration; and though on the part of the settlers, a large majority would readily engage, I nevertheless feel persuaded that, until a better class of peasantry be introduced, and a code of judicature suited to the condition of the natives, its practicability, as a general principle, is unattainable.

“In the course of my wanderings through the distant interior, I found it necessary, in order to arrive at a correct judgment, to observe the relative character of both classes, i. e. the European and the Aborigine. The difficulty on the part of the Aborigine by proper management can be overcome; but the difficulty on the part of the depraved white man is of far different character, and such as to require that either their place should be supplied by a more honest and industrious peasantry, or that a more suitable code of judicature be established, to restrain their nefarious proceedings with reference to the aboriginal natives.

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"I found, on my last expedition, that a large majority of the white servants employed at the stock stations in the distant interior were, for the most part, men of depraved character; and it was with deep regret that I observed that they were all armed; and in the estimation of some of these characters, with whom I conversed, I found that the life of a native was considered to be of no more value than that of a wild dog. The settlers complained generally of the bad character of their men. The saying is common among them, 'That the men and not we are the masters.' The kind of treatment evinced towards the aboriginal natives in remote parts of the interior by this class of persons, may be easily imagined; but as I shall have occasion more fully to advert to this topic in the report I am about to transmit to the Government, I shall defer for the present offering further observations.

"The bad character of the white servants is a reason assigned by many settlers for keeping the natives from their stations. At a few establishments, *viz.* Norman M'Leod's, Baillie's, Campbell's, Lenton's, and Urquhart's, an amicable and friendly relation has been maintained for several years; the Aborigines are employed and found useful. I visited these stations; and the proprietors assured me the natives had never done them any injury; the natives also spoke in high terms of these parties. There are other settlers also who have rendered assistance in improving the condition of the natives, and to whom I shall advert in my next report.

"Whether the proprietors of these establishments devote more attention, or whether their white servants are of less nefarious character than others, I am not prepared to say; but the facts I have stated are incontrovertible, and are sufficient to shew the reclaimability of the natives, when proper persons are engaged, and suitable means had recourse to. I cannot but accede to the proposition, namely, that of holding out inducements to all who engage in the amelioration of the aboriginal natives. Those who have had experience, who have been tried and found useful, ought to have such inducements held out to them as would ensure a continuance of their appointments, the more especially as it has always been found difficult to obtain suitable persons for this hazardous and peculiar service."

The following extract from another letter, also addressed to his Honour the Superintendent, shews the opinions and feelings of the writer, a Magistrate of the Colony, and a Commissioner of Crown Lands, in the Geelong district.

"In offering my candid opinion, I submissively beg leave to state, that for the last three years, on all occasions, I have been a friend to the natives; but from my general knowledge of their habits of idleness, extreme cunning, vice, and villany, that it is out of the power of all exertion that can be bestowed on them to do good by them; and I further beg leave to state, that I can plainly see the general conduct of the native growing worse, and, if possible, more useless, and daily more daring. One and all appear to consider that no punishment awaits them. This idea has latterly been instilled

into their minds with, I should think, considerable pains, and also that the white men should be punished for the least offence.

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"In reply to the latter part of your letter, I beg leave to bring to your notice that, at considerable risk, two years ago, I apprehended a native for the murder of one of Mr. Learmonth's men, near Bunengang. He was committed to Sydney gaol, and at the expiration of a year he was returned to Melbourne to be liberated, and is now at large. In the case of Mr. Thomson's, that I apprehended two, and both identified by the men who so fortunately escaped. It is a difficult thing to apprehend natives, and with great risk of life on both sides. On the Grange, and many parts of the country, it would be impossible to take them; *and in my opinion*, the only plan to bring them to a fit and proper state is to insist on the gentlemen in the country to protect their property, *and to deal with such useless savages on the spot.*"

Captain Grey bears testimony to similar feelings and occurrences in Western Australia. In speaking of capturing some natives, he says, vol. 2. p. 351. "It was necessary that I should proceed with great caution, in order not to alarm the guilty parties when they saw us approaching, in which case, I should have had no chance of apprehending them, and I did not intend to adopt the popular system of shooting them when they ran away." And again, at page 356, he says, "It was better that I, an impartial person, should see that they were properly punished for theft, than that the Europeans should fire indiscriminately upon them, as had lately been done, in another quarter."

Even in South Australia, where the Colonists have generally been more concentrated, and where it might naturally be supposed there would be less likelihood of offenders of this kind escaping detection and punishment, there are not wanting instances of unnecessary and unprovoked, and sometimes of wanton injury upon the natives. In almost all cases of this description, it is quite impracticable from the inadmissibility of native evidence, or from some other circumstances, to bring home conviction to the guilty. [Note 50 at end of para.] On the other hand, where natives commit offences against Europeans, if they can be caught, the punishment is certain and severe. Already since the establishment of South Australia as a colony, six natives have been tried and hung, for crimes against Europeans, and many others have been shot or wounded, by the police and military in their attempts to capture or prevent their escape. No European has, however, yet paid the penalties of the law, for aggressions upon the Aborigines, though many have deserved to do so. The difficulty consists in legally bringing home the offence, or in refuting the absurd stories that are generally made up in justification of it.

[Note 50: Vide Chapter 9, of Notes on the Aborigines.]

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A single instance or two will be sufficient, in illustration of the impunity which generally attends these acts of violence. On the 25th January, 1843, the sheep at a station of Mr. Hughes, upon the Hutt river, had been scattered during the night, and some of them were missing. It was concluded the natives had been there, and taken them, as the tracks of naked feet were said to have been found near the folds. Upon these grounds two of Mr. Hughes' men, and one belonging to Mr. Jacobs, another settler in the neighbourhood, took arms, and went out to search for the natives. About a mile from the station they met with one native and his wife, whom they asked to accompany them back to the station, promising bread and flour for so doing. They consented to go, but were then escorted *as prisoners*, the two men of Mr. Hughes' guarding the male native, and Mr. Jacobs' servant (a person named Gregory) the female. Naturally alarmed at the predicament they were in, the man ran off, pursued by his two guards, but escaped. The woman took another direction, pursued by Gregory, who recaptured her, and she was said to have then seized Gregory's gun, and to have struck at him several blows with a heavy stick, upon which, being afraid that he would be overcome, *he shot her*. Mr. Hughes, the owner of the lost sheep, came up a few moments after the woman was shot, and heard Gregory's story concerning it, but no marks of his receiving any blows were shewn. On the 23rd of March, he was tried for the offence of manslaughter; there did not appear the slightest extenuating circumstances beyond his own story, and his master giving him a good character, and yet the jury, without retiring, returned a verdict of Not Guilty!

At the very next sittings of the Supreme Court Criminal Sessions, another and somewhat analogous case appeared. The following remarks were made by His Honour Judge Cooper, to the Grand Jury respecting it: "There was also a case of manslaughter to be tried, and he called their attention to this, because it did not appear in the Calendar. The person charged was named Skelton, and as appeared from the depositions, was in custody of some sheep, when an alarm of the rushing of the sheep being given, he looked and saw something climbing over the fence, and subsequently something crawling along the ground, upon which he fired off his piece, and hit the object, which upon examination turned out to be a native. The night was dark, and the native was brought into the hut, where he died the next day. He could not help observing, that cases of this kind were much more frequent than was creditable to the reputation of the Colony. Last Sessions a man was tried and acquitted of the charge of killing a native woman. That verdict was a very merciful one, but not so merciful, he trusted, as to countenance the idea that the lives of the natives are held too cheaply. The only observation that he would make upon this case was, that it was *one of great suspicion*."

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[Note 51: I believe this case was not brought to trial.]

Other cases have occurred in which some of the circumstances have come under my own notice, and when Europeans have committed wanton aggressions on the Aborigines, and have then made up a plausible story to account for what had taken place, but where, from obvious circumstances, it was quite impossible to disprove or rebut their tale, however improbable it might be. In the Port Phillip District in 1841, Mr. Chief Protector thus writes to the local Government.

“Already appalling collisions have happened between the white and aboriginal inhabitants, and, although instances, it is possible, have transpired when natives have been the aggressors, yet it will be found that the largest majority originated with the Europeans. The lives of aboriginal natives known to have been destroyed are many, and if the testimony of natives be admissible, the amount would be great indeed; but even in cases where the Aborigines are said to be the aggressors, who can tell what latent provocation existed for perpetrating it? Of the numerous cases that could be cited, the following from a recent journal of an assistant protector, Mr. Parker, of the Lodden, will suffice to shew the insurmountable difficulty, I may add the impossibility, of bringing the guilty parties to justice, for in nine cases, I may say, out of ten, where natives are concerned, the only evidence that can be adduced is that of the Aborigines.

“This evidence is not admissible. Indeed the want of a code, suited to the Aborigines, is now so strongly felt, and of such vital importance to the welfare and existence of the natives, that I earnestly trust that this important subject may be brought under the early consideration and notice of Her Majesty’s Government.

“The following is the extract from Mr. Parker’s journal referred to: ‘On the 8th of March 1841, I proceeded to the Pyrenees to investigate the circumstances connected with the slaughter of several Aborigines, by a Mr. Frances. On the 9th and 10th I fell in with different parties of natives. From the last of these I obtained some distressing statements, as to the slaughter of the blacks; they gave me the names of seven individuals shot by Mr. Frances within the last six months. I found, however, no legal evidence attainable. The only persons present in the last and most serious affair with the Aborigines, which took place in December of last year, were Frances, a person named Downes, and a stock-keeper in Melbourne. No other admissible evidence of the death of these poor people can be obtained than what Frances’s written statement conveys. In that he reports that he and the person before named *went out in consequence of seeing the bush on fire, and fell in suddenly with some natives, on whom they*

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*fired and killed four.* The natives say six were slain, and their information on that point is more to be depended on. Owing to the legal disabilities of the Aborigines, this case must be added with many others which have passed without judicial notice. I cannot, however, but wish that squatting licenses were withheld from persons who manifest such an utter disregard of human life as Mr. Frances, even on his own shewing, has done.'

"And in this latter sentiment, under existing circumstances, I most cordially agree. In Frances' case, the *perpetrator admits* his having *shot four aborigines*, and for aught that is shewn to the contrary, it was *an unprovoked aggression*. The natives, whose testimony Mr. Parker states, can be relied upon, affirm that six were slain, and these within the brief period of six months.

"In my last expedition I visited the country of the 'Barconedeets,' the tribe attacked by Frances; of these I found a few sojourning with the "Portbullucs," a people inhabiting the country near Mount Zero, the northernmost point of the Grampians. These persons complained greatly of the treatment they had received, and confirmed the statement made to the sub-protector by the other natives. The following are a few of the collisions, from authentic documents brought under the notice of this department, that have happened between settlers and Aborigines, and are respectfully submitted for the information of the Government.

"*Cases.—Charles wedge and others.*—Five natives killed and others wounded at the Grampians.

"*Aylward and others.*—Several natives killed and others wounded at the Grampians. In this case Aylward deposed, 'that there must have been a great many wounded and several killed, as he saw blood upon the grass, and in the tea-tree two or three dead bodies.'

"*Messrs. WHYTE'S first collision.*—William Whyte deposed that 30 natives were present, and they were all killed but two, and one of these it is reported died an hour after of his wounds.

"*DARLOT.*—One native shot. Two natives shot near Portland Bay by the servants of the Messrs. Henty.

"*Hutton and mounted police.*—The written report of this case states, 'that the party overtook the aborigines at the junction of the 'Campaspee;' they fired, and it is stated, that to the best of the belief of the party, five or six were killed.' In the opinion of the sub-protector a greater number were slain.

"*Messrs. Winter and others.*—On this occasion five natives were killed.

“One black shot by Frances.

“*Munroe and police.*—Two blacks shot and others wounded.

“The following from Lloyd’s deposition:—‘We fired on them; I have no doubt some were killed; there were between forty and fifty natives.’



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*"By persons unknown.—A native of the Coligan tribe killed by white persons.*

*"Messrs. Wedge and others.—Three natives killed and others wounded.*

*"Names of Taylor and Lloyd are mentioned as having shot a black at Lake Colac.*

*"WHYTE'S second collision.—ALLAN'S case.—Two natives shot.*

*"Taylor was overseer of a sheep station in the Western district, and was notorious for killing natives. No legal evidence could be obtained against this nefarious individual. The last transaction in which he was concerned, was of so atrocious a nature, that he thought fit to abscond, and he has not been heard of since. No legal evidence was attainable in this latter case. There is no doubt the charges preferred were true, for in the course of my inquiries on my late expedition, I found a tribe, a section of the Jarcoorts, totally extinct, and it was affirmed by the natives that Taylor had destroyed them. The tribes are rapidly diminishing. The 'Coligans,' once a numerous and powerful people, inhabiting the fertile region of Lake 'Colac,' are now reduced, all ages and sexes, under forty, and these are still on the decay. The Jarcoorts, inhabiting the country to the west of the great lake 'Carangermite,' once a very numerous and powerful people, are now reduced to under sixty. But time would fail, and I fear it would be deemed too prolix, were I to attempt to particularise in ever so small a degree, the previous state, condition, and declension of the original inhabitants of so extensive a province."*

Upon the same subject, His Honour the Superintendent of Port Phillip thus writes:—

*"On this subject, I beg leave to remark that great impediments evidently do interpose themselves in the way of instituting proper judicial inquiry into the causes and consequences of the frequent acts of collision between the settlers and the aboriginal natives, and into the conduct of the settlers on such occasions. I am quite ready to lament with the Protectors, that numerous as the cases have unfortunately been in which the lives of the Aborigines have been taken in this district, in no single instance has the settler been brought before the proper tribunal."*

Many similar instances might be adduced to shew the little chance there is of evidence enough being procurable, even to cause the aggressor to be put upon his trial, still less to produce his conviction.

Independently of the instances of wanton outrage, which sometimes are perpetrated on the outskirts of the settled districts by the lowest and most abandoned of our countrymen, there are occasions also, when equal injuries are inflicted unintentionally, from inexperience or indiscretion, on the part of those whose duty it is to protect rather than destroy, when the innocent have been punished instead of the guilty [Note 52 at

end of para.], and thus the very efforts made to preserve peace and good order, have inadvertently become the means of subverting them.

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[Note 52: Upon collisions of this character, Lord John Russell remarks in his despatch, 21st December, 1839, to Sir G. Gipps: "In the case now before me the object of capturing offenders was entirely lost sight of, and shots were fired at men who were apparently only guilty of jumping into the water to escape from an armed pursuit. I am, however, happy to acknowledge that you appear to have made every practicable exertion for the prevention of similar calamities in future, and I approve the measures adopted by you for that purpose. You cannot overrate the solicitude of Her Majesty's Government on the subject of the Aborigines of New Holland. It is impossible to contemplate the condition and the prospects of that unfortunate race without the deepest commiseration. I am well aware of the many difficulties which oppose themselves to the effectual protection of these people, and especially of those which must originate from the exasperation of the settlers, on account of aggressions on their property, which are not the less irritating, because they are nothing else than the natural results of the pernicious examples held out to the Aborigines, and of the many wrongs of which they have been the victims. Still it is impossible that the Government should forget that the original aggression was our own; and that we have never yet performed the sacred duty of making any systematic or considerable attempt to impart to the former occupiers of New South Wales, the blessings of Christianity, or the knowledge of the arts and advantages of civilized life."]

Several very lamentable instances of this kind, have occurred in Port Lincoln. The following is one among others. Soon after the murder of Messrs. Biddle and Brown, a party of soldiers was sent over to try and capture the aggressors. In one of their attempts a native guide was procured from the Eastern tribe, who promised to conduct them to where the murderers were. The party consisting of the military and their officer, the police, a settler, and the missionary, in all twelve or fourteen persons, set off towards Coffin's Bay, following as they supposed upon the track of the murders. Upon reaching the coast some natives were seen fishing in the water, and the party was at once spread out in a kind of semicircle, among the scrub, to close upon and capture them; the officer, missionary, and guide, being stationed near the centre. As the party advanced nearer, the guide saw that he was mistaken in the group before him, and that they were not the guilty parties, but friends. The officer called out not to fire, but unfortunately from the distance the men were at, and the scrubby nature of the country, he was not heard or attended to. A shot was fired, one of the natives sprung up convulsively in the water, walked on shore and fell down, exclaiming whilst dying, "me Kopler, me good man," and such indeed it proved. He was one of a friendly tribe, and a particular protege of the missionary's, having taken the name of Kopler from his German servant who was so called.

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The other natives at once came forward to their dying friend, scornfully motioning away his murderers, fearless alike of the foes around them, and regardless of their ill-timed attempts to explain the fatal mistake. Will it be credited, that at such a scene as this the soldiers were indulging in coarse remarks, or brutal jests, upon the melancholy catastrophe; and comparing the last convulsive spring of the dying man to a salmon leaping in the water. Yet this I was assured was the case by the Government Resident at Port Lincoln, from when I received this account.

Another melancholy and unfortunate case of the same nature occurred at Port Lincoln, on the 11th of April, 1844, where a native was shot by a policeman, for attempting to escape from custody, when taken in charge on suspicion of being implicated in robbing a stranded vessel. An investigation was made into this case by the Commissioner of Police, when it was stated in the depositions, that attempts at rescue were made by the other natives. Upon these grounds, I believe, it was considered that the policeman was justified in what he did.

The following extract relating to this subject, is from a letter addressed to a gentleman in Adelaide, by the Rev. C. Schurmann, one of the German Missionaries, who has for some years past been stationed among the Port Lincoln natives, and is intimately acquainted with their language.

[Note 53: Without adopting the tone of this letter, and which in some respects I cannot approve of, I believe the writer to be deeply interested in the welfare of the Aborigines, and strongly impressed with a conviction of the evils and injuries to which they are subject from our anomalous position with regard to them. I have quoted it, therefore, not for the purpose of casting imputations on the Government, but to shew how powerless they are, and how frequently, under the existing system in force with respect to the Aborigines, those very measures which were conceived and entered upon with the best intentions, produce in their result the most unmitigated evils.]

“You will probably recollect, that some time ago (I think it was in the month of May) the Adelaide newspapers contained a short notice of a Port Lincoln native having been shot by the police in self-defence, and a letter in the ‘Observer,’ mentioned another as being shot by Mr.—, but as the charitable correspondent added, ‘Unfortunately only in the arm, instead of through the body.’ From these statements one would infer that the parties concerned in these transactions were without blame, being perfectly justified—the one to protect his life, and the other his property. However, since my return to Port Lincoln, I have learned that both tales run very differently when told according to truth. I address myself, therefore, to you, with the true facts of the transactions, as I have learned them. partly from the settlers themselves, partly from the natives. My motive for so doing is to case my own mind, and to gratify the interest which I know you take in the Aborigines of this country.

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"The man shot by the police was named Padlalta, and was of so mild and inoffensive a disposition, that he was generally noticed by the settlers on that very account, several of whom I have heard say since, it was a pity that some other native had not been hit in his stead. The same man was captured last year by Major O'llalloran's party, but was set at liberty as soon as I came up and testified his innocence, for which the poor fellow kissed my hand near a dozen times.

"The day before he met his death he was as usual in the town, doing little jobs for the inhabitants, to get bread or other food. On the evening when he was killed, he had encamped with about half a dozen other natives on the northern side of Happy Valley, a short mile from the town. The police who were sent by the Government Resident to see what number of natives were at the camp state, that while searching the man's wallet, he seized hold of one gun, and when the other policeman came up to wrest it from him, he the native grasped the other gun too. In the scuffle that ensued, one of the guns went off, when the other natives who had fled returned and presented their spears. They then shot the native who held the gun.

"Now this statement is a very strange one, when it is considered that the native was a very spare and weak man, so that either of the police ought to have been able to keep him at arm's length; but to say that he seized both their guns is beyond all credibility. The natives were sitting down when the police arrived. How they could therefore find a wallet upon the murdered man, I cannot conceive; since the natives never have their wallets slung, except when moving; and it certainly is not probable, that the man, in spite of the fright he is admitted to have been in, should have thought of taking up his wallet.

"The wallet is said to have contained some sovereigns, taken from the cutter Kate, which was wrecked some time previous to this affair, about forty miles up the coast, and to have been one of those marked by the police, at a native camp near the wreck from which the natives had been scared away, leaving all their things behind. But if the murdered native had taken the sovereigns, why were they not then in his wallet, or why was the wallet not examined the day before when he was in town? [Note 54 at end of para.] I think that there is little doubt that the police found no wallet at all upon the native, and that they coined away one of those found at the camp upon him, with a view to incriminate him."

[Note 54: There cannot be a greater act of injustice towards the natives than that of applying the English law to them with respect to stolen property. Any one who knows any thing of their habits, and the custom prevalent amongst them, of giving any European clothing, or other articles they may acquire, from one to another, must be fully aware how little the fact of their being found in possession of stolen property is just evidence against them. Articles such as I have mentioned, often pass, in a very short time, through the hands of three or four individuals, and perhaps even through as many tribes.]

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“Another native, Charley, who was present when the said affair took place, tells me, that the police sneaked upon, and fired at them, while sitting round the fire; [Note 55 at end of para.] that he jumped up, and endeavoured to make himself known, as a friendly native, by saying, “Yarri (that is the name the natives have given to one of the police), Yarri, I Charley, I Charley,”—but that the effect produced had been the pointing of a gun at him, when of course he ran away. That any of the natives returned, and poised their spears, he firmly denies; but accounts for the murder, by supposing that the dead man made resistance, and offered to spear his assailants. He moreover says, that Padlalta would not have died in consequence of the first shot, but that the police fired repeatedly, which agrees with the settlers, who say they heard three shots. When the bloody deed had been committed (a ball had passed right through his body), the cruel perpetrators ran home, leaving the murdered man helpless.”

[Note 55: There must, I think, be some mistake here in the phrascology. I cannot think any of the police would fire upon a small party of friendly natives whilst unresisting. The probability is, that they surrounded the natives to make prisoners, and fired upon being resisted. This must generally occur if the police have positive orders to make captures. Natives, not very much in contact with Europeans, will almost always resist an attempt to make prisoners of them, or will try to escape. Very many have, at various times, met their death under such circumstances; and too often it has occurred, that the innocent have been the suffering parties. This shews the absurdity of applying European customs and laws to a people situated as the Australian natives are. It shews, too, the necessity of altering our present system and policy towards them, to one that will exercise sufficient influence over them to induce them to give up offenders themselves. I believe such a system may be devised.—Vide Chapter IX.]

“Some time after, a party of three settlers went to the spot, one of whom he recognized, and claimed his acquaintance, and perhaps assistance, by mentioning the party’s Christian name; but, alas! no good Samaritan was found amongst these three; they all passed by on the other side, without alleviating his pain, moistening his parched lips, warming his shivering limbs, or aiding him in any way whatever. There he lay a whole cold and long winter night, without a fire to warm him, or a soul to talk to him. Next morning he was found still alive, but died on the way into town, where he was buried in the jail yard, like a condemned felon.

“What awful and melancholy reflections crowd upon one’s mind in thinking on this transaction. But what conclusions must a poor people, whom a Christian and civilized nation calls savages, arrive at, with such facts before them.

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“The other native, wounded by Mr.—in the arm, was doubtless of the party who attacked the flock; but it must have been some hours after that he was shot, for the shepherd had to come home with the flock to inform him of the occurrence, and then search and pursuit had to be made, during which he was overtaken. He is a stupid idiotic sort of man, so that the natives have not deemed him worthy of receiving the honours of their ceremonies, and still call him a boy, or youth, although he is an oldish man.

“On another occasion, when an uninhabited hut, with some wheat in it, had been broken into by some unknown natives, a party went in search of the offenders. It was night when they came on a camp, on the opposite side of the lake to where the hut stands; the natives, acting upon the first impulse, and warned by frequent examples, ran away, when two of the party snapped their pieces, but providentially both guns missed fire. The natives, however, soon took confidence, and returned, when it was found that two of the most orderly and useful men would have been shot if the guns had gone off. The party took upon themselves to make one of them prisoner, but of course did not venture to bring him before the magistrate.

“These facts incontestably prove, that, notwithstanding the Aborigines are called British subjects, and in spite of the so-called protection system, there is no shadow of protection for them, while they are debarred from the first and most important of all liberties, namely, that of being heard in a Court of civil Justice.

“Several instances have occurred during my residence in this district, in which natives have been arraigned before the administrators of the law, although I was morally convinced of their innocence; in other cases, they have sought redress through me, for wanton attacks on their person and lives, without being listened to.

“Only a few weeks ago a native was very nearly being taken up, on the charge of having thrown a spear at Mr. Smith’s shepherd, without, however, any felonious intent, the distance being too great. This circumstance saved the man, or else he would, no doubt, have been tried and found guilty on the shepherd’s evidence, who would not allow that he could be mistaken in the individual, although the accused native came boldly into town and court (a circumstance that has never before occurred since I have known these natives), although he was an intimate friend of the shepherd and his wife; and although all the other natives could prove where he had been at the time of the attack on the flock, and state who were the guilty parties.

“For those who have had an opportunity of observing the Aborigines in their original state, it is not very difficult to distinguish the guilty from the innocent, for they are a simple-minded race, little skilled in the arts of dissimulation.



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"It is bad enough that a great part of the colonists are inimical to the natives; it is worse that the law, as it stands at present, does not extend its protection to them; but it is too bad when the press lends its influence to their destruction. Such, however, is undoubtedly the case. When Messrs. Biddle and Brown were murdered, the newspapers entertained their readers week after week with the details of the bloody massacre, heaping a profusion of vile epithets upon the perpetrators. But of the slaughter by the soldiers, (who killed no less than four innocent natives, while they captured not one guilty party), among the tribes who had had nothing to do with the murders—of the treachery of attacking in the darkness of the night, a tribe who had the day before been hunting kangaroo with their informers, when one of the former guides to the magistrates' pursuing party was killed amongst others; of the wanton outrage on the mutilated body of one of the victims;—of these things the press was as silent as the grave."

Without attempting to enlarge more fully upon the subjects entered upon in the preceding pages, I trust that I have sufficiently shewn that the character of the Australian natives has been greatly misrepresented and maligned, that they are not naturally more irreclaimably vicious, revengeful, or treacherous than other nations, but on the contrary, that their position with regard to Europeans, places them under so many disadvantages, subjects them to so many injuries, irritates them with so many annoyances, and tempts them with so many provocations, that it is a matter of surprise, not that they sometimes are guilty of crime, but that they commit it so rarely.

If I have in the least degree succeeded in establishing that such is the case, it must be evident that it is incumbent upon us not only to make allowances when pronouncing an opinion on the character or the crimes of the Aborigines; but what is of far greater and more vital importance, as far as they are concerned, to endeavour to revise and improve such parts of our system and policy towards them as are defective, and by better adapting these to the peculiar circumstances of this people, at once place them upon juster and more equal terms, and thus excite a reasonable hope that some eventual amelioration may be produced, both in their moral and physical condition.

[Note 56: "We say distinctly and deliberately that nothing comparatively has yet been done—that the natives have hitherto acquired nothing of European civilization, but European vices and diseases, and that the speedy extinction of the whole race is inevitable, save by the introduction of means for their civilization on a scale much more comprehensive and effectual than any yet adopted."—Leading Article in South Australian Register, 1st August, 1840.]

I shall now proceed to give an account of the appearance, habits, mode of life, means of subsistence, social relations, government, ceremonies, superstitions, numbers, languages, *etc. etc.* of the natives of Australia, so as to afford some insight into the character and circumstances of this peculiar race, to exhibit the means hitherto adopted



for, and the progress made in attempting, their civilization, and to shew the effects produced upon them by a contact with Europeans.

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## Chapter II.

### **PHYSICAL APPEARANCE—DRESS—CHARACTER—HABITS OF LIFE— MEETINGS OF TRIBES—WARS—DANCES—SONGS.**

The Aborigines of Australia, with whom Europeans have come in contact, present a striking similarity to each other in physical appearance and structure; and also in their general character, habits, and pursuits. Any difference that is found to exist is only the consequence of local circumstances or influences, and such as might naturally be expected to be met with among a people spread over such an immense extent of country. Compared with other aboriginal races, scattered over the face of the globe, the New Hollander appears to stand alone.

The male is well built and muscular, averaging from five to six feet in height, with proportionate upper and lower extremities. The anterior lobes of the brain are fairly developed, so as to give a facial angle, far from being one of the most acute to be found amongst the black races. The eyes are sunk, the nose is flattened, and the mouth wide. The lips are rather thick, and the teeth generally very perfect and beautiful, though the dental arrangement is sometimes singular, as no difference exists in many between the incisor and canine teeth. The neck is short, and sometimes thick, and the heel resembles that of Europeans. The ankles and wrists are frequently small, as are also the hands and feet. The latter are well formed and expanded, but the calves of the legs are generally deficient. Some of the natives in the upper districts of the Murray, are, however, well formed in this respect. In a few instances, natives attain to a considerable corpulency. The men have fine broad and deep chests, indicating great bodily strength, and are remarkably erect and upright in their carriage, with much natural grace and dignity of demeanour. The eye is generally large, black, and expressive, with the eye-lashes long.

When met with for the first time in his native wilds there is frequently a fearless intrepidity of manner, an ingenuous openness of look, and a propriety of behaviour about the aboriginal inhabitant of Australia, which makes his appearance peculiarly prepossessing.

In the female the average height is about five feet, or perhaps a little under. The anterior part of the brain is more limited than in the male; the apex of the head is carried further back; the facial angle is more acute; and the extremities are more attenuated. The latter circumstance may probably be accounted for from the fact, that the females have to endure, from a very early age, a great degree of hardship, privation, and ill-treatment. Like most other savages the Australian looks upon his wife as a slave. To her belongs the duty of collecting and preparing the daily food, of making the camp or hut for the night, of gathering and bringing in firewood, and of procuring water. She must also attend to the children; and in travelling carry all the moveable

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property and frequently the weapons of her husband. In wet weather she attends to all the outside work, whilst her lord and master is snugly seated at the fire. If there is a scarcity of food she has to endure the pangs of hunger, often, perhaps, in addition to ill-treatment or abuse. No wonder, then, that the females, and especially the younger ones, (for it is then they are exposed to the greatest hardships,) are not so fully or so roundly developed in person as the men. Yet under all these disadvantages this deficiency does not always exist. Occasionally, though rarely, I have met with females in the bloom of youth, whose well-proportioned limbs and symmetry of figure might have formed a model for the sculptor's chisel. In personal appearance the females are, except in early youth, very far inferior to the men. When young, however, they are not uninteresting. The jet-black eyes, shaded by their long, dark lashes, and the delicate and scarcely-formed features of incipient womanhood give a soft and pleasing expression to a countenance that might often be called good-looking—occasionally even pretty.

The colour of the skin, both in the male and female, is generally black, or very darkly tinged. The hair is either straight or curly, but never approaching to the woolliness of the negro. It is usually worn short by both sexes, and is variously ornamented at different periods of life. Sometimes it is smeared with red ochre and grease; at other times adorned with tufts of feathers, the tail of the native dog, kangaroo teeth, and bandages or nets of different kinds.

[Note 57: The same fondness for red paint, ornaments of skins, tufts of feathers, *etc.*, is noticed by Catlin as prevalent among the American Indians, and by Dieffenbach as existing among the New Zealanders.]

When the head of the native is washed clean, and purified from the odour of the filthy pigment with which it is bedaubed, the crop of hair is very abundant, and the appearance of it beautiful, being a silken, glossy, and curly black. Great pains are, however, used to destroy or mar this striking ornament of nature.

Without the slightest pride of appearance, so far as neatness or cleanliness is concerned, the natives are yet very vain of their own rude decorations, which are all worn for *effect*. A few feathers or teeth, a belt or band, a necklace made of the hollow stem of some plant, with a few coarse daubs of red or white paint, and a smearing of grease, complete the toilette of the boudoir or the ball-room. Like the scenery of a panorama, they are then seen to most advantage at a distance; for if approached too closely, they forcibly remind us of the truth of the expression of the poet, that "nature unadorned is adorned the most."

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The body dress is simple; consisting of the skins of the opossum, the kangaroo, or the wallaby, when they can be procured. A single garment only is used, made in the form of an oblong cloak, or coverlet; by the skins being stretched out and dried in the sun, and then sewn together with the sinews of the emu, *etc.* The size of the cloak varies according to the industry of the maker, or the season of the year. The largest sized ones are about six feet square, but the natives frequently content themselves with one not half this size, and in many cases are without it altogether. The cloak is worn with the fur side outwards, and is thrown over the back and left shoulder, and pinned on in front with a little wooden peg; the open part is opposite the right side, so as to leave the right arm and shoulder quite unconfined, in the male; the female throws it over the back and left shoulder, and brings it round under the right arm-pit, and when tied in front by a string passing round the cloak and the back, a pouch is formed behind, in which the child is always carried. [Note 58 at end of para.] In either if the skin be a handsome one, the dress is very pretty and becoming.

[Note 58: A similar custom prevails among the women of the American Indians.—*Catlin*. vol. ii. p. 132.]

On the sea coast, where the country is barren, and the skins of animals cannot readily be procured, sea-weed or rushes are manufactured into garments, with considerable ingenuity. In all cases the garments worn by day constitute the only covering at night, as the luxury of variety in dress is not known to, or appreciated by, the Aborigines.

No covering is worn upon the head, although they are continually exposed to the rays of an almost tropical sun. In extreme seasons of heat, and 'when they are travelling, they sometimes gather a few green bunches or wet weeds and place upon their heads; but this does not frequently occur.

The character of the Australian natives is frank, open, and confiding. In a short intercourse they are easily made friends, and when such terms are once established, they associate with strangers with a freedom and fearlessness, that would give little countenance to the impression so generally entertained of their treachery. On many occasions where I have met these wanderers in the wild, far removed from the abodes of civilization, and when I have been accompanied only by a single native boy, I have been received by them in the kindest and most friendly manner, had presents made to me of fish, kangaroo, or fruit, had them accompany me for miles to point out where water was to be procured, and been assisted by them in getting at it, if from the nature of the soil and my own inexperience. I had any difficulty in doing so myself.

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I have ever found them of a lively, cheerful disposition [Note 59 at end of para.], patiently putting up with inconveniences and privations, and never losing that natural good temper which so strongly characterizes them. On the occasion of my second visit from Moorunde, to the Rufus natives in 1841, when I had so far overcome the ill-feelings and dread, engendered by the transactions in that quarter, in 1840, as to induce a large body of them to accompany me back to the station, they had to walk a distance of 150 miles, making daily the same stages that the horses did, and unprovided with any food but what they could procure along the road as they passed, and this from the rapidity with which they had to travel, and the distance they had to go in a day, was necessarily limited in quantity, and very far from sufficient to appease even the cravings of hunger, yet tired, foot-sore, and hungry as they were, and in company with strangers, whose countrymen had slain them in scores, but a few months before, they were always merry at their camps at nights, and kept singing, laughing, and joking, to a late hour.

[Note 59: Such appears usually to be the characteristic of Nature's children, than whom no race appears more thoroughly to enjoy life.—Vide character of the American Indians, by Catlin, vol. 1. p. 84.]

On falling in with them in larger numbers, when I have been travelling in the interior with my party, I have still found the same disposition to meet me on terms of amity and kindness. Nor can a more interesting sight well be imagined, than that of a hundred or two hundred natives advancing in line to meet you, unarmed, shouting and waving green boughs in both hands, men, women, and children, the old and the young, all joining in expressing their good feelings and pacific intentions. On such occasions I have been often astonished at the facility with which large bodies, have by a little kindness and forbearance been managed, and kept from being troublesome or annoying, by a party of only six or seven Europeans. I have occasionally had upwards of 150 natives sitting in a long line, where I placed them, and as orderly and obedient almost as a file of soldiers.

At other times, when riding with only a native boy over the plains of the interior, I have seen the blue smoke of the native fires, curling up through the distant line of trees, which marked some yet unvisited watercourse, and upon making towards it, have come suddenly upon a party encamped in the hollow, beneath the banks upon which I stood. Here I have remained, observing them for a few moments, unseen and unthought of. A single call would arouse their attention, and as they looked up, would draw from them a wild exclamation of dismay, accompanied by a look of indescribable horror and affright, at beholding the strange, and to them incomprehensible beings who stood before them. Weapons would hastily be seized, baggage gathered up, and the party so lately buried in repose and security, would at once be ready either to fight or to evacuate their camps, as circumstances might seem to render most expedient. A few friendly gestures and a peaceable demeanour would however soon dissipate their terror, and in a few moments their weapons would be thrown aside, and both invaders and invaded be upon intimate and confiding terms.

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I have always found the natives ready to barter their nets, weapons, or other implements, for European articles, and sometimes they will give them unsolicited, and without any equivalent; amongst themselves they constantly do this.

In their intercourse with each other, natives of different tribes are exceedingly punctilious and polite, the most endearing epithets are passed between those who never met before; almost every thing that is said is prefaced by the appellation of father, son, brother, mother, sister, or some other similar term, corresponding to that degree of relationship which would have been most in accordance with their relative ages and circumstances. In many instances, too, these titles are even accompanied by the still more insinuating addition of “dear,” to say nothing of the hugs and embraces which they mutually give and receive.

The natives are very fond of the children they rear, and often play with, and fondle them; but husbands rarely shew much affection for their wives. After a long absence, I have seen natives, upon their return, go to their camp, exhibiting the most stoical indifference, never take the least notice of their wives, but sit down, and act, and look, as if they had never been out of the encampment; in fact, if any thing, they are more taciturn and reserved than usual, and some little time elapses before they enter into conversation with freedom, or in their ordinary manner.

[Note 60: For the existence of similar customs amongst the American Indians, vide Catlin, vol. i. p. 56.]

Upon meeting children after a long absence, I have seen parents “fall upon their necks, and weep” bitterly. It is a mistaken idea, as well as an unjust one, that supposes the natives to be without sensibility of feeling. It may often be repressed from pride or policy, but it will sometimes break forth uncontrolled, and reveal, that the best and genuine feelings of the heart are participated in by savage in common with civilized man. The following is an instance in point:—A fine intelligent young boy, was, by his father’s consent, living with me at the Murray for many weeks; but upon the old man’s going into Adelaide, he took his son away to accompany him. Whilst there, the boy died, and for nearly a year I never saw any thing more of the father, although he occasionally had been within a few miles of my neighbourhood. One day, however, I was out shooting about three miles from home, and accidentally fell in with him. Upon seeing me he immediately burst into tears, and was unable to speak. It was the first time he had met me since his son’s death, and my presence forcibly reminded him of his loss. The same circumstance occurred when he accompanied me to the house, where every thing he saw recalled the memory of his child.

Innate propriety of behaviour is also frequently exhibited by the Aborigines in their natural state, in the modest unassuming manner in which they take their positions to observe what is going on, and in a total absence of any thing that is rude or offensive. It is true that the reverse of this is also often to be met with; but I think it will usually be

found that it is among natives who have before been in contact with Europeans, or where familiarities have been used with them first, or an injudicious system of treatment has been adopted towards them.

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*Delicacy* of feeling is not often laid to the charge of the Aborigines, and yet I was witness to a singular instance of it at King George's Sound. I was looking one evening at the natives dancing, and who were, as they always are on these occasions, in a state of complete nudity. In the midst of the performance, one of the natives standing by a spectator, mentioned that a white woman was passing up the road; and although this was some little distance away, and the night was tolerably dark, they all with one accord crossed over to the bushes where their cloaks were, put them on, and resumed their amusement.

It has been said, and is generally believed, that the natives are not courageous. There could not be a greater mistake, at least as far as they are themselves concerned, nor do I hold it to be any proof that they are cowards, because they dread or give way before Europeans and their fire-arms. So unequal a match is no criterion of bravery, and yet even thus, among natives, who were labouring under the feelings, naturally produced by seeing a race they were unacquainted with, and weapons that dealt death as if by magic, I have seen many instances of an open manly intrepidity of manner and bearing, and a proud unquailing glance of eye, which instinctively stamped upon my mind the conviction that the individuals before me were very brave men.

In travelling about from one place to another, I have always made it a point, if possible, to be accompanied by one or more natives, and I have often found great advantage from it. Attached to an exploring party they are frequently invaluable, as their perceptive powers are very great, and enable them both to see and hear anything at a much greater distance than a European. In tracking stray animals, and keeping on indistinct paths, they display a degree of perseverance and skill that is really wonderful. They are useful also in cutting bark canoes to cross a river, should such impede the progress of the party, and in diving for anything that may be lost in the water, *etc. etc.* The Aborigines generally, and almost always those living near large bodies of water, are admirable swimmers and divers, and are almost as much at home in the water as on dry land. I have known them even saw a small log or root at the bottom of a deep river. In a locality, however, which is badly watered, it sometimes happens that they cannot swim. At Meerkap, in Western Australia, while crossing with some friends, from the Sound to Swan River, we met with some who were in this predicament, and who seemed a good deal astonished at our venturing into the small ponds at that place. I have been told that the natives at the Sound could not swim before that settlement was occupied by Europeans—this seems hardly probable, however, upon the sea-coast; at all events, be this as it may, they all swim now.



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In habit they are truly nomadic, seldom remaining many weeks in one locality, and frequently not many days. The number travelling together depends, in a great measure, upon the period of the year, and the description of food that may be in season. If there is any particular variety more abundant than another, or procurable only in certain localities, the whole tribe generally congregate to partake of it. Should this not be the case, then they are probably scattered over their district in detached groups, or separate families.

At certain seasons of the year, usually in the spring or summer, when food is most abundant, several tribes meet together in each other's territory for the purpose of festivity or war, or to barter and exchange such food, clothing, implements, weapons, or other commodities as they respectively possess; or to assist in the initiatory ceremonies by which young persons enter into the different grades of distinction amongst them. The manner and formalities of meeting depend upon the cause for which they assemble. If the tribes have been long apart, many deaths may have occurred in the interim; and as the natives do not often admit that the young or the strong can die from natural causes, they ascribe the event to the agency of sorcery, employed by individuals of neighbouring tribes. This must of course be expiated in some way when they meet, but the satisfaction required is regulated by the desire of the injured tribe to preserve amicable relations with the other, or the reverse.

The following is an account of a meeting which I witnessed, between the natives of Moorunde (comprising portions of several of the neighbouring tribes) and the Nar-wij-jerook, or Lake Bonney tribe, accompanied also by many of their friends. This meeting had been pre-arranged, as meetings of large bodies of natives never take place accidentally, for even when a distant tribe approaches the territory of another unexpectedly, messengers are always sent on in advance, to give the necessary warning. The object of the meeting in question was to perform the initiatory ceremonies upon a number of young men belonging to both of the tribes. In the Murray district, when one tribe desires another to come from a distance to perform these ceremonies, young men are sent off with messages of invitation, carrying with them as their credentials, long narrow nets, made of string manufactured from the rush. These nets are left with the tribe they are sent to, and brought back again when the invitation is responded to.

Notice having been given on the previous evening to the Moorunde natives of the approach of the Nar-wij-jerook tribe, they assembled at an early hour after sunrise, in as clear and open a place as they could find. Here they sat down in a long row to await the coming of their friends. The men were painted, and carried their weapons, as if for war. The women and children were in detached groups, a little behind them, or on

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one side, whilst the young men, on whom the ceremonies were to be performed, sat shivering with cold and apprehension in a row to the rear of the men, perfectly naked, smeared over from head to foot with grease and red-ochre, and without weapons. The Nar-wij-jerook tribe was now seen approaching. The men were in a body, armed and painted, and the women and children accompanying them a little on one side. They occasionally halted, and entered into consultation, and then, slackening their pace, gradually advanced until within a hundred yards of the Moorunde tribe. Here the men came to a full stop, whilst several of the women singled out from the rest, and marched into the space between the two parties, having their heads coated over with lime, and raising a loud and melancholy wail, until they came to a spot about equi-distant from both, when they threw down their cloaks with violence, and the bags which they carried on their backs, and which contained all their worldly effects. The bags were then opened, and pieces of glass and shells taken out, with which they lacerated their thighs, backs, and breasts, in a most frightful manner, whilst the blood kept pouring out of the wounds in streams; and in this plight, continuing their wild and piercing lamentations, they moved up towards the Moorunde tribe, who sat silently and immoveably in the place at first occupied. One of the women then went up to a strange native, who was on a visit to the Moorunde tribe and who stood neutral in the affair of the meeting, and by violent language and frantic gesticulations endeavoured to incite him to revenge the death of some relation or friend. But he could not be induced to lift his spear against the people amongst whom he was sojourning. After some time had been spent in mourning, the women took up their bundles again, and retiring, placed themselves in the rear of their own party. An elderly man then advanced, and after a short colloquy with the seated tribe, went back, and beckoned his own people to come forward, which they did slowly and in good order, exhibiting in front three uplifted spears, to which were attached the little nets left with them by the envoys of the opposite tribe, and which were the emblems of the duty they had come to perform, after the ordinary expiations had been accomplished.

In advancing, the Nar-wij-jeroos again commenced the death wail, and one of the men, who had probably sustained the greatest loss since the tribes had last met, occasionally in alternations of anger and sorrow addressed his own people. When near the Moorunde tribe a few words were addressed to them, and they at once rose simultaneously, with a suppressed shout. The opposite party then raised their spears, and closing upon the line of the other tribe, speared about fifteen or sixteen of them in the left arm, a little below the shoulder. This is the generally understood order of revenge; for the persons who were to receive the wounds, as soon as they saw the weapons of their assailants poised, at once put out the left foot, to steady themselves, and presented the left shoulder for the blow, frequently uttering the word "Leipa" (spear), as the others appeared to hesitate.

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Whilst this was going on, the influential men of each tribe were violently talking to each other, and apparently accusing one another of being accessory to the death of some of their people. Disclaimers passed on each side, and the blame was imputed to other and more distant tribes. The manes of the dead having been appeased, the honour of each party was left unsullied, and the Nar-wij-jerooks retired about a hundred yards, and sat down, ready to enter upon the ceremonies of the day, which will be described in another place. [Note 61: Chapter V.]

If the meeting of the tribes be for the purpose of war, a favourable situation is selected by one of the parties, and notice is sent to the other, who then proceed to the place of meeting, where both draw out their forces in opposing parallel lines. Day-break, or nearly about sunset in the evening, are the times preferred for these engagements, as the softened light at those hours does not so much affect the eyesight, and the spears are more easily seen and avoided. Both parties are fully armed with spears, shields, and other weapons, and the fight sometimes lasts for three or four hours, during which scarcely a word is spoken, and but little noise of any kind is heard, excepting a shrill cry now and then, when some one is wounded or has a narrow escape. Many are injured generally on both sides, and some severely so; but it rarely happens that more than one or two are killed, though hundreds may have been engaged.

The fights are sometimes witnessed by men who are not concerned in them, by the women and the children. The presence of the females may be supposed probably to inspire the belligerents with courage and incite them to deeds of daring.

The most dangerous and fatal affrays in which the natives engage are those which occur suddenly amongst tribes who have been encamped near one another on amicable terms, and between whom some cause of difference has arisen, probably in relation to their females, or some recent death, which it is imagined the sorcerers have been instrumental in producing. In the former case a kind of melee sometimes takes place at night, when fire-brands are thrown about, spears launched, and bwirris [Note 62 at end of para.] bran-dished in indescribable confusion. In the latter case the affray usually occurs immediately after the body is buried, and is more of a hand-to-hand fight, in which bwirris are used rather than spears, and in which tremendous blows are struck and frightful wounds inflicted.

[Note 62: A short, heavy, wooden stick, with a knob at one end.]

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In wars males are always obliged to join their relatives by blood and their own tribe. Women frequently excite the men to engage in these affrays to revenge injuries or deaths, and sometimes they assist themselves by carrying spears or other weapons for their husbands. I am not aware that women or children are ever butchered after a battle is over, and I believe such is never the case. Single camps are sometimes treacherously surprised when the parties are asleep, and the males barbarously killed in cold blood. This generally takes place just before the morning dawns, when the native is most drowsy, and least likely to give his attention to any thing he might hear. In these cases the attack is generally made under the belief that the individual is a desperate sorcerer, and has worked innumerable mischiefs to their tribe. In their attacks upon European parties I believe the natives generally advance in a line or crescent, beating their weapons together, throwing dust in the air, spitting, biting their beards, or using some other similar act of defiance and hostility. I have never witnessed any such collision myself, but am told that the attack is always accompanied by that peculiar savage sound produced by the suppressed guttural shout of many voices in unison, which they use in conflicts amongst themselves, and which is continued to the moment of collision, and renewed in triumph whenever a weapon strikes an opponent.

When hostilely disposed from either fear or from having been previously ill-treated, I have seen the natives, without actually proceeding to extremities, resort to all the symptoms of defiance I have mentioned, or at other times, run about with fire-brands in their hands, lighting the bushes and the grass, either as a charm, or in the hope of burning out the intruders. When much alarmed and rather closely pressed, they have run up the trees like monkeys, and concealed themselves among the boughs, evidently thinking they were secure from pursuit there.

If tribes meet simply for the purpose of festivity, and have no deaths to avenge on either side, although they appear in warlike attitude, painted and bearing spear and shield, yet when they approach each other, they all become seated upon the ground. After which, the strangers, should there be any, undergo a formal introduction, and have their country and lineage described by the older men. At these meetings all occurrences of interest are narrated, information is given as to the localities in which food is most abundant, and invitations are issued by the proprietors of these districts, to their relations and friends to accompany them thither.

The position of one tribe towards another, whether on friendly terms or otherwise, is talked about, and consultations are held on the existing state of affairs, whether hostilities shall be continued or withdrawn, and future plans of operation are marked out.

Whilst the men are occupied in discussing these matters, the females engage in a narration of family occurrences, such as births of children, marriages, deaths, *etc.*, not omitting a sprinkling of gossip and scandal, from which, even these ebon sisters of a fairer race, are not altogether exempt.

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In the evening, the huts of the different tribes are built as near to each other as practicable, each tribe locating itself in the direction from whence it came. The size and character of the huts, with the number of their occupants, vary according to the state of the weather, and the local circumstances of their position. In fine weather, one hut will contain from two to five families, in wet weather more, each family however having a separate fire.

The amusements of the natives are various, but they generally have a reference to their future occupations or pursuits. Boys who are very young, have small reed spears made for them by their parents, the ends of which are padded with grass, to prevent them from hurting each other. They then stand at a little distance, and engage in a mimic fight; and by this means acquire early that skill in the use of this weapon, for which, in after life, they are so much celebrated. At other times round pieces of bark are rolled along the ground, to represent an animal in the act of running, at which the spears are thrown for the sake of practice.

Another favourite amusement among the children, is to practise the dances and songs of the adults, and a boy is very proud if he attains sufficient skill in these, to be allowed to take part in the exhibitions that are made before other tribes.

String puzzles are another species of amusement with them. In these a European would be surprised to see the ingenuity they display, and the varied and singular figures which they produce. Our juvenile attempts in this way, are very meagre and uninteresting compared to them. [Note 63: An amusement of the New Zealand children. —Dieffenbach, vol. 2. p. 32.]

Other gratifications enjoyed by children, consist in learning the occupations and pursuits of after life, as to make twine, and weapons; to ascend trees; to procure food; to guide the canoe, and many other things, which enter into the pursuits of a savage.

The elder boys engage more extensively in similar occupations, as they are more particularly interested in them, and by their exertions have to provide chiefly for their own support. Mock combats frequently take place amongst them, in which they are encouraged by the adults, that they may acquire the dexterities of warfare, in which they are soon to be more seriously engaged. [Note 64: For an account of a similar practise among the American Indians, vide Catlin, vol. 1. p. 131.]

An amusement of the adults, is a large bunch of emu feathers tied together, (fig. 1. Pl. 1.) which is held out and shaken as if in defiance, by some individual, whilst the others advance to try to take it out of his hands. This occasions an amusing struggle before the prize is gained, in which it is not uncommon to see from ten to twenty strong and lusty men rolling in a heap together. This is a sort of athletic exercise amongst them, for the purpose of testing each other's strength. On such an occasion they are all unarmed and naked.

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At nights, dances or plays are performed by the different tribes in turn, the figures and scenes of which are extensively varied, but all are accompanied by songs, and a rude kind of music produced by beating two sticks together, or by the action of the hand upon a cloak of skins rolled tightly together, so as to imitate the sound of a drum. In some of the dances only are the women allowed to take a part; but they have dances of their own, in which the men do not join. At all times they are the chief musicians, vocal and instrumental. Sometimes, however, they have an old man to lead the band and pitch the tunes; and at others they are assisted by the old and young men indiscriminately.

The natives have not any war-dance, properly so called, though sometimes they are decorated in all the pomp and circumstance of war. Being excellent mimies, they imitate in many of their dances the habits and movements of animals. They also represent the mode of hunting, fighting, love-making, *etc.* New figures and new songs are constantly introduced, and are as much applauded and encored, as more refined productions of a similar kind in civilized communities; being sometimes passed from tribe to tribe for a considerable distance. I have often seen dances performed to songs with which I was acquainted, and which I knew to belong to distant parts of the country where a different dialect was spoken, and which consequently could not be understood where I heard them. Many of the natives cannot even give an interpretation of the songs of their own districts [Note 65 at end of para.], and most of the explanations they do give are, I am inclined to think, generally very imperfect, as the measures or quantities of the syllables appear to be more attended to than the sense.

[Note 65: "Not one in ten of the young men who are dancing and singing it, know the meaning of the song they are chaunting over."—Catlin, vol. 1. p. 126. Also the case in New Zealand, with respect to some of the songs.—Vide Dieffenbach, vol. 2. p. 57.]

Of these amusements the natives are passionately fond; and when once they have so far overcome their naturally indolent disposition as to be induced to engage in them there is no knowing when they will give over. Dances are sometimes held during the day, but these are of rare occurrence, and seem to be in some way connected with their ceremonial observances or superstitions, since rude figures, and lofty branches of trees, decorated with tufts of feathers, emu plumes, swan's down and red ochre, occupy a prominent part in the exhibition, although never met with in the dances by night.



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The dances vary a great deal among the different tribes, both as to figures and music; the painting or decoration of their persons, their use of weapons, and the participation of the females in them. Throughout the entire continent, as far as it is known, there are many points of resemblance in the dances of all the Aborigines, such as the practice of painting the body with white and red ochre, carrying boughs in their hands, or tying them round their limbs; adorning the head with feathers or down, bearing bunches of feathers, tied in tufts in their hands, the women singing and beating time upon folded skins, the men beating time upon sticks or some of their smaller weapons, an old man acting as leader of the band, and giving the time and tune to the others; the dances representing the actions of animals, the circumstances of the chase, of war, or of love; and the singular and extraordinary quivering motion of the thighs when the legs are distended, a peculiarity probably confined to the natives of the continent of Australia.

The most interesting dances are those which take place at the meeting of different tribes. Each tribe performs in turn, and as there is much rivalry, there is a corresponding stimulus to exertion. The dances usually commence an hour or two after dark, and are frequently kept up the greater part of the night, the performers becoming so much excited that, notwithstanding the violent exercise required to sustain all their evolutions, they are unwilling to leave off. It is sometimes difficult to induce them to commence a dance; but if they once begin, and enter into the spirit of it, it is still more difficult to induce them to break up.

The females of the tribe exhibiting, generally sit down in front of the performers, either irregularly, in a line, or a semicircle, folding up their skin cloaks into a hard ball, and then beating them upon their laps with the palm of their hand, and accompanying the noise thus produced with their voices. It is surprising to see the perfect time that is kept in this way, and the admirable manner in which the motions of the dancers accord with the music. There is no confusion, irregularity, or mistake. Each person is conversant with his part; and all exhibit a degree of elasticity and gracefulness in their movements which, in some of the dances, is very striking and beautiful.

In many of the figures, weapons are carried, such as the waddy, the shield, the spear, *etc.* and in these it is amazing to behold the facility and skill with which they form in close array, spread into open rank, change places, and thread through the mazes of the dance, without ever deranging their plans, or coming in contact with each other.

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The tribes who are not engaged in dancing, are seated in a large semicircle as spectators, occasionally giving a rapturous exclamation of delight, as any part of the performance is well gone through or any remarkable feat of activity exhibited. Where natives have not much acquaintance with Europeans, so as to give up, in some measure, their original habits, if there is any degree of jealousy between the respective tribes, they are sometimes partitioned off from each other by boughs of trees, whilst they look at the dance. On one occasion I saw five tribes met together, and the evening was of course spent in dancing. Each tribe danced in turn, about forty being engaged at once, besides sixteen females, eight of whom were at each corner of the male performers. The men were naked, painted in various devices with red and white, and had their heads adorned with feathers. The women wore their opossum cloaks, and had bands of white down round their foreheads, with the long feathers of the cockatoo sticking up in front like horns. In the dance the men and women did not intermingle; but the two sets of women who were dancing at the corners of the line, occasionally changed places with each other, passing in this transit, at the back of the men. All sung, and the men beat time upon their smaller weapons whilst dancing, the whole making up a wild and piercing noise, most deafening and ungrateful to the ears.

The natives of the Rufus and Lake Victoria (Tar-ru) have a great variety of dances and figures. One of these, which I witnessed, representing the character, habits, and chase of the kangaroo was admirably performed, and would have drawn down thunders of applause at any theatre in Europe. One part of this figure, where the whole of the dancers successively drop down from a standing to a crouching posture, and then hop off in this position with outstretched arms and legs, was excellently executed. The contrast of their sable skins with the broad white stripes painted down their legs; their peculiar attitudes, and the order and regularity with which these were kept, as they moved in a large semicircle, in the softening light of the fire, produced a striking effect; and in connection with the wild and inspiring song, which gave an impulse to their gesticulation, led me almost to believe that the scene was unearthly.

In some of the dances the music varies rapidly from slow to quick, and the movements alter accordingly. In some they are altogether measured and monotonous, in others very lively and quick, keeping the performers almost constantly at a double quick march, moving in advance and retreat, crossing past or threading through the ranks, and using a kind of motion with the feet in unison with the music, that bears a strong resemblance to the European mode of dancing. At particular points the figures terminate by some simultaneous motion of the whole performers, accompanied by a deep, guttural "Waugh," [Note 66 at end of para.] uttered by all together; at others by the actors closing in a dense circle, and raising and pointing their weapons upwards with the same exclamation.



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[Note 66: This very peculiar sound appears to be common among the American Indians, and to be used in a similar manner.—Vide Catlin, vol. 2. p.136.]

The “Paritke,” or natives inhabiting the scrub north-west of Moorunde, have quite a different form of dancing from the river natives. They are painted or decorated with feathers in a similar way; but each dancer ties bunches of green boughs round the leg, above the knees, whilst the mode of dancing consists in stamping with the foot and uttering at each motion a deep ventral intonation, the boughs round the knees making a loud rustling noise in keeping with the time of the music. One person, who directs the others in the movements of this dance, holds in his hands an instrument in the form of a diamond, made of two slight sticks, from two and a half to three feet long, crossed and tied in the middle, round this a string, made of the hair of the opossum, is pressed from corner to corner, and continued successively towards the centre until there is only room left for the hand to hold the instrument. At each corner is appended a bunch of cockatoo feathers. With this the chief performer keeps a little in advance of the dancers, and whisking it up and down to the time of the music, regulates their movements.

In another dance, in which women are the chief performers, their bodies are painted with white streaks, and their hair adorned with cockatoo feathers. They carry large sticks in their hands, and place themselves in a row in front, whilst the men with their spears stand in a line behind them. They then all commence their movements, but without intermingling, the males and females dancing by themselves. There is little variety or life in this dance, yet it seems to be a favourite one with the natives.

The women have occasionally another mode of dancing, by joining the hands together over the head, closing the feet, and bringing the knees into contact. The legs are then thrown outwards from the knee, whilst the feet and hands are kept in their original position, and being drawn quickly in again a sharp sound is produced by the collision. This is either practised alone by young girls, or by several together for their own amusement. It is adopted also when a single woman is placed in front of a row of male dancers to excite their passions; for many of the native dances are of a grossly licentious character. In another figure they keep the feet close together, without lifting them from the ground, and by a peculiar motion of the limbs advance onwards, describing a short semicircle. This amusement is almost exclusively confined to young females among themselves.

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It has already been remarked, that the natives, on particular occasions, have dances which they perform in the day-time, which are different from others, and seem to have some connection with their ceremonial observances or superstitions. I have only witnessed one of these. It took place at Moorunde, in March 1844, on the occasion of a large number of distant natives coming to visit the place; and the visitors were the performers. The Moorunde natives were seated upon the brow of a sand-bank; the strangers, consisting of two tribes, down in a hollow a little way off, among a few bushes. When ready, they advanced in a line towards the others, dancing and singing, being painted and decorated as usual, some having tufts of feathers placed upon their heads like cockades and others carrying them in their hands tied to short sticks. Nearly all the males carried bunches of green boughs, which they waved and shook to the time of the song. The women were also painted, and danced in a line with the men, those of each tribe stationing themselves at opposite ends of the line. Dancing for a while, they retired again towards the hollow, and after a short interval advanced as before, but with a person in the centre carrying a curious, rude-looking figure, raised up in the air. This singular object consisted of a large bundle of grass and reeds bound together, enveloped in a kangaroo skin, with the flesh side outwards, and painted all over in small white circles. From the top of this projected a thin stick, with a large tuft of feathers at the end to represent the head, and sticks were stuck out laterally from the sides for the arms, terminating in tufts of feathers stained red to represent the hands. From the front, a small stick about six inches long was projected, ending with a thick knob, formed of grass, around which a piece of old cloth was tied. This was painted white and represented the navel. The figure was about eight feet long, and was evidently intended to symbolise a man. It was kept in its elevated position by the person who carried it, and who advanced and retired with the movements of the dancers. The position of the latter was alternately erect and crouching, whilst they sang and beat time with the green boughs. Sometimes they stretched out their right arms simultaneously, and at other times their left, apparently for the purpose of marking the time at particular parts of the song. After dancing for a while in this way, they again retired to the hollow, and for a few moments there was another pause; after which they again advanced as before, but without the image. In the place of this two standards were exhibited, made of poles, about twelve feet long, and borne by two persons. These were perfectly straight, and for the first eight feet free from boughs; above this nine branches were left upon each pole, having at their ends each a bunch of feathers of the hawk or owl. On the top of one of the standards was a bunch of emu feathers. The branches were stripped of all their smaller twigs and leaves, and of their bark. They were painted white, and wound round with the white down of the black swan, twisted into a rope. This also extended for a considerable distance down the pole, below the undermost branch.

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Having again retired towards the hollow, they remained there for a few minutes, and then advanced for the third time. On this occasion, however, instead of the image or standards, they all carried their spears. After dancing with these for some time, they went forward towards the Moorunde natives, who sprang upon their feet, and seizing their weapons, speared two or three of the strangers in the shoulder, and all was over. I was anxious to have got hold of the rude figure to have a drawing made of it, but it had been instantly destroyed. The standards I procured.

This dance took place between nine and ten in the morning, and was quite unlike any thing I had seen before. A stranger might have supposed it to be a religious ceremony, and the image the object of worship. Such, however, I am convinced was not the case, although I believe it to have had some connection with their superstitions, and that it was regarded in the light of a charm.

Before the country was occupied by Europeans, the natives say that this dance was frequently celebrated, but that latterly it has not been much in use. No other instance of it ever came under my own observation in any part of New Holland.

The songs of the natives are of a very rude and unmeaning character, rarely consisting of more than one or two ideas, which are continually repeated over and over again. They are chiefly made on the spur of the moment, and refer to something that has struck the attention at the time. The measure of the song varies according to circumstances. It is gay and lively, for the dance; slow and solemn for the enchanter; and wild and pathetic for the mourner. The music is sometimes not unharmonious; and when heard in the stillness of the night and mellowed by distance, is often soothing and pleasing. I have frequently laid awake, after retiring to rest, to listen to it. Europeans, their property, presence, and habits, are frequently the subject of these songs; and as the natives possess great powers of mimicry, and are acute in the observation of anything that appears to them absurd or ludicrous, the white man often becomes the object of their jests or quizzing. I have heard songs of this kind sung at the dances in a kind of comic medley, where different speakers take up parts during the breaks in the song, and where a sentence or two of English is aptly introduced, or a quotation made from some native dialect, other than that of the performers. It is usually conducted in the form of question and answer, and the respective speakers use the language of the persons they are supposed to represent. The chorus is, however, still the same repetition of one or two words.

The following specimens, taken from a vocabulary published by Messrs. Teichelmann, and Schurmann, German Missionaries to the Aborigines, will give an idea of the nature of the songs of the Adelaide tribe.

KADLITPIKO PALTÍ. Pindi mai birkibirki parrato, parrato. (DE CAPO BIS.)



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*Captain JACK'S song.*

The European food, the pease, I wished to eat, I wished to eat.

MULLAWIRRABURKARNA PALTİ. Natta ngai padlo ngaityarniappi; watteyernaurlo tappandi ngaityo parni tatti. (DA Capo.)

*King john's song.*

Now it (viz. the road or track) has tired me;  
throughout Yerna there is here unto me a continuous road.

WILTONGARROLO kundando

Strike (him, viz. the dog) with the tuft of eagle feathers.

Kadlottikurrelo paltando

Strike (him) with the girdle

Mangakurrelo paltando

Strike (him) with the string round the head

Worrikarrolo paltando

Strike (him) with the blood of circumcision

Turtikarrolo paltando

Strike (him) with the blood of the arm. *etc. etc.*

Kartipaltapaltarlo padlara kundando

Wodliparrele kadlondo

Kanyamirarlo kadlondo

Karkopurrelo kadlondo

"This curse or imprecation is used in hunting a wild dog, which, by the mysterious effects of those words, is induced to lie down securely to sleep, when the natives steal upon and easily kill him. The first word in each line denotes things sacred or secret, which the females and children are never allowed to see.

\* \* \*

KAWEMUKKA minnurappindo Durtikarro minnurappindo

Tarralye minnurappindo Wimmari minnurappindi

Kirki minurappindo Wattetarpirri minnurappindo

Worrikarro minurappindo

“These sentences are used in hunting opossums, to prevent their escape, when the natives set fire to hollow trees in which the opossums are living.

\* \* \*

*Karro karro wimmari Karra yernka makkitia*  
*Karro karro kauwemukka Makkitia mulyeria*  
*Karro karro makkitia*

“These words are rapidly repeated to the NGULTAS, while undergoing the painful operation of tattooing; they are believed to be so powerful as to soothe the pain, and prevent fatal consequences of that barbarous operation.”

Another specimen may be given from the Vocabulary published by Mr. Meyer, another of the German Missionaries at Encounter Bay.

“Miny-el-ity yarluke an-ambe what is it road me for Aly-..el-..arr’  
yerk-in yangaiak-ar! here are they standing up hill . . . . . s

What a fine road is this for me winding between the hills!

“The above words compose one of the native songs. It refers to the road between Encounter Bay and Willunga. All their songs appear to be of the same description, consisting of a few words which are continually repeated. This specimen, it will be observed, consists of two regular verses:

-u|—|u-|u-u -u|—|u-|u-u

“This may, however, be accidental.”

I have not thought it worth while to give any specimens of the songs I have collected myself, because I could not be quite certain that I should give the original words with strict accuracy, neither could I be satisfied about the translations.

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The assemblage of several tribes at one place for any of the objects I have described, rarely continues uninterrupted for any great length of time, for even where it has taken place for the most pacific purposes, it seldom terminates as it began; and the greater the number of natives present, the less likelihood is there that they will remain very long in a state of quiescence.

If not soon compelled to separate by the scarcity of food, or a desire to follow some favourite pursuit, for which the season of the year is favourable, they are generally driven to it by discord and disagreements amongst themselves, which their habits and superstitions are calculated to foment.

### Chapter III.

#### **FOOD—HOW PROCURED—HOW PREPARED—LIMITATION AS TO AGE, ETC., ETC.**

The food of the Aborigines of Australia embraces an endless variety of articles, derived both from the animal and vegetable kingdom. The different kinds in use depend in a great measure upon the season of the year and local circumstances. Every district has in it something peculiar to itself. The soil and climate of the continent vary greatly in their character and afford a corresponding variety of productions to the Aborigines. As far as it is yet known there are no localities on its coast, no recesses in its interior, however sterile and inhospitable they may appear to the traveller, that do not hold out some inducements to the bordering savage to visit them, or at proper seasons of the year provide him with the means of sustenance. Captain Grey remarks, in volume 2, of his travels, page 261—

“Generally speaking, the natives live well; in some districts there may at particular seasons of the year be a deficiency of food, but if such is the case, these tracts are, at those times, deserted. It is, however, utterly impossible for a traveller or even for a strange native to judge whether a district affords an abundance of food, or the contrary; for in traversing extensive parts of Australia, I have found the sorts of food vary from latitude to latitude, so that the vegetable productions used by the Aborigines in one are totally different to those in another; if, therefore, a stranger has no one to point out to him the vegetable productions, the soil beneath his feet may teem with food, whilst he starves. The same rule holds good with regard to animal productions; for example, in the southern parts of the continent the Xanthorrea affords an inexhaustible supply of fragrant grubs, which an epicure would delight in, when once he has so far conquered his prejudices as to taste them; whilst in proceeding to the northward, these trees decline in health and growth, until about the parallel of Gantheaume Bay they totally disappear, and even a native finds himself cut off from his ordinary supplies of insects; the same circumstances taking place with regard to the roots and other kinds of food at the same time, the traveller necessarily finds himself reduced to cruel extremities. A

native from the plains, taken into an elevated mountainous district near his own country, for the first time, is equally at fault.

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“But in his own district a native is very differently situated; he knows exactly what it produces, the proper time at which the several articles are in season, and the readiest means of procuring them. According to these circumstances he regulates his visits to the different portions of his hunting ground; and I can only state that I have always found the greatest abundance in their huts.”

It is evident therefore that a European or even a stranger native would perish in a district capable of supplying the necessaries of life, simply because he had not the experience necessary to direct him where to search for food, or judgment to inform him what article might be in season at the particular time of his visit. It is equally the same with respect to procuring water. The native inhabiting a scrubby and an arid district has, from his knowledge of the country and from a long residence and practical experience in the desert, many resources at command to supply his wants, where the white man would faint or perish from thirst.

The very densest brushes, which to the latter are so formidable and forbidding, hold out to the former advantages and inducements to resort to them of more than ordinary temptation. Abounding in wild animals of various kinds, they offer to the natives who frequent them an unlimited supply of food: a facility for obtaining firewood, a grateful shade from the heat, an effectual screen from the cold, and it has already been shewn that they afford the means of satisfying their thirst by a process but little known, and which from a difference in habits and temperament would be but little available to the European.[Note 67 at end of para.] In judging, therefore, of the character of any country, from the mere fact of natives being seen there, or even of their being numerous, we must take all these circumstances into consideration; and, in estimating the facility with which a native can remain for a long time in a country, apparently arid and inhospitable, we must not omit to take into account his education and experience, and the general nature of his habits. The two former have accustomed him from infancy to feel at home and at ease, where a European sees only dread and danger: he has thus the advantage over the European in the desert, that a swimmer has in the water over the man who cannot swim; conscious of his own powers and resources, he feels not the least apprehension, whilst the very terrors of the other but augment his danger. On the other hand, the general habits, mode of life, and almost temperament of the savage, give him an equally great advantage. Indolent by disposition and indulgence, he makes very short stages in his ordinary travels, rarely moving more than from eight to twelve miles in the day, and this he does so leisurely and quietly, that he neither becomes excited nor heated, and consequently does not experience that excessive thirst, which is produced by the active exertions or violent exercise of the European, and which in the latter is at the same time so greatly augmented, by his want of confidence and anxiety.



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[Note 67: Vide vol. I. p.349 (March 26.)]

Another very great advantage on the part of the natives is, the intimate knowledge they have of every nook and corner of the country they inhabit; does a shower of rain fall, they know the very rock where a little water is most likely to be collected, the very hole where it is the longest retained, and by repairing straight to the place they fill their skins, and thus obtain a supply that lasts them many days. Are there heavy dews at night, they know where the longest grass grows, from which they may collect the spangles, and water is sometimes procured thus in very great abundance. [Note 68 at end of para.] Should there be neither rains nor dews, their experience at once points out to them the lowest levels where the gumscrub grows, and where they are sure of getting water from its roots, with the least possible amount of labour that the method admits of, and with the surest prospect of success.

[Note 69: Vide vol. I. p.349 (March 27.)]

[Note 68: Vide vol. I. p.361 (March 30.)]

Another very important circumstance in favour of the native, and one which results in a measure from some of the above-mentioned considerations, is the fact, that the native sets to work to procure his supply calmly and collectedly, and before he requires it; whilst the European, even if acquainted with the method of obtaining it, would not resort to it until the last extremity, when the body was fatigued and heated by previous exertion, the mouth dry and parched by thirst, and the mind excited and anxious from apprehension. The natural consequence of such a very different combination of circumstances would be, that the native would obtain an abundant and satisfying supply, whilst the European would never be able to procure a sufficiency to appease his thirst, but would rather fatigue and exhaust his strength the more, from his want of skill and experience, and from his body and mind being both in an unfit state for this particular kind of exertion. Such at least, on many various occasions, I have found to be the case both with myself, and with natives with me who have not been accustomed to the scrub, or to this method of procuring water. The difficulty and labour of finding and digging out the roots, our want of skill in selecting proper ones, the great dust arising from the loose, powdery soil in which they were, and our own previously excited and exhausted state, have invariably prevented us from deriving the full advantage we expected from our efforts.

In cases of extreme thirst, where the throat is dry and parched, or life at all in danger, the toil of digging for the roots would be well repaid by the relief afforded. I have myself, in such cases, found that though I could by no means satiate my thirst, I could always succeed in keeping my mouth cool and moist, and so far in rendering myself equal to exertions I could not otherwise have made. Indeed, I hold

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it impossible that a person, acquainted with this means of procuring water, and in a district where the gum-scrub grew, could ever perish from thirst in any moderate lapse of time, if he had with him food to eat, and was not physically incapable of exertion. Under such circumstances, the moisture he would be able to procure from the roots, would, I think, be quite sufficient to enable him to eat his food, and to sustain his strength for a considerable time, under such short stages as would gradually conduct him free from his embarrassments.

In addition to the value of the gum-scrub to the native, as a source from whence to obtain his supply of water, it is equally important to him as affording an article of food, when his other resources have failed. To procure this, the lateral roots are still made use of, but the smaller ones generally are selected, such as vary in diameter from an inch downwards. The roots being dug up, the bark is peeled off and roasted crisp in hot ashes; it is then pounded between two stones, and has a pleasant farinaceous taste, strongly resembling that of malt. I have often seen the natives eating this, and have frequently eaten it myself in small quantities. How far it alone would support life, or sustain a man in strength, I have of course no means of forming an opinion; but it is, probably, only resorted to when other food is scarce. Several of the roots of other shrubs are also used for food, and some of them are mucilaginous and very palatable.

Throughout the greater portion of New Holland, where there do not happen to be European settlers, and invariably where fresh water can be permanently procured upon the surface, the native experiences no difficulty whatever in procuring food in abundance all the year round. It is true that the character of his diet varies with the changing seasons, and the formation of the country he inhabits; but it rarely happens that any season of the year, or any description of country does not yield him both animal and vegetable food. Amongst the almost unlimited catalogue of edible articles used by the natives of Australia, the following may be classed as the chief:—all salt and fresh-water fish and shell-fish, of which, in the larger rivers, there are vast numbers and many species; freshwater turtle; frogs of different kinds; rats and mice; lizards, and most kinds of snakes and reptiles; grubs of all kinds; moths of several varieties; fungi, and many sorts of roots; the leaves and tops of a variety of plants; the leaf and fruit of the mesembryanthemum; various kinds of fruits and berries; the bark from the roots of many trees and shrubs; the seeds of leguminous plants; gum from several species of acacia; different sorts of manna; honey from the native bee, and also from the flowers of the Banksia, by soaking them in water; the tender leaves of the grass-tree; the larvae of insects; white ants; eggs of birds; turtles or lizards; many kinds of kangaroo; opossums; squirrels, sloths, and wallabies; ducks; geese; teal; cockatoos; parrots; wild dogs and wombats; the native companion; the wild turkey; the swan; the pelican; the leipoa, and an endless variety of water-fowl, and other descriptions of birds.

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Of these articles, many are not only procurable in abundance, but in such vast quantities at the proper seasons, as to afford for a considerable length of time an ample means of subsistence to many hundreds of natives congregated in one place; and these are generally the kinds of food of which the natives are particularly fond. On many parts of the coast, and in the larger inland rivers, fish are obtained of a very fine description, and in great abundance. At Lake Victoria, which is filled with the back waters of the Murray, I have seen six hundred natives encamped together, all of whom were living at the time upon fish procured from the lake, with the addition, perhaps, of the leaves of the mesembryanthemum. When I went amongst them I never perceived any scarcity in their camps. The fish were caught in nets.

At Moorunde, when the Murray annually inundates the flats, fresh-water cray-fish make their way to the surface of the ground from holes where they have been buried during the year, in such vast numbers that I have seen four hundred natives live upon them for weeks together, whilst the numbers spoiled or thrown away would have sustained four hundred more. This fish is an excellent and nutritious article of food, and would be highly prized by the epicure. It is caught by the women who wade into the water in a long close line, stooping down and walking backwards, whilst they grope with their hands and feet, presenting a singular, and to the uninitiated, an incomprehensible spectacle, as they thus move slowly backwards, but keep the line regular and well preserved, as all generally occupy the same position at one time. When a cray-fish is caught the large claws are torn off to prevent the animal from biting, and both claws and body are put into a small net suspended from the neck for that purpose. In two or three hours a woman will procure as many fish as will last her family for a day. The men are too lazy to do anything when food is so abundant, and lie basking under the trees in luxurious indolence, whilst their wives, mothers, or sisters are engaged in cooking for them.

An unlimited supply of fish is also procurable at the Murray about the beginning of December, when the floods, having attained their greatest height, begin again to recede; and when the waters, which had been thrown by the back water channels of the river into the flats behind its banks, begin again to reflow through them into the river as it falls in height. At this time the natives repair to these channels, and making a weir across them with stakes and grass interwoven, leave only one or two small openings for the stream to pass through. To these they attach bag nets, which receive all the fish that attempt to re-enter the river. The number procured in this way in a few hours is incredible. Large bodies of natives depend upon these weirs for their sole subsistence, for some time after the waters have commenced to recede.

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Another very favourite article of food, and equally abundant at a particular season of the year, in the eastern portion of the continent, is a species of moth which the natives procure from the cavities and hollows of the mountains in certain localities. This, when roasted, has something of the appearance and flavour of an almond badly peeled. It is called in the dialect of the district, where I met with it, Booguon. The natives are never so well conditioned in that part of the country, as at the season of the year when they return from feasting upon this moth; and their dogs partake equally of the general improvement.

The tops, leaves, and stalks of a kind of cress, gathered at the proper season of the year, tied up in bunches, and afterwards steamed in an oven, furnish a favourite, and inexhaustible supply of food for an unlimited number of natives. When prepared, this food has a savoury and an agreeable smell, and in taste is not unlike a boiled cabbage. In some of its varieties it is in season for a great length of time, and is procured in the flats of rivers, on the borders of lagoons, at the Murray, and in many other parts of New Holland.

There are many other articles of food among the natives, equally abundant and valuable as those I have enumerated: such as various kinds of berries, or fruits, the bulbous roots of a reed called the belillah, certain kinds of fungi dug out of the ground, fresh-water muscles, and roots of several kinds, *etc.* Indeed, were I to go through the list of articles seriatim, and enter upon the varieties and subdivisions of each class, with the seasons of the year at which they were procurable, it would at once be apparent that the natives of Australia, in their natural state, are not subject to much inconvenience for want of the necessaries of life. In almost every part of the continent which I have visited, where the presence of Europeans, or their stock, has not limited, or destroyed their original means of subsistence, I have found that the natives could usually, in three or four hours, procure as much food as would last for the day, and that without fatigue or labour. They are not provident in their provision for the future, but a sufficiency of food is commonly laid by at the camp for the morning meal. In travelling, they sometimes husband, with great care and abstinence, the stock they have prepared for the journey; and though both fatigued and hungry, they will eat sparingly, and share their morsel with their friends, without encroaching too much upon their store, until some reasonable prospect appears of getting it replenished.

In wet weather the natives suffer the most, as they are then indisposed to leave their camps to look for food, and experience the inconveniences both of cold and hunger. If food, at all tainted, is offered to a native by Europeans, it is generally rejected with disgust. In their natural state, however, they frequently eat either fish or animals almost in a state of putridity.

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Cannibalism is not common, though there is reason to believe, that it is occasionally practised by some tribes, but under what circumstances it is difficult to say. Native sorcerers are said to acquire their magic influence by eating human flesh, but this is only done once in a life-time.

[Note 70: The only authentic and detailed account of any instance of cannibalism, that I am acquainted with, is found in Parliamentary Papers on Australian Aborigines, published August, 1844, in a report of Mr. Protector Sievwright, from Lake Tarong, in one of the Port Phillip districts.

“On going out I found the whole of the men of the different tribes (amounting to upwards of 100) engaged hand to hand in one general melee.

“On being directed by some of the women, who had likewise sought shelter near my tent, to the huts of the Bolaghers, I there found a young woman, supported in the arms of some of her tribe, quite insensible, and bleeding from two severe wounds upon the right side of the face; she continued in the same state of insensibility till about 11 o'clock, when she expired.

“After fighting for nearly an hour, the men of the Bolagher tribe returned to their huts, when finding that every means I had used to restore the young woman was in vain, they gave vent to the most frantic expressions of grief and rage, and were employed till daylight in preparing themselves and weapons to renew the combat.

“Shortly before sunrise they again rushed towards the Targurt and Elengermite tribes, who, with about a dozen of Wamambool natives, were encamped together, when a most severe struggle took place between them, and very few escaped on either side without serious fractures or dangerous spear wounds. Although the Targurt tribe were supported by the Elengermite and Wamambool natives, and were consequently much superior in number, they were, after two hours hard fighting, driven off the ground and pursued for about four miles, to where their women and children had retired; when one of the former, named Mootinewhannong, was selected, and fell, pierced by about 20 spears of the pursuers.

“The body of this female was shortly afterwards burned to ashes by her own people, and the Bolagher natives returned to their encampment, apparently satisfied with the revenge they had taken, and remained silently and sullenly watching the almost inanimate body of the wounded female.

“When death took place, they again expressed the most violent and extravagant grief; they threw themselves upon the ground, weeping and screaming at the height of their voices, lacerating their bodies and inflicting upon themselves wounds upon their heads, from blows which they gave themselves with the leangville. About an hour after the death of the young woman, the body was removed a few hundred yards into the bush

by the father and brother of the deceased; the remainder of the tribe following by one at a time, until they

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had all joined what I imagined to be the usual funeral party. Having accompanied the body when it was removed, I was then requested to return to my tent, which request I took no notice of. In a few minutes I was again desired, rather sternly, and by impatient signs to go. I endeavoured to make them understand that I wished to remain, and I sat down upon a tree close to where the body lay. The father of the deceased then came close up to me, and pointed with his finger to his mouth, and then to the dead body. I was at this moment closely and intensely scrutinized by the whole party. I at once guessed their meaning, and signified my intention to remain, and, with as much indifference as I could assume, stretched myself upon the tree, and narrowly watched their proceedings.

“With a flint they made an incision upon the breast, when a simultaneous shriek was given by the party, and the same violent signs of grief were again evinced. After a short time the operation was again commenced, and in a few minutes the body disembowelled.

“The scene which now took place was of the most revolting description; horror-stricken and utterly disgusted, while obliged to preserve that equanimity of demeanour upon which I imagined the development of this tragedy to depend, I witnessed the most fearful scene of ferocious cannibalism.

“The bowels and entire viscera having been disengaged from the body, were at first portioned out; but from the impatience of some of the women to get at the liver, a general scramble took place for it, and it was snatched in pieces, and, without the slightest process of cooking, was devoured with an eagerness and avidity, a keen, fiendish expression of impatience for more, from which scene, a memory too tenacious upon this subject will not allow me to escape; the kidneys and heart were in like manner immediately consumed, and as a climax to these revolting orgies, when the whole viscera were removed, a quantity of blood and serum which had collected in the cavity of the chest, was eagerly collected in handfuls, and drunk by the old man who had dissected the body; the flesh was entirely cut off the ribs and back, the arms and legs were wrenched and twisted from the shoulder and hip joints, and their teeth employed to dis sever the reeking tendons, when they would not immediately yield to their impatience. The limbs were now doubled up and put aside in their baskets; and on putting a portion of the flesh upon a fire which had previously been lit, they seemed to remember that I was of the party; something was said to one of the women, who cut off a foot from the leg she had in her possession, and offered it to me; I thought it prudent to accept of it, and wrapping it in my handkerchief, and pointing to my tent, they nodded assent, and I joyfully availed myself of their permission to retire. They shortly afterwards returned to their huts with the debris of the feast, and during the day, to the horror and annoyance of my two boys, and those belonging to the establishment, they brought another part, and some half-picked bones, and offered them to us. The head

was struck off with a tomahawk and placed between hot stones in the hollow of a tree, where it has undergone a process of baking, and it is still left there otherwise untouched.”]



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Many methods of obtaining the various articles of food, are resorted to by the natives, some of these are very simple; some exceedingly ingenious; whilst others require great tact and skill; and not a few exercise to their fullest extent those qualities, which they possess so greatly, and prize so highly, such as quickness of sight, readiness of hand, caution in arranging plans, judgment in directing them, patience in waiting for the result, endurance in pursuing, and strength in holding fast.

Fish are procured in different ways. They are caught with weirs or dams, as already described; and also with large seines made of string manufactured from the rush, and buoyed up with dry reeds, bound into bundles, and weighted by stones tied to the bottom. This is used just in the same way as the European seine, being either shot from a canoe, or set by swimming or wading, according to the depth of the water. Great numbers of fish of various kinds, and often of a large size, are caught in this way. Fresh water turtles, varying in weight from three to twelve pounds, are also taken in the same way, and are excellent eating.

Another kind of net (ngail-le) used in fishing is made of slender twine, and has a large mesh. It is long, but not more than from two to three feet deep. A string is passed through the loops of the upper part, and is then stretched across a lagoon, or any other sheet of still water, the upper part being nearly level with the surface of the water, and the lower part dangling loose below, without weight. In setting it each extremity is fastened to a pole or spear, stuck firmly in the mud to keep it in its place, whilst a third pole is occasionally put in the middle. A few dry reeds are sometimes fastened at intervals to the line, running through the upper part to prevent the net from sinking too low. When set, the native either remains by it to take the fish out as they are caught, or leaves it there all night. The fish swimming about the lagoon, or sporting near the surface, strike against the net, and get their heads fast in the meshes. The net swinging loose, yields to their pressure, and entangles them the more as they struggle to extricate themselves from it. This is a most destructive mode of catching fish, and generally secures the finest and largest.

Fish are sometimes taken in another way. A party of natives proceed to a lagoon, or lake of still water, each carrying in his hand a small net (ken-de-ran-ko) of a semi-oval shape, about twenty inches long, from seven to nine inches across, and from five to seven inches deep. This net is kept in shape by a thin hoop of wood running round it in the upper part. With this the native dives to the bottom, and searches among the weeds until he sees a fish; he then cautiously places the net under it, and, rising suddenly to the surface, holds his victim at arm's length above his head; and then biting it to kill it, he throws it on the shore and dives down again for another.

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The natives are very skilful in this mode of fishing, and it is an interesting sight to see several of them in the water diving together, and exerting themselves against each other in their efforts to catch the best fish, whilst the affrighted inhabitants of the water swim wildly and confusedly about, seeking shelter in the mud and weeds, only to become an easier prey. I have even seen natives dive down in the river, without net or implement of any kind, and bring up good-sized fish, which they had caught with their hands at the bottom.

Another method of diving with the net is conducted on a larger scale. The net itself is made of strong twine, from six to eight feet long, oval at the top, about two feet across, and two deep. It is looped to a wooden hoop or bow, with a strong string drawn tightly across the two ends of the bow, and passed through the loops of the straight side of the net. With this two natives dive together under the cliffs which confine the waters of the Murray, each holding one end of the bow. They then place it before any hole or cavity there may be in the rocks beneath the surface, with the size, shape, and position of which they have by previous experience become well acquainted; the terrified fish is then driven into the net and secured. Fishes varying from twenty to seventy pounds are caught in this way. It is only, however, at particular seasons of the year, when the female fish are seeking for a place to deposit their spawn that this mode of fishing can be adopted.

Other kinds of hoop-nets are used for catching fish in shallow waters, or for taking the shrimp, and a small fish like the white-bait, but they need not be particularly described.

The next principal mode of procuring fish is by spearing them, and even this is performed in a variety of ways, according to the season of the year, the description of fish to be taken, and the peculiarities of the place where they are found. In the shallow waters upon the sea-coast the native wades with his spear and throwing-stick, and follows the windings of the fish with singular rapidity and skill, rarely missing his aim where he has an opportunity of striking.

In the larger rivers, when the waters are low and clear, a party of natives varying in numbers from five to forty plunge in with their spears, which for the purpose are made of hard wood, with smooth, sharp points, and about six feet long. Forming themselves into a large semicircle in the water, they all dive down, simultaneously, with their weapons, accompanied sometimes by a young man, a few yards in advance of the middle of the party, and without a spear. For a considerable time they remain under water, and then, if successful, gradually emerge, and deliver the fish that have been speared, to their friends on the shore. If unsuccessful they swim a few yards further down, and dive again with their weapons. And thus they frequently go on for a mile or two, until they are either tired or satisfied with their success. I have known a party of thirty natives kill seven or eight fish in the course of an hour, none of which were under fifteen pounds, whilst some of them were much larger.

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The regularity with which they keep their relative positions, notwithstanding the current of the river, and the dexterity and order with which they dive under the water, are truly surprising to a person who witnesses them for the first time.

At the period of floods, and when they have nearly attained their height, and the young reeds and rushes begin to shew themselves above the surface of the water, near the bank of rivers or of lagoons formed by the floods in the alluvial flats behind, another method of spearing fish is practised from a canoe (mun) made out of a solid sheet of the bark of the gum-tree (eucalyptus).

To these reeds the fish are very fond of resorting, probably to feed upon the insects that are found upon the tender leaves; in moving about from one place to another they strike against the reeds, and produce a vibration in the tops above the water; this indicates to the native, who is sailing stealthily along in his canoe, the exact place where they are passing, and suddenly raising his arm with great energy he strikes forcibly among the reeds with his spear, without letting it go out of his hand. If the first blow does not succeed, it is rapidly repeated, and seldom fails in securing a prize. When a large fish is speared, it is pressed downwards to the ground, and the native leaps out of his canoe and dives to the bottom to secure it. The spear (moo-ar-roo) used in this method of fishing varies from ten to sixteen feet in length, and is made of pine, pliant, and of nearly a uniform thickness; it is about an inch and a half in diameter, and has two short pointed pieces of hard wood lashed to one end, projecting about five or six inches, and set a little apart, so as to form a kind of prongs or grains. This instrument is also used for propelling the canoe.

It is used too for spearing fish by night, which is by far the most interesting method of any.

Having previously prepared his canoe, straightened his spear, and hardened and sharpened the points of the prongs, the native breaks up his fire-wood in small pieces, and loads his canoe with a stock calculated to last the time he intends to be absent. An oval piece of bark, about three feet long and two broad, is then coated over with wet mud and placed in the stern of the canoe, on a framework of sticks. One or two sticks are stuck upright in the mud, and others placed around them in the form of a cone. A fire is then put underneath, and the native, stepping into the bow of his canoe, pushes steadily into the stream, and commences his nocturnal employment. The wood of which the fire is made is of a particular kind, and, as only one description of tree will answer, it has frequently to be brought from a considerable distance. It is obtained among the brush of the table-land stretching behind the valley of the Murray, on either side, and its peculiarities are that it is light, brittle, and resinous, emitting when burning a most agreeable fragrance and a powerful and brilliant light, almost wholly free from smoke.

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Two men usually accompany each canoe, one to attend to the fire, and keep it always burning brightly, and the other to guide the canoe and spear the fish. As soon as the fire begins to blaze up the scene becomes most beautiful. The low black looking piece of bark floats noiselessly down the middle of the stream, or stealthily glides under the frowning cliffs, now lit up by a brilliant light. In the bow is seen the dark, naked, but graceful form of the savage, standing firm and erect, and scarcely seeming to move, as with the slightest motion of his arms he guides the frail canoe. His spear is grasped in his hand, whilst his whole attitude and appearance denote the most intense vigilance and attention. Suddenly you see his arm uplifted, and the weapon descending with the rapidity of thought, a splash is seen, a struggle heard, and a fish is slowly and cautiously drawn towards the canoe pierced through with the spear. If it is a large one, the native at once plunges into the water, still retaining his hold of the spear, and soon reappears with the trophy in his arms.

Among the rocks under the cliffs, or among logs or roots of trees, or on a clayey bottom, large fresh-water lobsters (poo-ta-ron-ko) are procured in the same way, weighing from two to four pounds each, and of a most delicate and excellent flavour. I have frequently been out with a single native, and seen him spear from ten to sixteen of these in an hour or two.

It has a singular and powerful effect upon the imagination, to witness at midnight a fleet of these canoes, gliding about in the distance like so many balls of fire, imparting a still deeper shade to the gloom of darkness which surrounds the spectator, and throwing an air of romance on the whole scene. Occasionally in travelling at night, and coming suddenly upon the river from the scrub behind, I have been dazzled and enchanted with the fairy sight that has burst upon me. The waters have been alive with brilliant fires, moving to and fro in every direction, like meteors from a marsh, and like those too, rapidly and inexplicably disappearing when the footsteps of strangers are heard approaching.

A few other methods of catching fish are sometimes resorted to, such as stirring up the mud in stagnant ponds, and taking the fish when they come up almost choked to the surface. Groping with their hands or with boughs, *etc. etc.*

There is also a particular season of the year (about September), when in the larger rivers the fish become ill or diseased, and lie floating on the surface unable to descend, or drift down dead with the current. Fishes weighing nearly eighty pounds are sometimes taken in this way. The natives are always looking out for opportunities of procuring food so easily, and never hesitate to eat any fish, although they may have been dead for some time.

I have never seen the natives use hooks in fishing of their own manufacture, nor do I believe that they ever make any, though they are glad enough to get them from Europeans.

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The large fresh-water lobster is sometimes procured by diving, in which case the females are generally employed, as the weather is cold, and night is the best time to procure them. It is extraordinary to see a party of women plunge into the water on a cold dark night, and swim and dive about amongst logs, stumps, roots, and weeds without ever hurting themselves, and seldom failing to obtain the object of their search.

Turtles are procured in the same way, but generally by the men, and in the day time.

Muscles of a very large kind are also got by diving. The women whose duty it is to collect these, go into the water with small nets (len-ko) hung round their necks, and diving to the bottom pick up as many as they can, put them into their bags, and rise to the surface for fresh air, repeating the operation until their bags have been filled. They have the power of remaining for a long time under the water, and when they rise to the surface for air, the head and sometimes the mouth only is exposed. A stranger suddenly coming to the river when they were all below, would be puzzled to make out what the black objects were, so frequently appearing and disappearing in the water.

Cray-fish of the small kind (u-kod-ko) weighing from four to six ounces are obtained by the women wading into the water as already described, or by men wading and using a large bow-net, called a "wharro," which is dragged along by two or three of them close to the bottom where the water is not too deep.

Frogs are dug out of the ground by the women, or caught in the marshes, and used in every stage from the tadpole upwards.

Rats are also dug out of the ground, but they are procured in the greatest numbers and with the utmost facility when the approach of the floods in the river flats compels them to evacuate their domiciles. A variety is procured among the scrubs under a singular pile or nest which they make of sticks, in the shape of a hay-cock, three or four feet high and many feet in circumference. A great many occupy the same pile and are killed with sticks as they run out.

Snakes, lizards and other reptiles are procured among the rocks or in the scrubs. Grubs are got out of the gum-tree into which they eat their way, as also out of the roots of the mimosa, the leaves of the zamia, the trunk of the xanthorra, and a variety of other plants and shrubs.

One particularly large white grub, and a great bon-bouche to the natives, is procured out of the ground. It is about four inches long and half an inch in thickness, and is obtained by attaching a thin narrow hook of hard wood to the long, wiry shoots of the polygonum, and then pushing this gently down the hole through which the grub has burrowed into the earth until it is hooked. Grubs are procured at a depth of seven feet in this way without the delay or trouble of digging.

Moths are procured as before described; or the larger varieties are caught at nights whilst flying about.

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Fungi are abundant, and of great variety. Some are obtained from the surface of the ground, others below it, and others again from the trunks and boughs of trees.

Roots of all kinds are procured by digging, one of the most important being that of the flag or cooper's reed, which grows in marshes or alluvial soils that are subject to periodical inundations. This is used more or less at all seasons of the year, but is best after the floods have retired and the tops have become decayed and been burnt off. The root is roasted in hot ashes, and chewed, when it affords a nutritious and pleasant farinaceous food.

The belillah is another important bulbous root, which also grows on lands subject to floods. It is about the size of a walnut, of a hard and oily nature, and is prepared by being roasted and pounded into a thin cake between two stones. Immense tracts of country are covered with this plant on the flats of the Murray, which in the distance look like the most beautiful and luxuriant meadows. After the floods have retired I have seen several hundreds of acres, with the stems of the plant six or seven feet high, and growing so closely together as to render it very difficult to penetrate far amongst them.

The thick pulpy leaf of the mesembryanthemum is in general use in all parts of Australia which I have visited, and is eaten as a sort of relish with almost every other kind of food. That which grows upon the elevated table lands is preferred to that which is found in the valleys. It is selected when the full vigour of the plant begins to decline and the tips of the leaves become red, but before the leaf is at all withered. The fruit is used both when first ripe and also after it has become dried up and apparently withered. In each case it has an agreeable flavour and is much prized by the natives.

Many other descriptions of fruits and berries are made use of in different parts of the continent, the chief of which, so far as their use has come under my own observation, are—

1. A kind of fruit called in the Moorunde dialect "ketango," about the size and shape of a Siberian crab, but rounder. When this is ripe, it is of a deep red colour, and consists of a solid mealy substance, about the eighth of an inch in thickness, enclosing a large round stone, which, upon being broken, yields a well-flavoured kernel. The edible part of the fruit has an agreeable acid taste, and makes excellent puddings or preserves, for which purpose it is now extensively used by Europeans. The shrub on which this grows, is very elegant and graceful, and varies from four to twelve feet in height. [Note 71: A species of fusanus.] When in full bearing, nothing can exceed its beauty, drooping beneath its crimson load.

Another shrub found in the scrubs, may sometimes be mistaken for this, as it bears in appearance a similar fruit; but on being tasted, it is bitter and nauseous. This in the Murray dialect is called "netting." The natives prepare it by baking it in an oven, which takes the bitter taste away. The "netting" is earlier in season than the "ketango."



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2. A berry about the size and shape of a large sloe, but with a smaller stone; conical in shape, and rounded at the large end. This fruit is juicy and saline, though not disagreeable in taste. There are several varieties of it, which when ripe are of a black, red, or yellow colour. The black is the best. The bush upon which it grows is a salsolaceous bramble [Note 72: *Nitraria Australis*], and is found in large quantities on the saline flats, bordering some parts of the Murrumbidgee and Murray rivers; and along the low parts of the southern coast, immediately behind the ridges bounding the sea shore. It is a staple article of food in its season, among the natives of those districts where it abounds, and is eaten by them raw, stone and all.

3. A small berry or currant, called by the natives of Moorunde “eertapko,” about the size of No. 2. shot. When ripe it is red, and of an agreeable acid flavour. It grows upon a low creeping tap-rooted plant, of a salsolaceous character, found in the alluvial flats of the Murray, among the polygonum brushes, and in many other places. A single plant will spread over an area of many yards in diameter, covering the dry and arid ground with a close, soft, and velvety carpet in the heat of summer, at which time the fruit is in perfection. To collect so small a berry with facility, and in abundance, the natives cut a rounded tray of thin bark, two or three feet long, and six or eight inches wide, over this they lift up the plant, upon which the fruit grows, and shake the berries into it. When a sufficiency has been collected, the berries are skilfully tossed into the air, and separated from the leaves and dirt. The natives are very fond of this fruit, which affords them an inexhaustible resource for many weeks. In an hour a native could collect more than he could use in a day.

The other sorts of fruits and berries are numerous and varied, but do not merit particular description.

[Note 73: Mr. Simpson gives the following account of the Bunya Bunya, a fruit-bearing tree lately discovered on the N.E. coast of New Holland.

“Ascending a steep hill, some four miles further on, we passed through a bunya scrub, and for the first time had an opportunity of examining this noble tree more closely. It raises its majestic head above every other tree in the forest, and must, therefore, frequently reach the height of 250 feet; the trunk is beautifully formed, being as straight as an arrow, and perfectly branchless for above two-thirds of its height; branches then strike off, nearly at right angles from the trunk, forming circles which gradually diminish in diameter till they reach the summit, which terminates in a single shoot; the foliage shining, dark green, the leaves acutely pointed and lanceolate, with large green cones, the size of a child’s head, hanging from the terminal branches in the fruiting season (January). It is, too, very remarkable that the bunya tree, according to the natives, is



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nowhere to be met with but in these parts; it is, however, there is no doubt, a species of the araucaria genus, well known in South America; the timber, when green, is white, fine grained and very tough, but whether it retains these qualities when dry, has not yet been determined. The Aborigines are particularly fond of the bunya nuts, which are as large as a full sized almond, including the shell, and, in good seasons, come from a distance of 100 or 200 miles to feast upon them.”]

Bark from the roots of trees and shrubs is roasted, and then pounded between two stones for use.

Gums exude from the trees on which they are procured. These are generally varieties of the Mimosa.

Manna exudes in great abundance from the tree already mentioned, as constituting the firewood which the natives use in fishing by night. It is of a mottled red or brown colour, of a firm consistency and sweet taste, resembling exactly in appearance, flavour, and colour, the manna used medicinally in Europe.

Another variety is yielded by the Eucalyptus mannifera and is found early in the morning under the tree, scattered on the ground. This is beautifully white and delicate, resembling flakes of snow.

Honey is procured by steeping the cones of the Banksia or other melliferous flowers in water. It is procured pure from the hives of the native bees, found in cavities of rocks, and the hollow branches of trees. The method of discovering the hive is ingenious. Having caught one of the honey bees, which in size exceeds very little the common house fly, the native sticks a piece of feather or white down to it with gum, and then letting it go, sets off after it as fast as he can: keeping his eye steadily fixed upon the insect, he rushes along like a madman, tumbling over trees and bushes that lie in his way, but rarely losing sight of his object, until conducted to its well-filled store, he is amply paid for all his trouble. The honey is not so firm as that of the English bee, but is of very fine flavour and quality.

White ants are dug in great numbers out of their nests in the ground, which are generally found in the scrubs. They are a favourite food of the natives in the spring of the year. The females only are used, and at a time just before depositing their eggs. They are separated from the dirt that is taken up with them, by being thrown into the air, and caught again upon a trough of bark.

The eggs of birds are extensively eaten by the natives, being chiefly confined to those kinds that leave the nest at birth, as the leipoa, the emu, the swan, the goose, the duck, *etc.* But of others, where the young remain some time in the nest after being hatched,



the eggs are usually left, and the young taken before they can fly. The eggs of the leipoa, or native pheasant, are found in singular-looking mounds of sand, thrown up by the bird in the midst of the scrubs, and often measuring several yards in circumference. The egg is about the size of the goose egg, but the shell is extremely thin and fragile. The young are hatched by the heat of the sand and leaves, with which the eggs are covered. Each egg is deposited separately, and the number found in one nest varies from one to ten.

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One nest that I examined, and that only a small one, was twelve yards in circumference, eighteen inches high, and shaped like a dome. It was formed entirely of sand scraped up by the bird with its feet. Under the centre of the dome, and below the level of the surrounding ground was an irregular oval hole, about eighteen inches deep, and twelve in diameter. In this, the eggs were deposited in different layers among sand and leaves; on the lower tier was only one egg, on the next two, at a depth of four or five inches from the ground. All the eggs were placed upon their smaller ends, and standing upright. The colour of the egg is a dark reddish pink; its length, three inches six-tenths; breadth, two inches two-tenths; circumference, lengthwise, ten inches, and across, seven inches two-tenths. The eggs appear to be deposited at considerable intervals. In the nest alluded to, two eggs had only been laid sixteen days after it was discovered, at which time there had been one previously deposited. The bird is shaped like a hen pheasant, of a brownish colour, barred with black, and its weight is about four pounds and a half.

The eggs of the emu are rather smaller than those of the ostrich. They are of a dark green colour and the shell is very thick. They are deposited by the bird almost upon the ground, in the vicinity of a few bushes, or tufts of grass, and usually in a country that is tolerably open; a great many eggs are found in one nest, so that it is generally looked upon by the natives as a great prize.

Eggs are eaten in all stages. I have even seen rotten ones roasted, and devoured with great relish.

Kangaroos are speared, netted, or caught in pit falls. Four methods of spearing them are practised. 1st. A native travelling with his family through the woods, when he sees a kangaroo feeding or sleeping, will steal silently and cautiously upon it, keeping, as he advances, a tree or shrub between himself and the animal, or holding up before him, if he be in an open place, a large branch of a tree, until sufficiently near to throw the fatal weapon. 2ndly. Two natives get upon the track of a kangaroo, which they follow up perseveringly even for two or three days, sleeping upon it at night, and renewing their pursuit in the morning, until, at last, the wearied animal, fairly tired out by its relentless pursuers, is no longer able to fly before them, and at last becomes a prize to the perseverance of the hunters. 3rdly. A small hut of reeds is made near the springs, or water holes, in those districts, where water is scarce; and in this, or in the top of a tree, if there be one near, the native carefully conceals himself, and patiently waits until his game comes to drink, when he is almost sure to strike it with his spear, seldom quitting his lurking place without an ample remuneration for his confinement. 4thly. A large party of men go out early in the morning, generally armed with barbed spears, and take their stations upon ground

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that has been previously fixed upon in a large semicircle. The women and children, with a few men, then beat up, and fire the country for a considerable extent, driving the game before them in the direction of the persons who are lying in wait, and who gradually contract the space they had been spread over, until they meet the other party, and then closing their ranks in a ring upon the devoted animals, with wild cries and shouts they drive them back to the centre as they attempt to escape, until, at last, in the conflict, many of them are slaughtered. At other times, the ground is so selected as to enable them to drive the game over a precipice, or into a river, where it is easily taken. Netting the kangaroo does not require so large a party; it is done by simply setting a strong net (*mugn-ko*) across the path, which the animal is accustomed to frequent, and keeping it in its place by long sticks, with a fork upon the top. A few natives then shew themselves in a direction opposite to that of the net, and the kangaroo being alarmed, takes to his usual path, gets entangled in the meshes, and is soon despatched by persons who have been lying in wait to pounce upon him.

Pitfalls are also dug to catch the kangaroo around the springs, or pools of water they are accustomed to frequent. These are covered lightly over with small sticks, boughs, *etc.* and the animal going to drink, hops upon them, and falls into the pit without being able to get out again. I have only known this method of taking the kangaroo practised in Western Australia, between Swan River and King George's Sound,

The emu is taken similarly to the kangaroo. It is speared in the first, third, and fourth methods I have described. It is also netted like the kangaroo, indeed with the same net, only that the places selected for setting it are near the entrance to creeks, ravines, flats bounded by steep banks, and any other place where the ground is such as to hold out the hope, that by driving up the game it may be compelled, by surrounding scouts, to pass the place where the net is set. When caught the old men hasten up, and clasping the bird firmly round the neck with their arms, hold it or throw it on the ground, whilst others come to their assistance and despatch it. This is, however, a dangerous feat, and I have known a native severely wounded in attempting it; a kick from an emu would break a person's leg, though the natives generally keep so close to the bird as to prevent it from doing them much harm.

The emu is frequently netted by night through a peculiarity in the habits of the bird, that is well-known to the natives, and which is, that it generally comes back every night to sleep on one spot for a long time together. Having ascertained where the sleeping place is, the natives set the net at some little distance away, and then supplying themselves with fire-sticks, form a line from each end of the net, diverging in the distance. The party may now be considered as forming two sides of a triangle, with the net at the apex and the game about the middle of the base; as soon as the sides are formed, other natives arrange themselves in a line at the base, and put the bird up. The

emu finding only one course free from fire-sticks, viz. that towards the net or apex of the triangle, takes that direction, and becomes ensnared.

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Opossums are of various kinds and sizes. They inhabit the hollows of trees, or sometimes the tops, where they make a house for themselves with boughs. They are also found in the holes of rocks. They are hunted both in the day-time and by moon-light. During the day the native, as he passes along, examines minutely the bark of the trees, to see whether any marks have been left by the claws of the animal in climbing on the previous night. If he finds any he is sure that an opossum is concealed, either in that tree or one adjoining. The way he distinguishes whether the marks are recently made or otherwise is, by examining the appearance of the bark where the wound is, if fresh it is white, has rough edges, or has grains of sand adhering to it; if otherwise it is dry and brown, and free from loose particles. Having ascertained that an opossum has recently been there, he then ascends the tree to look for it; this, if the tree be in a leaning position, or has a rough bark, is not difficult to him, and he rarely requires any other aid than his hands and feet; but if the bark be smooth, and the tree straight, or of very large dimensions, he requires the assistance of his stone hatchet, or of a strong sharp-pointed stick, flattened on one side near the point (called in the Adelaide dialect, "Wadna," in that of Moorunde "Ngakko,"); with this instrument a notch is made in the bark about two feet above the ground. In this the small toes of the left foot are placed, the left arm is employed in clasping the trunk of the tree, and the right in cutting another notch for the right foot, about two feet above the first; but a little to one side of it, the wadna or ngakko is now stuck firmly in the bark above, and serves to enable him to raise the body whilst gaining the second notch, into which the ball of the great toe of the right foot is placed, and the implement liberated to make a third step on the left side, and so on successively until the tree is ascended. The descent is made in the same manner, by clasping the tree, and supporting the feet in the notches. The principle of climbing in the way described, appears to consist in always having three points of contact with the tree, either two arms and one leg, or two legs and one arm.

Having got up the tree, the native proceeds to search for any holes there may be in its trunk, or among the boughs; these vary from one foot to nine, or more, in depth, for the whole trunk itself is sometimes hollow. To ascertain in which hole the opossum is, the native drops in a pebble or a piece of bark, or a broken bit of stick, and then applying his ear to the outside, listens for the rustling motion made by the animal in shifting its position, when disturbed by what has been dropped upon it. A stick is sometimes made use of, if the hole be not very deep, for the same purpose, after inserting it in the hole, and twisting the rough end round and withdrawing it, he looks to see if any fur is left on the point, if so, the animal is there, but if the point of the stick shews no fur, he goes to the next hole or tree, and so on until he finds it.

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If not very far in the hole the native puts in his arm, and draws it out by the tail, striking its head violently against the tree to prevent its biting him, as soon as it is clear of the orifice; if the hole be deep, the furthest point to which the animal can recede is ascertained, and an opening made near it with whatever implement he may be using. If the whole trunk of the tree, or a large portion of it be hollow, a fire is made in the lower opening, which soon drives out the game.

When opossums are hunted by moonlight, the native dog is useful in scenting them along the ground where they sometimes feed, and in guiding the native to the tree they have ascended, when alarmed at his approach. They are then either knocked down with sticks or the tree is ascended as in the day time.

Flying squirrels are procured in the same way as opossums. The sloth, which is an animal as large as a good sized monkey, is also caught among the branches of the larger scrub-trees, among which it hides itself; but it is never found in holes.

Wallabies are of many kinds, and are killed in various ways. By hunting with bwirris, by nets, by digging out of the ground; the larger sorts, as rock wallabies, by spearing, and several kinds by making runs, into which they are driven. In hunting with bwirris (a short heavy stick with a knob at one end) a party of natives go out into the scrub and beat the bushes in line, if any game gets up, the native who sees it, gives a peculiar "whir-rr" as a signal for the others to look out, and the animal is at once chased and bwirris thrown at him in all directions, the peculiar sound of the "whir-rr" always guiding them to the direction he has taken. It rarely happens that an animal escapes if the party of natives be at all numerous.

In netting the wallabies, a party of seven or eight men go in advance, with each a net of from twenty to forty feet long, and when they arrive near the runs, usually made use of by these animals, a favourable spot is selected, and the nets set generally in a line and nearly together, each native concealing himself near his own net. The women and children who, in the mean time had been making a considerable circuit, now begin to beat amongst the bushes with the wind, shouting and driving the wallabies before them towards the nets, where they are caught and killed.

Other species of the wallabie burrow in the ground like rabbits, and are dug out. The large rock-wallabies are speared by the natives creeping upon them stealthily among the rugged rocks which they frequent, on the summits of precipitous heights which have craggy or overhanging cliffs.

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In making runs for taking the wallabie, the natives break the branches from the bushes, and laying them one upon another, form, through the scrubs, two lines of bush fence, diverging from an apex sometimes to the extent of several miles, and having at intervals large angles formed by the fence diverging. At the principal apex and at all the angles or corners the bushes are tied up, and a hole in the fence left like the run of a hare. At each of these a native is stationed with his bwirris, and the women then beating up the country, from the base of the triangle drive up the game, which finding themselves stopped by the bush fence on either side, run along in search of an opening until the first angle presents itself, when they try to escape by the run, and are knocked on the head by the native guarding it.

Native companions and swans are sometimes speared or killed with bwirris; the latter are also caught easily in the water holes or lakes when moulting, as they are then unable to fly. Pelicans are caught in nets or whilst asleep in the water, by natives wading in and seizing them by the legs.

Wild dogs are speared, but young ones are often kept and tamed, to assist in hunting, in which they are very useful. The wombat is driven to his hole with dogs at night, and a fire being lighted inside, the mouth is closed with stones and earth. The animal being by this means suffocated, is dug out at convenience.

Birds are killed on the wing, with bwirris, or whilst resting on the ground, or in the water, or upon branches of trees. They are also taken by spearing, by snaring, by noosing, and by netting. In spearing them the natives make use of a very light reed spear (kiko), which is pointed with hard wood, and projected when used, with the nga-waonk or throwing stick. They resort to the lagoons or river flats, when flooded, and either wading or in canoes, chase and spear the wild fowl. The kiko is thrown to a very great distance, with amazing rapidity and precision, so that a native is frequently very successful by this method, particularly so when the young broods of duck and other wild fowl are nearly full grown, but still unable to fly far. Getting into his canoe, the native paddles along with extraordinary celerity after his game, chasing them from one side of the lagoon to the other, until he loads himself with spoil.

Ducks and teal are caught by snaring, which is practised in the following manner. After ascertaining where there is a shelving bank to any of the lagoons, which is frequented by these birds, and upon which there is grass, or other food that they like near the edges, the natives get a number of strong reeds, bend them in the middle, and force the two ends of each into the ground, about seven inches apart, forming a number of triangles, with their uppermost extremities about five or six inches from the ground. From these, strings are suspended with slip nooses, and when a sufficient number are set, the natives go away, to let the ducks come up to feed. This they soon do; and whilst poking their heads about in every direction a great many push them through the snares and get hung.



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Noosing waterfowl is another general and very successful mode of taking them. It is performed by a native, with a tat-tat-ko, or long rod, tapering like a fishing rod, but longer, and having a piece of string at the end, with a slip noose working over the pliant twig which forms the last joint of the rod. [Note 74: Plate 4, fig. 1. (not reproduced in this etext)] This being prepared, and it having been ascertained where the birds are, the native binds a quantity of grass or weeds around his head, and then taking his long instrument, plunges into the water and swims slowly and cautiously towards them, whilst they see nothing but a tuft of grass or weeds coming floating towards them, of which they take no notice, until coming close upon them he gently raises the tapering end of the instrument, and carefully putting the noose over the head of the bird, draws it under water towards him. After taking it out of the noose, he tucks its head in his belt, or lets it float on the water, whilst he proceeds to catch another, or as many more as he can before the birds take the alarm at the struggles of their companions, and fly away. A windy day is generally selected for this employment, when the water is ruffled by waves. On such occasions a skilful native will secure a great many birds.

Netting birds remains to be described, and is the most destructive mode of taking them of any that is practised. Geese, ducks, teal, widgeons, shags, pelicans, pigeons, and others are procured in this way. The method adopted is as follows:—a large square or oblong net, (kue-rad-ko) from thirty to sixty feet broad, and from twenty to forty deep, is formed by lacing together pieces of old fishing nets, or any others, made of light twine, that they may have. A strong cord is then passed through the meshes of one end, and tied at both extremes of the net. The natives then go down to a lagoon of moderate width, where two tall trees may be standing opposite to each other on different sides, or they select an opening of a similar kind among the trees on the bank of the river, through which the ducks, or other birds, are in the habit of passing when flying between the river and the lagoons. An old man ascends each of the trees, and over the topmost branch of both lowers the end of a strong cord passing through the net. The other end is tied near the root of each tree, and serves for the native, who is stationed there, to raise or lower the net as it may be required. When set, the ropes are hauled tight, and the net dangles in the air between the two trees, hanging over the lagoon, or dry passage, as the case may be. All being ready, a native is left holding each end of the rope, and others are stationed at convenient places near, with little round pieces of bark in their hands to throw at the birds, and drive them onwards as they approach the net. The women are then sent to put the birds up, and they come flying through the open space towards the net, not dreaming of the

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evil that awaits them; as they approach nearer, the two natives at the trees utter a shrill whistle, resembling the note of the hawk, upon which the flock, which usually consists of ducks, lower their flight at once, and proceeding onwards, strike full against the net, which is instantly lowered by the men attending to it, and the birds are left struggling in the water, or on the ground, entangled in its meshes, whilst the natives are busy paddling in their canoes, or scampering towards the net on the ground, to wring their necks off, and get the instrument of destruction raised again, to be ready for the next flight that may come. Should the birds fly too high, or be inclined to take any other direction, little pieces of bark are thrown above them, or across their path, by the natives stationed for that purpose. These circling through the air, make a whirring noise like the swoop of the eagle when darting on his prey, and the birds fancying their enemy upon them, recede from the pieces of bark, and lowering their flight, become entangled in the net. Early in the morning, late in the evening, and occasionally in the night, this work is conducted, with the greatest success, though many are caught sometimes in the day.

As many as fifty birds are taken in a single haul. I have myself, with the aid of a native, caught thirty-three, and many more would have been got, but that the net was old, and the birds broke through it before they could be all killed. On other occasions, I have been out with the natives, where a party of five or six have procured from twenty to thirty ducks, on an average, daily, for many days successively. In these occupations the natives make use of a peculiar shrill whistle to frighten down the birds; it is produced by pulling out the under lip with the fore-finger and thumb, and pressing it together, whilst the tongue is placed against the groove, or hollow thus formed, and the breath strongly forced through. Whistling is also practised in a variety of other ways, and has peculiar sounds well known to the natives, which indicate the object of the call. It is used to call attention, to point out that game is near, to make each other aware of their respective positions in a wooded country, or to put another on his guard that an enemy is near, *etc.*, *etc.*

Such is an outline of some of the kinds of food used by the natives, and the modes of procuring it as practised in various parts of Australia where I have been. There is an endless variety of other articles, and an infinite number of minute differences in the ways of procuring them, which it is unnecessary to enter upon in a work which professes to give only a general account of the Aborigines, their manners, habits, and customs, and not a full or complete history, which could only be compiled after the observation of many years devoted exclusively to so comprehensive a subject.

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In the preparation and cooking of their food, and in the extent to which this is carried, there are almost as many differences as there are varieties of food. Having no vessels capable of resisting the action of fire, the natives are unacquainted with the simple process of boiling. Their culinary operations are therefore confined to broiling on the hot coals, baking in hot ashes, and roasting, or steaming in ovens. The native oven is made by digging a circular hole in the ground, of a size corresponding to the quantity of food to be cooked. It is then lined with stones in the bottom, and a strong fire made over them, so as to heat them thoroughly, and dry the hole. As soon as the stones are judged to be sufficiently hot, the fire is removed, and a few of the stones taken, and put inside the animal to be roasted if it be a large one. A few leaves, or a handful of grass, are then sprinkled over the stones in the bottom of the oven, on which the animal is deposited, generally whole, with hot stones, which had been kept for that purpose, laid upon the top of it. It is covered with grass, or leaves, and then thickly coated over with earth, which effectually prevents the heat from escaping. Bark is sometimes used to cover the meat, instead of grass or leaves, and is in some respects better adapted for that purpose, being less liable to let dirt into the oven. I have seen meat cooked by the natives in this manner, which, when taken out, looked as clean and nicely roasted as any I ever saw from the best managed kitchen.

If the oven is required for steaming food, a process principally applied to vegetables and some kinds of fruits, the fire is in the same way removed from the heated stones, but instead of putting on dry grass or leaves, wet grass or water weeds are spread over them. The vegetables tied up in small bundles are piled over this in the central part of the oven, wet grass being placed above them again, dry grass or weeds upon the wet, and earth over all. In putting the earth over the heap, the natives commence around the base, gradually filling it upwards. When about two-thirds covered up all round, they force a strong sharp-pointed stick in three or four different places through the whole mass of grass weeds and vegetables, to the bottom of the oven. Upon withdrawing the stick, water is poured through the holes thus made upon the hissing stones below, the top grass is hastily closed over the apertures and the whole pile as rapidly covered up as possible to keep in the steam. The gathering vegetable food, and in fact the cooking and preparing of food generally, devolves upon the women, except in the case of an emu or a kangaroo, or some of the larger and more valuable animals, when the men take this duty upon themselves.

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In cooking vegetables, a single oven will suffice for three or four families, each woman receiving the same bundles of food when cooked, which she had put in. The smaller kinds of fish and shell-fish, birds and animals, frogs, turtle, eggs, reptiles, gums, *etc.*, are usually broiled upon the embers. Roots, bark of trees, *etc.*, are cooked in the hot ashes. Fungi are either eaten raw or are roasted. The white ant is always eaten raw. The larvae of insects and the leaves of plants are either eaten raw or in a cooked state. The larger animals, as the kangaroo, emu, native dog, *etc.* and the larger fishes, are usually roasted in the oven.

In preparing the food for the cooking process a variety of forms are observed. In most animals, as the opossum, wallabie, dog, kangaroo, *etc.* the the bones of the legs are invariably broken, and the fur is singed off; a small aperture is made in the belly, the entrails withdrawn, and the hole closed with a wooden skewer, to keep in the gravy whilst roasting. The entrails of all animals, birds, and fishes, are made use of, and are frequently eaten whilst the animal itself is being prepared. Most birds have the feathers pulled or singed off, they are then thrown on the fire for a moment or two and when warm are withdrawn, skinned and the skin eaten. The meat is now separated on each side of the breast bone, the limbs are disjointed and thrown back, and the bird is placed upon the fire, and soon cooked, from the previous dissection it had undergone, and from hot coals being put above it.

The smaller fish and reptiles are simply thrown upon the fire, sometimes gutted, at other times not. The larger fish are divided into three pieces, in the following manner. The fish is laid on its side, and a longitudinal cut made from the head to within three or four inches of the tail, just above where the ribs are joined to the back bone, these are separated by a sharp pointed stick, and the same done on the other side; a transverse incision is then made near the root of the tail, the gills are separated from the head, the fleshy part covering the back dissected from one to two inches thick, over the whole surface left between the longitudinal cuts that had been made in the sides, and extending from the head to the transverse incision near the tail. The divisions then consist of three pieces, one comprising the head, backbone, and tail, another the fleshy part that covered the back, and the third the belly and sides. The last is the most prized of the three. This method of dividing the fish is well adapted for ensuring rapid preparation in the process of cooking; it is also well suited for satisfying the respective owners and claimants; the three pieces being, if not quite equal in size, sufficiently so for the purpose of partition.

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There are many usages in force among the natives respecting the particular kinds of food allowed to be eaten at different ages; restrictions and limitations of many kinds are placed upon both sexes at different stages of life. What is proper to be eaten at one period, is disallowed at another, and vice versa. And although laws of this nature appear to be in force throughout the whole continent, there appear to be occasional differences of custom as to restriction in regard to both food and age. It also appears that there are more restrictions placed upon the females, until past the age of child-bearing, than upon the males.

Infants are not often weaned until between two and three years old; but during this time any food is given to them which they can eat, except those kind of vegetables which are likely to disagree with them. No restrictions are placed upon very young children of either sex, a portion being given to them of whatever food their parents may have. About nine or ten years appears to be the age at which limitations commence. Boys are now forbidden to eat the red kangaroo, or the female or the young ones of the other kinds; the musk duck, the white crane, the bandicoot, the native pheasant, (leipoa, meracco), the native companion, some kinds of fungi, the old male and female opossum, a kind of wallabie (linkara), three kinds of fish (toor-rue, toitchock, and boolye-a), the black duck, widgeon, whistling duck, shag (yarrilla), eagle, female water-mole (nee-witke), two kinds of turtles (rinka and tung-kanka), and some other varieties of food.

When young men they are disallowed the black duck, the widgeon, the whistling duck, the emu, the eggs of the emu, a fish called kalapko, the red kangaroo, the young of other kinds of kangaroo, if taken from the pouch; a kind of shag called yarrilla, the snake (yarl-dakko), the white crane, the eagle, a kind of water-mole (nee-witke), two kinds of turtle (rinka and tung-kanka), the musk-duck, the native dog, the large grub dug out of the ground (ronk), a vegetable food called war-itch (being that the emu feeds upon), the native companion, bandicoot, old male opossum, wallabie (linkara), coote, two fishes (toor-rue and toit-chock), *etc. etc.*

Married men, until from thirty-five to forty years of age, are still forbidden the red kangaroo, the young of any kangaroo from the pouch, the fish kalapko, the shag yarrilla, the coote, the white crane, the turtle rinka, the native companion, the eagle, *etc.*

Young females, before the breasts are fully developed, are disallowed the young of any of the kangaroo species if taken from the pouch, the red kangaroo, the white crane, the bandicoot, the native companion, the old male opossum, the wallabie (linkara), the shag (yarrilla), the eagle, *etc.*

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Full grown young females are not allowed to eat the male opossum, the wallabie (linkara), the red kangaroo, the fish kelapko, the black duck, the widgeon, the whistling duck, the coote, the native companion, two turtles (rinka and tung-kanka), the emu, the emu's egg, the snake (yarl-dakko), cray-fish which may have deformed claws, the female or the young from the pouch of any kangaroo, the musk duck, the white crane, the bandicoot, the wild dog, two kinds of fish (toor-rue and toitchock), the shag (yarrilla), the water mole (neewitke), the ground grub (ronk), the vegetable food eaten by the emu (war-itch), *etc.* When menstruating, they are not allowed to eat fish of any kind, or to go near the water at all; it being one of their superstitions, that if a female, in that state, goes near the water, no success can be expected by the men in fishing. Fish that are taken by the men diving under the cliffs, and which are always females about to deposit their spawn, are also forbidden to the native women.

Old men and women are allowed to eat anything, and there are very few things that they do not eat. Among the few exceptions are a species of toad, and the young of the wombat, when very small, and before the hair is well developed.

## Chapter IV.

### **PROPERTY IN LAND—DWELLINGS—WEAPONS—IMPLEMENTS—GOVERNMENT—CUSTOMS— SOCIAL RELATIONS—MARRIAGE—NOMENCLATURE.**

It has generally been imagined, but with great injustice, as well as incorrectness, that the natives have no idea of property in land, or proprietary rights connected with it. Nothing can be further from the truth than this assumption, although men of high character and standing, and who are otherwise benevolently disposed towards the natives, have distinctly denied this right, and maintained that the natives were not entitled to have any choice of land reserved for them out of their own possessions, and in their respective districts.

In the public journals of the colonies the question has often been discussed, and the same unjust assertion put forth. A single quotation will be sufficient to illustrate the spirit prevailing upon this point. It is from a letter on the subject published in South Australian Register of the 1st August, 1840:—"It would be difficult to define what conceivable proprietary rights were ever enjoyed by the miserable savages of South Australia, who never cultivated an inch of the soil, and whose ideas of the value of its direct produce never extended beyond obtaining a sufficiency of pieces of white chalk and red ochre wherewith to bedaub their bodies for their filthy robberies." Many similar proofs might be given of the general feeling entertained respecting the rights of the Aborigines, arising out of their original possession of the soil. It is a feeling, however, that can only have originated in an entire ignorance of the habits, customs, and

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ideas of this people. As far as my own observation has extended, I have found that particular districts, having a radius perhaps of from ten to twenty miles, or in other cases varying according to local circumstances, are considered generally as being the property and hunting-grounds of the tribes who frequent them. These districts are again parcelled out among the individual members of the tribe. Every male has some portion of land, of which he can always point out the exact boundaries. These properties are subdivided by a father among his sons during his own lifetime, and descend in almost hereditary succession. A man can dispose of or barter his land to others; but a female never inherits, nor has primogeniture among the sons any peculiar rights or advantages. Tribes can only come into each other's districts by permission, or invitation, in which case, strangers or visitors are always well treated. The following extract from Captain Grey's work gives the result of that gentlemen's observations in Western Australia, corroborated by Dr. Lang's experience of the practice among the natives of New South Wales, (vol. ii. p. 232 to 236.)

*"Traditional laws relative to landed property.*—Landed property does not belong to a tribe, or to several families, but to a single male; and the limits of his property are so accurately defined that every native knows those of his own land, and can point out the various objects which mark his boundary. I cannot establish the fact and the universality of this institution better than by the following letter addressed by Dr. Lang, the Principal of Sydney College, New South Wales, to Dr. Hodgkin, the zealous advocate of the Aboriginal Races:

*"Liverpool, 15th Nov. 1840.*

*"My Dear Friend,—In reply to the question which you proposed to me some time ago, in the course of conversation in London, and of which you have reminded me in the letter I had the pleasure of receiving from you yesterday, with the pamphlets and letters for America, viz.—'Whether the Aborigines of the Australian continent have any idea of property in land,' I beg to answer most decidedly in the affirmative. It is well known that these Aborigines in no instance cultivate the soil, but subsist entirely by hunting and fishing, and on the wild roots they find in certain localities (especially the common fern), with occasionally a little wild honey; indigenous fruits being exceedingly rare. The whole race is divided into tribes, more or less numerous, according to circumstances, and designated from the localities they inhabit; for although universally a wandering race with respect to places of habitation, their wanderings are circumscribed by certain well-defined limits, beyond which they seldom pass, except for purposes of war or festivity. In short, every tribe has its own district, the boundaries of which are well known to the natives generally; and within that district all the wild animals are*



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considered as much the property of the tribe inhabiting, or rather ranging on, its whole extent, as the flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, that have been introduced into the country by adventurous Europeans, are held by European law and usage the property of their respective owners. In fact, as the country is occupied chiefly for pastoral purposes, the difference between the Aboriginal and the European ideas of property in the soil is more imaginary than real, the native grass affording subsistence to the kangaroos of the natives, as well as to the wild cattle of the Europeans, and the only difference indeed being, that the former are not branded with a particular mark like the latter, and are somewhat wilder and more difficult to catch. Nay, as the European regards the intrusion of any other white man upon the *cattle-run*, of which European law and usage have made him the possessor, and gets it punished as a trespass, the Aborigines of the particular tribe inhabiting a particular district, regard the intrusion of any other tribe of Aborigines upon that district, for the purposes of kangaroo hunting, *etc.* as an intrusion, to be resisted and punished by force of arms. In short, this is the frequent cause of Aboriginal, as it is of European wars; man, in his natural state, being very much alike in all conditions—jealous of his rights, and exceedingly pugnacious. It is true, the European intruders pay no respect to these Aboriginal divisions of the territory, the black native being often hunted off his own ground, or destroyed by European violence, dissipation, or disease, just as his kangaroos are driven off that ground by the European's black cattle; but this surely does not alter the case as to the right of the Aborigines.

“But particular districts are not merely the property of particular tribes; particular sections or portions of these districts are universally recognised by the natives as the property of individual members of these tribes; and when the owner of such a section or portion of territory (as I ascertained was the case at King George's Island) has determined on burning off the grass on his land, which is done for the double purpose of enabling the natives to take the older animals more easily, and to provide a new crop of sweeter grass for the rising generation of the forest, not only all the other individuals of his own tribe, but whole tribes from other districts are invited to the hunting party, and the feast and dance, or corrobory that ensue; the wild animals on the ground being all considered the property of the owner of the land. I have often heard natives myself tell me, in answer to my questions on the subject, who were the Aboriginal owners of particular tracts of land now held by Europeans; and indeed this idea of property in the soil, *for hunting purposes*, is universal among the Aborigines. They seldom complain of the intrusion of Europeans; on the contrary, they are pleased at their *sitting down*,



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as they call it, on their land: they do not perceive that their own circumstances are thereby sadly altered for the worse in most cases; that their means of subsistence are gradually more and more limited, and their numbers rapidly diminished: in short, in the simplicity of their hearts, they take the frozen adder in their bosom, and it stings them to death. They look for a benefit or blessing from European intercourse, and it becomes their ruin.

"If I had a little more leisure I would have written more at length, and in a style more worthy of your perusal; but you may take it as certain, at all events, that the Aborigines of Australia *have* an idea of property in the soil in their native and original state, and that that idea is, in reality, not very different from that of the European proprietors of sheep and cattle, by whom they have, in so many instances, been dispossessed, without the slightest consideration of their rights or feelings.

"Indeed, the infinity of the native names of places, all of which are descriptive and appropriate, is of itself a *prima FACIE* evidence of their having strong ideas of property in the soil; for it is only where such ideas are entertained and acted on, that we find, as is certainly the case in Australia, NULLUM *sine* NOMINE SAXUM.

"I am, my dear Friend,  
"Your's very sincerely,  
"John Dunmore Lang.

"To Dr. Hodgkin."

The dwellings of the Aborigines are simple, of a very temporary character, and requiring but little skill or labour to construct them. In the summer season, or when the weather is fine, they consist of little more than a few bushes laid one upon the other, in the form of a semicircle, as a protection from the wind, for the head, which is laid usually close up to this slight fence. In the winter, or in cold or wet weather, the semicircular form is still preserved, but the back and sides are sheltered by branches raised upon one end, meeting at the top in an arch, and supported by props in front, the convex part being always exposed to the wind. The sizes of these huts depends upon the facilities that may be afforded for making them, the number of natives, and the state of the weather.

[Note 75: "Travelled northerly for 20 miles; at evening encamped at Tarcone, adjacent to the station (then being formed) of Drs. Bernard and Kilgour. The greater part of the servants at this establishment had been convicts, they were in a state of great insubordination. My native attendants pointed out an extensive weir, 200 feet long and five feet high; they said it was the property of a family, and emphatically remarked, "that white men had stolen it and their country;" the Yow-ew-nil-lurns were the original inhabitants. "Tapoe," the Mount Napier of Mitchell, is an isolated hill of volcanic

formation; the crater is broken down on the west side to its base. The great swamp is skirted by low hills and well grassed

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open forest land; the natives are still the undisputed occupants, no white men having been there to dispossess them. The people who occupy the country have fixed residences; at one village were 13 large huts, they are warm and well constructed, in shape of a cupola or "kraal;" a strong frame of wood is first made, and the whole covered with thick turf, with the grass inwards; there are several varieties; those like a kraal are sometimes double, having two entrances, others are demicircular; some are made with boughs and grass, and last are the temporary screens; one hut measured 10 feet diameter by five feet high, and sufficiently strong for a man on horseback to ride over.

"Left early, attended by Pevay, to reconnoitre the country. In the marshes numerous trenches were again met with; these resembled more the works of civilized than of savage men; they were of considerable extent; one continuous treble line measured 500 yards in length, two feet in width, and from 18 inches to two feet in depth; these treble dikes led to extensive ramified watercourses; the whole covered an area of at least ten acres, and must have been done at great cost of labour to the Aborigines, a convincing proof of their persevering industry. These are the most interesting specimens of native art I had seen; thousands of yards had been accomplished; the mountain streams were made to pass through them. In fishing, the natives use the arabine or eel-pot of platted grass, from nine to twelve feet in length. On the elevated ground were some of the largest ash-hills I had seen, and must have been the work of generations; one measured 31 yards in length, 29 in width, and two in height, with hollow cavities for the natives' bivouacs and camping places."—"Extract from Mr. Robinson's Letter, copied from papers relative to Australian Aborigines, printed for the House of Commons, August 1844, p. 240."]

Sometimes each married man will have a hut for himself, his wives, and family, including perhaps occasionally his mother, or some other near relative. At other times, large long huts are constructed, in which, from five to ten families reside, each having their own separate fire. Young unmarried men frequently unite in parties of six or eight, and make a hut for themselves. The materials of which the huts are composed, are generally small branches or boughs of trees, covered in wet weather with grass, or other similar material. At other times, and especially if large, or made in wet weather, they are formed of thick solid logs of wood, piled and arranged much in the same way as the lighter material, but presenting an appearance of durability that the others do not possess. In this case they are generally well covered over with grass, creeping plants, or whatever else may appear likely to render them waterproof. In travelling through the country, I have found that where bushes or shrubs abounded, I could at any time in an hour or two, by working hard, make myself a

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hut in which I could lie down, perfectly secure from any rain. The natives, of course, have much less difficulty in doing this, from their great skill and constant practice. In many parts of New Holland that I have been in, bark is almost exclusively used by the natives, for their huts; where it can be procured good it is better than any thing else. I have frequently seen sheets of bark twelve feet long, and eight or ten feet wide, without a single crack or flaw, in such cases one sheet would form a large and good hut; but even where it is of a far inferior description, it answers, by a little system in the arrangement, better than almost any thing else. Projecting, or overhanging rocks, caverns, hollows of trees, *etc. etc.*, are also frequently made use of by the natives for lodging houses in cold or wet weather. When hostile parties are supposed to be in the neighbourhood, the natives are very cautious in selecting secret and retired places to sleep. They go up on the high grounds, back among scrubs, or encamp in the hollows of watercourses, or where there are dense bushes of polygonum, or close belts of reeds; the fires are very small on these occasions, and sometimes none are made; you may thus have a large body of natives encamped very near you without being conscious of it. I have been taken by a native to a camp of about twenty people in a dense belt of reeds, which I had gone close by without being aware of their presence, although I could not have been more than three or four yards from some of them when I passed.

It has already been remarked, that where many natives meet together, the arrangements of their respective huts depends upon the direction they have come from. In their natural state many customs and restrictions exist, which are often broken through, when they congregate in the neighbourhood of European settlements.

Such is the custom requiring all boys and uninitiated young men to sleep at some distance from the huts of the adults, and to remove altogether away in the morning as soon as daylight dawns, and the natives begin to move about. This is to prevent their seeing the women, some of whom may be menstruating; and if looked upon by the young males, it is supposed that dire results will follow. Strangers are by another similar rule always required to get to their own proper place at the camp, by going behind and not in front of the huts. In the same way, if young males meet a party of women going out to look for food, they are obliged to take a circuit to avoid going near them. It is often amusing to witness the dilemma in which a young native finds himself when living with Europeans, and brought by them into a position at variance with his prejudices on this point. All the buildings of the natives are necessarily from their habits of a very temporary character, seldom being intended for more than a few weeks' occupation, and frequently only for a few days. By this time food is likely to become scarce, or the immediate neighbourhood

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unclean, and a change of locality is absolutely unavoidable. When the huts are constructed, the ground is made level within, any little stumps of bushes, or plants, stones, or other things being removed, and grass, reeds, or leaves of trees frequently gathered and spread over the bottom, to form a dry and soft bed; this and their opossum cloak constitute the greatest degree of luxury to which they aspire. Occasionally native men, in very cold weather, are both without huts and clothing of any kind. In this case, many small fires are made (for the natives never make a large one), by which they keep themselves warm. I have often seen single natives sleep with a fire at their head, another at their feet, and one on either side, and as close as ever they could make them without burning themselves; indeed, sometimes within a very few inches of their bodies.

The weapons of the natives are simple and rudimental in character, but varied in their kind and make, according to the purposes for which they may be required, or the local circumstances of the district in which they are used. The spear, which is the chief weapon of offence over all the known parts of the continent, is of two kinds, one kind is used with the throwing stick, and the other is thrown out of the hand; of each there are four varieties that I am acquainted with. Of those launched with the throwing stick there are—1, the kiko, or reed spear, pointed with hard wood; 2, the kiero, or hard wood spear, with about two feet of the flower-stem of the grass-tree jointed to the upper end; 3, a similar weapon, with five or six jags cut in the solid wood of the point upon one side; and 4, the light hard wood spear of Port Lincoln, and the coast to the eastward, where a single barb is spliced on at the extreme point with the sinew of the emu or the kangaroo: each spear averages from six to eight feet in length, and is thrown with facility and precision to distances, varying from thirty to one hundred yards, according to the kind made use of, and the skill of the native in using it.

Of the large spear there is—1, the karkuroo, or smooth heavy spear, made of the gum-scrub; 2, the same description of weapon, barbed with fragments of flint or quartz; 3, another variety, having five or six jags cut at the point, upon one side; and 4, a similar weapon, with the same number of barbs cut upon both sides of the point: each of them is from twelve to fourteen feet long, and is thrown with most deadly force and accuracy to distances of from thirty to forty feet. The fishing spear has already been described. The Nga-wa-onk, or throwing stick is from twenty to twenty-six inches in length, and is of a very similar character throughout the continent, varying a little in width or shape according to the fashion of particular districts. It consists of a piece of hard wood, broad about the middle, flattened and sometimes hollowed on the inside, and tapering to either extremity; at the point the tooth of a kangaroo

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is tied and gummed on, turning downwards like a hook; the opposite end has a lump of pitch with a flint set in it, moulded round so as to form a knob, which prevents the hand from slipping whilst it is being used, or it is wound round with string made of the fur of the opossum for the same purpose. In either case it is held by the lower part in the palm of the hand, clasped firmly by the three lower fingers, with its upper part resting between the fore-finger and the next; the head of the spear, in which is a small hole, is fitted to the kangaroo tooth, and then coming down between the fore-finger and thumb, is firmly grasped for throwing; the arm is then drawn back, the weapon levelled to the eye, a quivering motion given to it to steady it, and it is hurled with a rapidity, force, and precision quite incredible.

The Wangn or wangno (the boomerang of Eastern and kiley of Western Australia) is another simple but destructive weapon, in the hands of the native. It consists of a thin, flat, curved piece of hard wood, about two feet long, made out of the acacia pendula or gum-scrub, the raspberry-jam wood, or any other of a similar character, a branch or limb is selected which has naturally the requisite curve (an angle from one hundred to one hundred and thirty degrees) and is dressed down to a proper shape and thickness, and rounded somewhat at the bend, those whose angles are slightly obtuse, are usually thrown with the sharp edge against the wind, and go circling through the air with amazing velocity, and to a great height and distance, describing nearly a parabola and descending again at the foot of the person who throws them; those which have the largest obtuse angle are thrown generally against the ground from which they bound up to a great height, and with much force. With both, the natives are able to hit distant objects with accuracy, either in hunting or in war; in the latter case this weapon is particularly dangerous, as it is almost impossible, even when it is seen in the air, to tell which way it will go, or where descend. I once nearly had my arm broken by a wangno, whilst standing within a yard of the native who threw it, and looking out purposely for it.

The (katta twirris) or two-edged sword is a formidable weapon, used among the tribes to the north of Adelaide, exclusively for war; another weapon, common among the same tribes, is the katta, a round chisel-pointed stick, about three feet long, and used principally in pitched battles between two individuals.

Another weapon is an angular piece of hard wood, pointed and shaped very much like a miner's pick, the longer or handle-end being rounded and carved, to give a firmer grasp; another dreadful weapon, intended for close combat, is made out of hard wood, from two to three feet long, straight and with the handle rounded and carved for the grasp, which has an immense pointed knob at the end; the bwirri, is also a weapon of hard wood about two feet long, rather slight and merely smoothed in the handle, with a round knob at the extremity, it is principally thrown, and with very great precision; but is more generally used after game than in warfare.

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The shield (tar-ram) is made out of the bark or wood of the gum-tree, and varies in shape and device, the ordinary shield is about two or two and a half feet long, from eight to eighteen inches across, and tapering from the middle towards the extremities, two holes are made near the centre, through which a piece of wood is bent for a handle; shields are always carved and painted in time of war.

The implements made use of by the natives are not very numerous, and their general characteristics are nearly the same all over the continent. The native hatchet is made of a very hard greenish-looking stone, rubbed to an edge on either side; it is fixed in the cleft of a stick, or a branch is doubled round it, and either tied or gummed to prevent its slipping. The throwing sticks have generally a sharp piece of quartz or flint gummed on at the lower end, which is used as a knife or chisel; flints or muscle shells are used for skinning animals, dissecting food, cutting hair, *etc.*

The ngak-ko, a strong chisel-pointed stick, from three to four feet long, is used for dissecting the larger animals and fish, for digging grubs out of the trees, for making holes to get out opossums, *etc.*, for stripping bark, ascending trees, for cutting bark canoes, and a variety of other useful purposes. The rod for noosing ducks, (tat-tat-ko) and other wild fowl, is about sixteen feet long, and consists, in its lower part, for the first ten feet, of hard wood, tapering like an ordinary spear, to this is cemented with resin, a joint of tolerably strong reed about sixteen inches long, at the upper end of this is inserted and cemented with wax, a tapering rod of hard wood, three feet long and very similar to the top joint of a fly-fishing rod, to this is spliced a fine springy and strong top, of about eighteen inches in length, at the end of which is bound a piece of fine strong cord, which works with a running noose upon the tapering end of the instrument. Needles are made from the fibula of the emu or kangaroo, and are pointed at one end by being rubbed on a stone, they are used in sewing as we use a shoemaker's awl, the hole is bored and the thread put through with the hand; the thread is made of the sinews of the emu and kangaroo. The netting needle is a little round bit of stick or reed, about the size of a lead pencil, round which the string is wound, no mesh is used, the eye and hand enabling the native to net with the utmost regularity, speed, and neatness.

The nets for hunting, for carrying their effects or food, for making belts for the waist, or bandages for the head, are all made from the tendons or fur of animals, or from the fibres of plants. In the former, the sinews of the kangaroo or emu, and the fur of opossums and other similar animals, are used; in the latter, a species of rush, the fibres of the root of the mallow, the fibres of the root of the broad flag-reed, *etc.* and in some parts of the continent, the fibrous bark of trees. The materials are prepared for use by being soaked in water and carded with the teeth and hands, or by being chewed or rubbed.



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String is made by the fibres being twisted, and rubbed with the palm of the hand over the naked thighs, and is often as neatly executed as English whip-cord, though never consisting of more than two strands,—the strands being increased in thickness according to the size of the cord that may be required. Nets vary in size and strength according to the purposes for which they are required; the duck net (*kew-rad-ko*) has already been described, as also the *kenderanko*, or small net for diving for fish, and the *taendilly* net, for diving with under the rocks for the larger fish; the *kenyinki* is a net with very small meshes, and set out with a wooden bow, for catching shrimps and other very small fish. There are also, a *wharro*, a large hoop-net for catching small cray-fish; a *lenko*, or small net for hanging round the neck, to put muscles, cray-fish, frogs, *etc.* in; a *rocko*, or large net bag, used by the women for carrying their worldly effects about with them; the *kaar-ge-rum*, or net for the waistband; the *rad-ko*, or fishing net, which is a regular seine for catching fish, about fifty or sixty feet in length, and varying in depth according to the place where it is to be used; the emu or kangaroo net (*nunko*) is very strong, with meshes from five to six inches square; it is made of cord as thick as a large quill, and its length is from a hundred to a hundred and thirty feet, and depth about five feet when set. The wallabie net is about thirty feet long, of strong cord, and when set about eighteen inches high. The size of the meshes of all the nets depends upon the game to be taken; generally they are small. Neat, and variously striped baskets and mats are made by the women of certain tribes, from rushes, or a broad-leaved description of grass. The *kallater* is a round basket, wide at the base, and tapering upwards; its size varies. The *poola-danooko* is a very pretty looking, flat, oval basket, adapted for laying against the back. The *poneed-ke* is a large, flat, circular mat, worn over the back and shoulders, and when tied by a band round the waist affords a lodging for an infant. Large bags or wallets are also made of kangaroo skins, with the fur outside, and small ones of the skins of lesser animals with the fur inside. Skins are prepared for making cloaks by pegging them tight out upon the ground soon after they are taken off the animal, when dry, cold ashes or dust are thrown in, to absorb any grease that may have exuded. If the weather is damp, or the native is in a hurry, they are pegged out near the fire; after drying, the smaller skins are rubbed with stones to make them flexible, or are scored or ornamented with various devices, cut with a flint or shell on the skin side; the larger skins have their inner layers shaved off by flints, shells, or implements of wood. Opossums, wallabies, young kangaroos, *etc.* are skinned sometimes by simply making a slit about the head, through which the rest of the body is made to pass; the skins are turned



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inside out, and the ends of the legs tied up, and are then ready for holding water, and always form part of the baggage of natives who travel much about, or go into badly watered districts. I have seen these skins (lukomb) capable of holding from two to three gallons of water: the fur is always inside. The karko is a small spade of wood, used by the natives north of Adelaide for digging up grubs from the ground. The canoe or "mun" is a large sheet of bark cut from the gum-tree, carefully lowered to the ground, and then heated with fire until it becomes soft and pliable, and can be moulded into form, it is then supported by wooden props, to keep it in shape, until it becomes hard and set, which is in about twenty-four hours, though it is frequently used sooner. On its being launched, sticks or stretchers are placed across each end and in the middle, to prevent the bark from contracting or curling up with exposure to the air. A large canoe will hold seven or eight people easily; it is often twenty feet long. The following is a description of an ordinary one for fishing:—length fifteen feet, width three feet, depth eight inches, formed out of a single sheet of bark, with one end a little narrower than the other and pointing upwards. This end is paddled first; the bottom is nearly flat, and the canoe is so firm, that a person can take hold of one side, and climb into it from the water without upsetting it. It is paddled along with the long pine-spear moo-aroo, described as being used in fishing at night by firelight. In propelling it the native stands near the centre, pushing his moo-aroo against the water, first on one side and then on the other; in shallow water one end of the moo-aroo is placed on the bottom, and the canoe so pushed along. The natives are well acquainted with the use of fire, for hardening the points of their weapons or softening the wood to enable them to bend them. In the former case, the point is charred in the fire, and scraped with a shell or flint to the precise shape required; in the latter, their spears, and other similar weapons, are placed upon hot ashes, and bent into form by pressure. It is a common practice among many of the tribes to grease their weapons and implements with human fat, taken from the omentum, either of enemies who have been killed, or of relations who have died. Spears, and other offensive arms, are supposed to possess additional powers if thus treated; and nets and other implements for procuring game are imagined to become much more effectual in ensnaring prey. In setting nets, too, the natives have a practice of taking up a handful of water to the mouth, and then squirting it out over the net, in a shower of spray, this they think is a powerful charm to ensure the fish being caught.

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There can hardly be said to be any form of government existing among a people who recognize no authority, and where every member of the community is at liberty to act as he likes, except, in so far as he may be influenced by the general opinions or wishes of the tribe, or by that feeling which prompts men, whether in civilised or savage communities to bend to the will of some one or two persons who may have taken a more prominent and leading part than the rest in the duties and avocations of life. Among none of the tribes yet known have chiefs ever been found to be acknowledged, though in all there are always some men who take the lead, and whose opinions and wishes have great weight with the others.

Other things being equal, a man's authority and influence increase among his tribe in proportion to his years. To each stage of life through which he passes is given some additional knowledge or power, and he is privileged to carry an additional number of implements and weapons, as he advances in life. An old grey-headed man generally carries the principal implements and weapons, either for war or sorcery; many of the latter the women and children are never allowed to see, such as pieces of rock-crystal, by which the sorcerer can produce rain, cause blindness, or impart to the waters the power of destroying life, *etc.*; sacred daggers for causing the death of their enemies by enchantment; the moor-y-um-karr or flat oval piece of wood which is whirled round the camp at nights, and many others of a similar nature.

I have not, however, found that age is invariably productive of influence, unless the individual has previously signalized himself among his people, and taken up a commanding position when youth and strength enabled him to support his pretensions, and unless he be still in full possession of vigour of mind and energy of character, though no longer endowed with personal strength. The grey-head appears to be usually treated with respect as long as the owner is no incumbrance to those around him, but the moment he becomes a drag, every tie is broken, and he is at once cast off to perish. Among many tribes with which I have been acquainted, I have often noticed that though the leading men were generally elderly men from forty-five to sixty years old, they were not always the oldest; they were still in full vigour of body and mind, and men who could take a prominent part in acting as well as counselling. I am inclined, therefore, to think that the degree of estimation in which any native is held by his fellows, or the amount of deference that may be paid to his opinions, will in a great measure depend upon his personal strength, courage, energy, prudence, skill, and other similar qualifications, influenced, perhaps, collaterally by his family connections and the power which they possess.

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Each father of a family rules absolutely over his own circle. In his movements and arrangements he is uncontrolled, yet, as a matter of policy, he always informs his fellows where he is going, what he is going to do, how long he will be absent, when he will meet them again, *etc.* It thus happens that, although a tribe may be dispersed all over their own district in single groups, or some even visiting neighbouring tribes, yet if you meet with any one family they can at once tell you where you will find any other, though the parties themselves may not have met for weeks. Some one or other is always moving about, and thus the news of each other's locality gets rapidly spread among the rest. The principal occupation, indeed, of parties when they meet, is to give and receive information relative to neighbouring families or tribes. In cases of sudden danger or emergency, the scattered groups are rapidly warned or collected by sending young men as messengers, or by raising signal smokes in prominent positions.

In an assembly of the tribe, matters of importance are generally discussed and decided upon, by the elder men, apart from the others. It not unfrequently happens, however, that some discontented individual will loudly and violently harangue the whole tribe; this usually occurs in the evening, and frequently continues for hours together; his object being generally either to reverse some decision that has been come to, to excite them to something they are unwilling to do, or to abuse some one who is absent. Occasionally he is replied to by others, but more frequently allowed uninterruptedly to wear himself out, when from sheer exhaustion he is compelled to sit down.

Occasionally the tribe is addressed by its most influential members in the language of admonition or advice, and though at such times a loud tone and strong expressions are made use of, there is rarely any thing amounting to an order or command; the subject is explained, reasons are given for what is advanced, and the result of an opposite course to that suggested, fully pointed out; after this the various members are left to form their own judgments, and to act as they think proper.

In their domestic relations with one another polygamy is practised in its fullest extent. An old man having usually from one to four wives, or as many as he can procure.

The females, and especially the young ones are kept principally among the old men, who barter away their daughters, sisters, or nieces, in exchange for wives for themselves or their sons. Wives are considered the absolute property of the husband, and can be given away, or exchanged, or lent, according to his caprice. A husband is denominated in the Adelaide dialect, Yongarra, Martanya (the owner or proprietor of a wife). Female children are betrothed usually from early infancy, and such arrangements are usually adhered to; still in many cases circumstances occur frequently to cause

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an alteration; but if not, the girls generally go to live with their husbands about the age of twelve, and sometimes even before that. Relatives nearer than cousins are not allowed to marry, and this alliance does not generally take place. Female orphans belong to the nearest male relative, as also does a widow, instead of to the nearest male relative of the husband, as was found to be the case in Western Australia by Captain Grey. Two or three months generally elapse before the widow goes to another husband; but if the wife dies, the man takes another as soon as he can get one. If a woman, having young children, join another tribe, the children go with her; but I am not aware whether they would remain permanently attached to that tribe or not. Brothers often barter their sisters for wives for themselves, but it can only be done with the parents' consent, or after their death. If a wife be stolen, war is always continued until she is given up, or another female in her place.

There is no ceremony connected with the undertaking of marriage. In those cases where I have witnessed the giving away of a wife, the woman was simply ordered by the nearest male relative in whose disposal she was, to take up her "rocko," the bag in which a female carries the effects of her husband, and go to the man's camp to whom she had been given. Marriage is not looked upon as any pledge of chastity, indeed no such virtue is recognised.

[Note 76: Foeminae sese per totam pene vitam prostituunt. Apud plurimas tribus juventutem utriusque sexus sine discrimine concumbere in usus est. Si juvenis forte indigenorum coetum quendam in castris manentem adveniat ubi quaevis sit puella innupta, mos est; nocte veniente et cubantibus omnibus, illam ex loco exsurgere et juvenem accedentem cum illo per noctem manere unde in sedem propriam ante diem redit. Cui foemina sit, eam amicis libenter praebet; si in itinere sit, uxori in castris manenti aliquis ejus supplet ille vires. Advenis ex longinquo accedentibus foeminas ad tempus dare hospitis esse boni judicatur. Viduis et foeminis jam senescentibus saepe in id traditis, quandoque etiam invitis et insciis cognatis, adolescentes utuntur. Puellae tenerae a decimo primum anno, et pueri a decimo tertio vel quarto, inter se miscentur. Senioribus mos est, si forte gentium plurium castra appropinquant, viros noctu huic inde transeuntes, uxoribus alienis uti et in sua castra ex utraque parte mane redire. Temporis quinetiam certis, machina quaedam ex ligno ad formam ovi facta, sacra et mystica, uam foeminas aspicere haud licitam, decem plus minus uncias longa et circa quatuor lata insculpta ac figuris diversis ornata, et ultimam perforata partem ad longam (plerumque e crinibus humanis textam) inscendam chordam cui nomen "Mooyumkarr," extra castra in gyrum versata, stridore magno e percusso aere facto, libertatem coeundi juventuti esse tum concessam omnibus indicat. Parentes saepe infantum, viri uxorum quaestum corporum faciunt. In urbe Adelaide panis praemio parvi aut paucorum denariorum meretrices fieri eas libenter cogunt. Facile potest intelligi, amorem inter nuptos vix posse esse grandem, quum omnia quae ad foeminas attinent, hominum arbitrio ordinentur et tanta sexuum societati laxitas, et adolescentes quibus ita multae

ardoris explendi dantur occasiones, haud magnopere uxores, nisi ut servas desideraturos.

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But little real affection consequently exists between husbands and wives, and young men value a wife principally for her services as a slave; in fact when asked why they are anxious to obtain wives, their usual reply is, that they may get wood, water, and food for them, and carry whatever property they possess. In 1842 the wife of a native in Adelaide, a girl about eighteen, was confined, and recovered slowly; before she was well the tribe removed from the locality, and the husband preferred accompanying them, and left his wife to die, instead of remaining to attend upon her and administer to her wants. When the natives were gone, the girl was removed to the mission station, to receive medical attendance, but eventually died. In the same year an old woman who broke her thigh was left to die, as the tribe did not like the trouble of carrying her about. Parents are treated in the same manner when helpless and infirm. [Note 77 at end of para.] In 1839 I found an aged man left to die, without fire or food, upon a high bare hill beyond the Broughton. In 1843 I found two old women, who had been abandoned in the same way, at the Murray, and although they were taken every care of when discovered, they both died in about a week afterwards. No age is prescribed for matrimony, but young men under twenty-five years of age do not often obtain wives, there are exceptions, however, to this: I have seen occasionally young men of seventeen or eighteen possessing them. When wives are from thirty-five to forty years of age, they are frequently cast off by the husbands, or are given to the younger men in exchange for their sisters or near relatives, if such are at their disposal.

[Note 77: "Practised by the American Indians."—Catlin, vol. i. p. 216.

"The early life of a young woman at all celebrated for beauty is generally one continued series of captivity to different masters, of ghastly wounds, of wanderings in strange families, of rapid flights, of bad treatment from other females amongst whom she is brought a stranger by her captor; and rarely do you see a form of unusual grace and elegance, but it is marked and scarred by the furrows of old wounds; and many a female thus wanders several hundred miles from the home of her infancy, being carried off successively to distant and more distant points."]

Women are often sadly ill-treated by their husbands or friends, in addition to the dreadful life of drudgery, and privation, and hardship they always have to undergo; they are frequently beaten about the head, with waddies, in the most dreadful manner, or speared in the limbs for the most trivial offences. No one takes the part of the weak or the injured, or ever attempts to interfere with the infliction of such severe punishments.

Few women will be found, upon examination, to be free from frightful scars upon the head, or the marks of spear-wounds about the body. I have seen a young woman, who, from the number of these marks, appeared to have been almost riddled with spear wounds. Upon this point Captain Grey remarks, vol. ii. p. 249.

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The menses commence to flow among the native females at an earlier age than among Europeans, frequently beginning at about twelve; they are also subject to many irregularities in their periodical return, arising probably from the kind of life they lead and the nature of the diet upon which they live. I have known cases where this irregularity has extended to three months. Child-bearing does not commence often before the age of sixteen, nor have I ever noticed pregnant women under that age. In inquiries conducted by Mr. Moorhouse among the natives of Adelaide, that gentleman ascertained, that as many as nine children have occasionally been born to one woman; that the average number is about five; but that each mother only reared an average of two. At childbirth, the placenta, which is considered as sacred, is carefully put away from the reach of the dogs as soon as thrown off from the uterus, and the female is up and following her usual avocations a very few hours after the accouchement. Instances have occurred of women sitting up, and asking for food an hour after confinement, though wet with rain, and having very little fire. Two days after it, I have seen a woman walking two or three miles, and going out to look for food in her usual manner. Infanticide is very common, and appears to be practised solely to get rid of the trouble of rearing children, and to enable the woman to follow her husband about in his wanderings, which she frequently could not do if encumbered with a child. The first three or four are often killed; no distinction appears to be made in this case between male or female children. Half-castes appear to be always destroyed.

The nomenclature of the natives is a subject of considerable difficulty, and is at present involved in much obscurity and uncertainty, so many different practices obtaining, and so many changes of name occurring to some individuals during the course of their life. In the Adelaide district, and among the tribes to the north, Mr. Moorhouse has found that numerical names are given to children when first born, in the order of birth, a variation in the termination constituting the distinction of name for male or female, thus:—

*If male. If female.*

The 1st child would be called	Kertameru Kertanya
2nd child would be called	Warritya Warriarto
3rd child would be called	Kudnutya Kudnarto
4th child would be called	Monaitya Monarto
5th child would be called	Milaitya Milarto
6th child would be called	Marrutya Marruarto
7th child would be called	Wangutya Wangwarto
8th child would be called	Ngarlaitya Ngarlarto
9th child would be called	Pouarna Ngarlarto

These are given at birth; but a short time after another name is added, which is derived from some object in nature, as a plant, animal, or insect. This name continues until after marriage and the birth of the first child, upon which the father takes the name of this child, and has the word binna or spinna, (an adult,) affixed, as Kadli; name of a

child, Kadlitpinna, the father of Kadli; the mother is called Kadli ngangki, or mother of Kadli, from ngangki, a female or woman. The names of the father and mother are changed at the birth of every child in the same manner.



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At Moorunde, and among many other tribes, I have not found any numerical names to be given at birth, the first name usually being that derived from some object in nature. This is occasionally changed after marriage and the birth of a child; as among the Adelaide or northern natives, the father taking the name of the child with the affix of imbe or nimbe (implying father), as Kartul, a child's name, Kartulnimbe the father of Kartul, Meparne, a child's name, Meparnimbe the father of Meparne. This paidronymic is not, however, always adhered to in preference to the original name; thus Meparnimbe is as often called by his former name of Tenberry as his paidronymic; he is also called occasionally Worrammo, from his being left-handed. Neither have I found the name of the parent change at the birth of every child; thus Meparnimbe has other children, younger than Meparne, as Warrulan, Timarro, *etc.* yet he is never called Warrulanimbe, Timarronimbe, *etc.* The mother's name, similarly to that of the father, is also occasionally altered to that of the child, with the affix of arwer, or emarwer, as Kartulemarwer, the mother of Kartul, Meparnemarwer, the mother of Meparne, yet is the original name of the mother as often used as the paidronymic. Old men are frequently called by the name of the place which belongs to them, with the affix of bookola thus Moorondooyo Bookola is the old man who owns Mooronde, *etc.*

At other times nicknames are given to natives, and so generally made use of by the others that the proper or original name becomes almost lost. Thus a native named Marloo, from a habit he had of looking about him and saying, "I see, I see," is called Nairkinimbe, or the father of seeing. Another named Ngalle-ngalle is called Eukonimbe, the father of eukodko, from his being very fond of the crayfish of that name, and so on. Other local appellations are given referring to some peculiarity of personal appearance, Parn-gang-gapko, the baldheaded, Towang Makkeroo, the broken-thighed, *etc.* Others again refer to family bereavements, as Roo ptootarap, a father without children, Parntomakker, a childless mother, Parnko, an orphan, Wirrang, one who has lost a brother, Rockootarap, one whose wife is dead, Thaltarlipke, an unmarried man, Rartchilock, one who owns a wife, Rang, a widow, Waukerow, an unmarried woman, *etc.* These are all distinctions, which though readily discoverable by a person tolerably well versed in the dialect, or long resident among the same natives, present many difficulties, and lead to many mistakes, amongst casual inquirers, or those whose pursuits do not keep them long at the place of their inquiries. There are others which are still more difficult to be understood, from the almost utter impossibility of learning (with any reasonable sacrifice of time) the language with sufficient accuracy to enable the inquirer thoroughly to comprehend the meanings of the proper names, and deduce the roots from which they are derived.

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Even among the Adelaide tribes, where there appears to be a greater uniformity in the system of nomenclature than I have met with any where else, and where Mr. Moorhouse has devoted more time and attention to the subject than perhaps any other person, there are still difficulties and uncertainties. Thus an Adelaide boy about the age of ten, is called by the name of Koar (the crow), from early infancy, but between ten and twelve, after undergoing one of their ceremonies, the name was changed to Mannara, (which I believe means the crow's nest). According, however, to the usual system adopted, this boy's name ought to have remained Koar, until, by becoming a married man and a father, it gave way to a paidronymic.

There is another subject somewhat analogous to that of nomenclature, and about which still less is known;—that of every native adopting some object in creation as his crest, or tiende. The same thing is noticed by Captain Grey in his narrative (vol. ii. p. 228).

“But as each family adopts some animal or vegetable, as their crest or sign, or *kobong* as they call it, I imagine it more likely, that these have been named after the families, than that the families have been named after them.

“A certain mysterious connection exists between a family and its *kobong*, so that a member of a family will never kill an animal of the species, to which his *kobong* belongs, should he find it asleep; indeed, he always kills it reluctantly, and never without affording it a chance to escape. This arises from the family belief, that some one individual of the species is their nearest friend, to kill whom would be a great crime, and to be carefully avoided. Similarly, a native who has a vegetable for his *kobong*, may not gather it under certain circumstances, and at a particular period of the year.”

From the foregoing quotation, it is apparent that very little difference exists in the custom as practised in Western and Southern Australia. In the former, however, there appears to be an unwillingness to destroy the object represented by the *kobong* or tiende that I have never observed in the latter. But very little appears to be known on this subject at present, as far as regards the reason for assuming the tiende, or its connection with the individual or family it may represent. The same tiende seems to descend from a father to his children; but I have been told occasionally of instances where such has not been the case. There are several striking differences between the customs and habits of the Aborigines of Western Australia, narrated by Captain Grey, and those in force among the tribes I have myself been best acquainted with in Southern or South-eastern Australia. One singular peculiarity is described by Captain Grey.

“One of the most remarkable facts connected with the natives, is that they are divided into certain great families, all the members of which bear the same names, as a family or second name: the principal branches of these families, so far as I have been able to ascertain, are the

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Ballaroke  
Tdondarup  
Ngotak  
Nagarnook  
Nogonyuk  
Mongalung  
Narrangur.

“But in different districts the members of these families give a local name to the one to which they belong, which is understood in that district, to indicate some particular branch of the principal family. The most common local names are,

Didaroke  
Gwerrinjoke  
Maleoke  
Waddaroke  
Djekoke  
Kotejumeno  
Namyungo  
Yungaree.

“These family names are common over a great portion of the continent; for instance, on the Western coast, in a tract of country extending between four and five hundred miles in latitude, members of all these families are found. In South Australia, I met a man who said that he belonged to one of them, and Captain Flinders mentions Yungaree, as the name of a native in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

“These family names are perpetuated, and spread through the country, by the operation of two remarkable laws:—

“1st. That children of either sex, always take the family name of their mother.

“2nd. That a man cannot marry a woman of his own family name.”

From this it appears that the natives of that part of the country have in addition to their other ordinary names a family or surname, which is perpetuated through successive generations on the mother's side. This is not the case as far as my observations and inquiries have enabled me to ascertain among the numerous tribes frequenting the Murray river, and Mr. Moorhouse assures me that he has been equally unable to detect any coincidence of the kind among the tribes frequenting the district of Adelaide.

The division, numbers, and names of the various tribes are also subjects of difficulty and uncertainty. As far as my researches have yet extended upon this point, it appears to me, first, that groups of natives have a distinctive or a local appellation, derived from

the particular place they belong to, as Barmerara maru, the natives frequenting the lake called Barmera: Moolyoolpero maru, the natives frequenting the lagoon called Moolyoolko, and so on. Secondly, a general or tribal name, as Narwijjerook, a native of the tribe so called, which includes the natives of Barmera and various others in that neighbourhood. Karn-brickolenbola, a native of the tribe so called, and which includes various groups around Mooroonde. Thirdly, it appears that wherever a change occurs in the name of the tribes to which contiguous groups of natives may belong, there is a corresponding change in the dialect or language spoken; thus the Narwij-jerook speak a dialect called Narwijjong, the Karn-brickolenbola tribe the Aiauwong dialect, and so on.

In many of these dialects there appears to be little more difference than exists among the counties in England. Such is the case up the course of the Murray from Lake Alexandrina to the Darling; and such Captain Grey found to be the case throughout a great part of Western Australia. In others the dialects are so totally unlike one another, that natives, meeting upon opposite sides of a river, cannot speak to or understand a word of what each other say, except through the medium of a third language, namely that spoken by the natives of the river itself, and which is totally unlike either of the other two.

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This is the case at Moorunde, where three different dialects meet, the Yakkumban, or dialect spoken by the Paritke tribe, or natives inhabiting the scrub to the west and north-west of the Murray. The Boraipar or language of the Arkatko tribe, who inhabit the scrub to the east of the Murray, and the Aiauwong or river dialect, extending, with slight variations, from the junction of the Murray and Lake Alexandrina to the Darling.

### Chapter V.

#### **CEREMONIES AND SUPERSTITIONS—FORMS OF BURIAL—MOURNING CUSTOMS—RELIGIOUS IDEAS—EMPIRICS, ETC.**

The ceremonies and superstitions of the natives are both numerous and involved in much obscurity; indeed it is very questionable if any of them are understood even by themselves. Almost all the tribes impose initiatory rites upon the young, through which they must pass from one stage of life to another, until admitted to the privileges and rights of manhood. These observances differ greatly in different parts of the continent, independently of local or distinctive variations indicative of the tribe to which a native may belong.

Thus at the Gulf of Carpentaria, the rite of circumcision is performed; at Swan River, King George's Sound, and nearly three hundred miles to the eastward of the latter place, no such rite exists. Round the head of the Great Australian Bight, and throughout the Port Lincoln Peninsula, not only is this rite performed, but a still more extraordinary one conjoined with it. [Note 78: "Finditur usque ad urethram a parte inferaa penis."] Descending the east side of Spencer's and St. Vincent's Gulf, and around the district of Adelaide, the simple rite of circumcision is retained. Proceeding but a little farther to the banks of the Murray, and its neighbourhood, no such ceremony exists, nor have I ever heard of its having been observed any where on the southeastern, or eastern parts of the continent.

So also with respect to tattooing; in one part of the continent it is adopted, in another it is rejected; when it is practised, there are many varieties in the form, number, or arrangement of the scars, distinguishing the different tribes, so that one stranger meeting with another any where in the woods, can at once tell, from the manner in which he is tattooed, the country and tribe to which he belongs, if not very remote. In the Adelaide district, Mr. Moorhouse has observed, that there are five stages to be passed through, before the native attains the rank of a bourka, or full grown man. The first is, that from birth to the tenth year, when he is initiated into the second, or Wilya kundarti, by being covered with blood, drawn from the arm of an adult; he is then allowed to carry a wirri for killing birds, and a small wooden spade (karko) for digging grubs out of the ground. At from twelve to fourteen, the third stage is entered, by having the ceremony of circumcision performed, which takes place in the following manner. Early

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in the morning, the boys to be circumcised are seized from behind, and a bandage is fastened over the eyes of each; they are then led away from the presence of the women and children to a distance of half a mile, when they are laid on the ground, and covered with a cloak, or skin, so as not to see what is passing amongst the adults, who proceed with the ceremony. Three of them now commence limping, and making a peculiar groaning noise, until they arrive opposite one of the boys, upon whom they seize. The individual laid hold of, jumps up, and runs off at full speed, as if he intended to escape; the three, before occupied in limping and groaning, run with him to prevent this, and after three or four races, all four run over the place where the boys are covered up, and the boy, who had been trying to escape, is caught, and laid down near the other boys, and covered with dust. He is now supposed to be in a state of enchantment, from which he is aroused by being lifted up by the ears, at the same time that loud noises are made into them. All the men now, except the sick, form themselves into a circle, and keep walking round in single file, the first individual having a katto, or long stick held down his back. After a few circles this is given to another; a short rest is taken, and then the whole party rise, except the sick, the inspired men, or sorcerers, and those upon whom the operation is to be performed, and proceed to a short distance, the man with the katto down his back leading. When assembled, they form into a line, and at word of command commence the peculiar stamping and groaning, beginning at the far end of the line, and gradually advancing towards the other. During several rounds of this noise, they advance at each, a little nearer to the boys, who when they are very near, have their eyes uncovered that they may see the men approaching. The first man who held the katto, fastens it in the ground, and all the others coming up, take hold of it, and fall down into a heap. The boys are then thrown upon the heap of men, and the operation is performed by men who are supposed to be inspired, or sorcerers. Immediately after the operation, the boys are taken away from the presence of all females, and kept upon a vegetable diet until recovered from its effects. The head is covered with grease, and red ochre, with a bandage passed round it, and is ornamented with tufts of feathers. The Yudna, or pubic covering, is worn by the circumcised for some months after the operation.

The fourth stage (Wilyaru) is entered about the age of twenty, when the back, shoulders, arms and chest, are tattooed. He is called ngulte, at the time of the operation; yellambambettu, when the incisions have begun to discharge pus; tarkange, when the sores are just healed; mangkauitya, at the time the cuts begin to rise; and bartamu, when the scars are at their highest elevation. Each tribe has a distinctive mode of making their incisions. Some have scars running completely across the chest, from one axillar to the other, whilst others have merely dotted lines; some have circles and semicircles formed on the apex of the shoulder, others small dots only.

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The fifth stage is *bourka* or full man, and is only attained when the individual is getting grey-headed.

Among the Murray natives and contiguous tribes, instead of the rite of circumcision, a ceremony called *wharepin*, is performed upon youths from fourteen to sixteen. Early in the morning some of the male friends of the boy about to be operated upon, go behind him to seize him, upon which he sets off running as hard as he can, as if to escape; but being followed by his pursuers is soon captured and thrown down; he is then raised up and surrounded by several natives, who hold him and smear him from head to foot, with red ochre and grease; during this part of the ceremony, a band of elderly women, generally the mother and other near relatives, surround the group, crying or lamenting, and lacerating their thighs and backs with shells or flints, until the blood streams down. When well ochred all over, the novice is led away by another native, apart from the rest of the tribe, or if there are more than one, they stand together linked hand in hand, and when tired sit down upon bunches of green boughs brought for that purpose, for they are neither allowed to sit on the ground, nor to have any clothing on; and when they move about they always carry a bunch of green boughs in each hand.

They are now ready for the ceremony, which is usually performed by influential natives of distant tribes, and which generally takes place at the meetings of these tribes, as in the case of the meeting of the Moorunde natives, and the *Nar-wij-jerook* tribe described in Chapter *ii*.P.220. On that occasion, there were three Moorunde natives to be operated upon. As soon as the ceremonial of the meeting of the tribes had been gone through, as already described, the *Nar-wij-jerook* natives retired about a hundred yards, and sat down on the ground, the Moorunde people remaining standing. The three spears which had little nets attached to them, and which had been brought down by the *Nar-wij-jerooks*, were now advanced in front of that tribe, still seated and stuck in a row in the ground. Three men then got up and seated themselves at the foot of the three spears, with their legs crossed. Two other natives then went over to the Moorunde people, to where the three novices stood shaking and trembling, like criminals waiting for their punishment, seizing them by the legs and shoulders, and carefully lifting them from the ground, they carried each in turn, and laid them on their backs at full length upon green boughs, spread upon the ground in front of the three men sitting by the spears, so that the head of each rested on the lap of one of the three. From the moment of their being seized, they resolutely closed their eyes, and pretended to be in a deep trance until the whole was over. When all three novices had been laid in their proper position, cloaks were thrown over them, but leaving the face exposed, and a *Nar-wij-jerook* coming to the side of each, carefully lifted up a portion



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of the covering and commenced plucking the hair from the pubes. At intervals, the operators were relieved by others of both sexes, and of various ages; little children under ten, were sometimes but not frequently officiating. When all the hair had been pulled out, that belonging to each native was carefully rolled up in green boughs, the three lots being put together, and given to one of the wise or inspired men to be put properly away; bunches of green boughs were now placed under each arm of the boys as also in their hands, after which several natives took hold of them, and raised them suddenly and simultaneously to their feet, whilst a loud guttural Whaugh was uttered by the other natives around. They were then disenchanted and the ceremony was over, but for some time afterwards, the initiated are obliged to sleep away from the camp, and are not allowed to see the women; their heads and bodies are kept smeared with red ochre and grease, and tufts of feathers and kangaroo teeth are worn tied to the hair in front. One of the most singular circumstances connected with this ceremony, is that the natives who have officiated never afterwards mention the name of the young men, nor do the latter ever mention the names of the individuals who have operated upon them; should the name of either be accidentally mentioned in the presence of the other, they are greatly annoyed, and at once put the hand up to the mouth to signify that it must not be spoken. It is thus often very difficult to find out the names of particular natives, and strangers would make many mistakes, imagining that they were putting down the name, when in reality they were marking some phrase, signifying that his name could not be mentioned by the one applied to. They have no objection to meet each other after the ceremony, nor do they decline speaking, but there is this peculiarity in their conduct that if one gives food, or any thing else to the other, it is either laid on the ground for him to take, or is given through the intervention of a third person, in the gentlest and mildest manner possible, whereas to another native it would be jerked, perhaps much in the same way that a bone is thrown to a dog. There are other instances in which the names of natives are never allowed to be spoken, as those of a father or mother-in-law, of a son-in-law and some cases arising from a connection with each other's wives. In speaking, therefore, of one another, or introducing persons to distant natives, a very round about way of describing them has often to be adopted, yet so intimately are neighbouring tribes acquainted with the peculiar relations subsisting between the members of each, that there is rarely any difficulty in comprehending who the individual is that is alluded to. Among the Adelaide tribes, there is no circumstance but death that makes them unwilling to mention the name of any of their acquaintances, and this cause of unwillingness I believe extends equally all over the continent.



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The ceremony of tattooing is practised among the tribes of the Murray and its neighbourhood with great circumstantial variety. Some are tattooed all over the back or breast in rows, some only one half of each or of one, some are only dotted, others have rings or semicircles round the upper part of the arms and some are tattooed on the belly, *etc.*

Many tribes I have met with in different parts of Australia, have no tattooing at all, others are marked on the breast by singular looking scars, occupying a space of six or eight inches each way upon the chest, these are called “renditch” in the Murray dialect, and are made by fire; but I have never been able to obtain any satisfactory information respecting them. These scars are confined to particular tribes whom I have only met with occasionally, and for a period which did not allow me the opportunity of making much inquiry into their origin.

At Encounter Bay, instead of plucking out the hair of the pubes, the incipient beard is pulled out by the roots, and the youth, as at the Murray, is smeared from head to foot with red ochre and grease.

Among the females the only ceremony of importance that I am aware of is that of tattooing the back, a long and very painful operation. [Note 79 at end of para.] The method of performing the operation is as follows: the person whose back is to be tattooed is taken out early in the morning and squatted on the ground with her back towards the operator (always a male), and her head bent down between the knees of a strong old woman who is sitting on the ground for that purpose; the back is thus presented in the best position to the operator, and the girl, as long as her head is kept firmly in its position, cannot possibly arise until all is over. The man who performs the ceremony then commences by taking hold of a fold of the flesh on the girl's right side, just above the breech, with his left hand, whilst with his right he holds a piece of flint or shell, and cuts perpendicular gashes an inch long, three-sixteenths of an inch deep, and about half an inch apart, in horizontal lines from right to left quite across the back, the rows being half an inch or three-quarters distant from each other.

[Note 79: Hoc plerumque menstruis jam primum venientibus factum est: saepe autem puellis propter timorem statum suam celantibus, aut aliqua alia ex causa, opus quod tempore menstrualis fieri prorsus necessarium est, in proxima differtur.]

This is carried up the whole way from where he commences to the shoulders, and when freshly done, presents one of the most dreadful spectacles imaginable, the blood gushes out in torrents, and though frequently wiped away with grass by some of the women present, is scarcely removed before the crimson stream flows as profusely as ever. During the time of the ceremony the mother and other female relations lament and mourn, whilst they lacerate their bodies with shells. When the incisions are all made, grass or boughs are

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warmed at the fire, to wipe off the blood. The whole scene is most revolting and disgusting; the ground near where the poor creature sits is saturated with blood, and the whole back is one mass of coagulated gore. In one case, where I saw this operation performed upon a girl belonging to the Paritke tribe, she seemed to suffer much pain. At first, until nearly a row of scars had been made across the lower part of the back, she bore the operation well, but as it proceeded, her cries were piteous and unceasing, and before it was concluded, they became the most heart-rending screams of agony. From the position in which she was held, however, by the old woman on the ground (and who, by the way, was her mother,) it was impossible for her to stir or escape; indeed, had she attempted it, she would probably have been most cruelly beaten in addition.

The ceremony occupied three-quarters of an hour, but it was two hours before the wounds had ceased to bleed, and even then, the dried blood was not washed off. Two kangaroo teeth, and a tuft of emu feathers were tied to the girl's hair, and she was smeared over with grease and red ochre, but was still forbidden to touch food until the morning.

Many weeks elapse before the wounds heal, and the inconveniences attending them are removed.

In another case that I saw, the girl bore the operation most stoically, until about two-thirds over, when she could stand it no longer, but screaming out in agony, applied her teeth and nails with such good effect to the thighs of the old lady who held her down, that the latter was compelled to release her grasp, and the poor girl got up, vowing she would not have another incision made. Of course all resistance would have been futile, or probably have only brought down a fearful chastisement upon her if she had been alone with her tribe in the bush; but she took advantage of my presence, and escaped with nearly one-third of the incisions deficient. At this ceremony many other natives of both sexes, and of all ages were standing looking on; but so little did they commiserate the poor creature's sufferings, that the degree of her pain only seemed to be the measure of their laughter and merriment.

The girls, however, are always anxious to have this ceremony performed, as a well tattooed back is considered a great addition to their other charms, and whenever I have offered to protect them from the cruelty of their tribe for refusing to submit to it, they have invariably preferred submitting to the operation.

The only other ceremonies undergone by the females, are those of having the belly or arms tattooed, and of having the hair plucked from the pubes after the death of a child, and sometimes from other causes.

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In the mode of disposing of the dead, and the ceremonials attending it, there is a difference in almost every tribe. Among the Adelaide natives as soon as a person dies, a loud wailing cry is raised by the relations and friends. The body is immediately wrapped up in the skin or clothing worn during life, and in the course of a day or two, it is placed upon the *wirkatti* or bier, which is made of branches crossed so as to form the radii of a circle, an examination is then entered upon as to the cause of death, in the following manner. The bier is carried upon the shoulders of five or six persons, over places where the deceased had been living; whilst this is going on, a person is placed under the bier, professedly in conversation with the deceased. He asks, what person killed you? If the corpse say no one, the inquest ceases; but if it states that some person has, the bier moves round, the corpse is said to produce the motion, influenced by *kuingo* (a fabulous personification of death). If the alleged murderer be present, the bier is carried round by this influence, and one of the branches made to touch him. Upon this a battle is sure to ensue either immediately, or in the course of a day or two.

At the time of burial the body is removed from the bier, and deposited, with the head to the west, in a grave from four to six feet deep. Children under four years are not buried for some months after death. They are carefully wrapped up, carried upon the back of the mother by day, and used as a pillow by night, until they become quite dry and mummy-like, after which they are buried, but the ceremony is not known to Mr. Moorhouse.

In the Encounter Bay neighbourhood, four modes of disposing of the dead obtain, according to Mr. Meyer:—old persons are buried; middle-aged persons are placed in a tree, the hands and knees being brought nearly to the chin, all the openings of the body, as mouth, nose, ears, *etc.* being previously sewn up, and the corpse covered with mats, pieces of old cloth, nets, *etc.* The corpse being placed in the tree, a fire is made underneath, around which the friends and relatives of the deceased sit, and make lamentations. In this situation the body remains, unless removed by some hostile tribe, until the flesh is completely wasted away, after which the skull is taken by the nearest relative for a drinking cup.

The third mode is to place the corpse in a sitting posture, without any covering, the face being turned to the eastward, until dried by the sun, after which it is placed in a tree. This mode is adopted with those to whose memory it is intended to shew some respect. The fourth method is to burn the body; but this is only practised in the case of still-born children, or such as die shortly after birth.

Another method practised upon Lake Alexandrina, is to construct a platform [Note 80 at end of para.], or bier upon high poles of pine, put upright in the ground upon which the body is placed, bandages being first put round the forehead, and over the eyes, and tied behind. A bone is stuck through the nose, the fingers are folded in the palm of the hand, and the fist is tied with nets, the ends of which are fastened about a yard from the hands; the legs are put crossing each other.

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[Note 80: "They often deposit their dead on trees and on scaffolds." —Catlin's *American Indians*, vol. ii. p. 10—vide also vol. i. p. 89]

The lamentations are raised by the natives around, fires are made below, so that the smoke may ascend over the corpse, and the mourners usually remain encamped about the place for a great length of time, or until the body is thoroughly dry, after which they leave it. Mr. Schurman says, "At Port Lincoln, after the body is put in a grave, and a little earth is thrown on it; the natives place a number of sticks across its mouth, over which they spread grass or bushes to prevent the remaining earth from falling down, so that an empty space of about three feet in depth is left between the body and the top earth."

At the Flinders river (Gulf of Carpentaria), Captain Stokes observes, "At the upper part of Flinders river, a corpse was found lodged in the branches of a tree, some twenty feet high from the ground; it had three coverings, first, one of bark, then a net, and outside of all a layer of sticks."

On the Murray river, and among the contiguous tribes, many differences occur in the forms of burial adopted by the various tribes. Still-born children are buried immediately. Infants not weaned are carried about by the mother for some months, well wrapped up, and when thoroughly dry, are put into nets or bags, and deposited in the hollows of trees, or buried. Children and young people are buried as soon as practicable after death, and a spearing match generally ensues.

Old people are also buried without unnecessary delay. I have even seen a man in the prime of life all ready placed upon the bier before he was dead, and the mourners and others waiting to convey him to his long home, as soon as the breath departed.

In the case of a middle-aged, or an old man, the spearing and fighting contingent upon a death is always greater than for younger natives. The burial rites in some tribes assimilate to those practised near Adelaide; in others I have witnessed the following ceremony:—The grave being dug, the body was laid out near it, on a triangular bier (birri), stretched straight on the back, enveloped in cloths and skins, rolled round and corded close, and with the head to the eastward; around the bier were many women, relations of the deceased, wailing and lamenting bitterly, and lacerating their thighs, backs, and breasts, with shells or flint, until the blood flowed copiously from the gashes. The males of the tribe were standing around in a circle, with their weapons in their hands, and the stranger tribes near them, in a similar position, imparting to the whole a solemn and military kind of appearance. After this had continued for some time, the male relatives closed in around the bier, the mourning women renewed their lamentations in a louder tone, and two male relatives stepped up to the bier, and stood across the body, one at the head, and one at the foot, facing each other.

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Having cut above the abdomen the strings binding the cloths which were wound round the body, they proceeded to cut a slit of about ten inches long, through the swathing cloths above the belly; through this opening, they removed the arms, which appeared to have been crossed there, laying them down by the sides, inside the wrappings (for no part was unwound); having warmed a handful of green boughs over a fire, they thrust them in through the opening in the cloths, upon the naked belly of the corpse; after a little while these were removed, and one of their sorcerers made an incision of about eight inches long in the abdomen. Having pulled out the entrails and peritoneum, they were turned over, and carefully examined, whilst the women kept wailing and cutting [Note 81 at end of para.] themselves more violently than before, and even the men themselves lamented aloud. When this had been continued for some time, a portion of the omentum was cut off, wrapped in green leaves, and then put carefully away in a bag. The entrails were now replaced, a handful or two of green leaves thrust in above them, the cloths replaced, and the body again bound up ready for interment.

[Note 81: Also an American custom.—Catlin, vol. i. p. 90. Lacerating the flesh at death was expressly forbidden in the Jewish dispensation. It is practised also in New Zealand.—Vide Dieffenbach.]

A relative of the deceased now jumped up, with his weapons, violently excited, and apparently with the intention of spearing some one; but he was at once restrained by his friends, who informed me that the investigation had satisfied them that the man had not died through the agency of sorcery; if he had, it is imagined that a cicatrice would have been found upon the omentum. Two men now got into the grave, spread a cloth in the bottom, and over that green boughs. Other natives turned the bier round, and lifting up the body, gave it to the two in the grave to lay in its proper position, which was quite horizontal, and with the head to the west [Note 82 at end of para.], the grave being dug east and west: green boughs were now thrown thickly into it, and earth was pushed in by the bystanders with their feet, until a mound had been raised some height above the ground. All was now over, and the natives began to disperse, upon which the wild and piercing wail of the mourners became redoubled.

[Note 82: This appears to be a very general custom, and to be of Eastern origin. Catlin describes it as always being attended to at the disposal of the dead by the American Indians. In South Africa, however, Moffat states (p. 307), “that the corpse is put exactly facing the north.”]

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Upon the mounds, or tumuli, over the graves, huts of bark, or boughs, are generally erected to shelter the dead from the rain; they are also frequently wound round with netting. Many graves being usually in one vicinity, and an elevated dry place being selected, the cemeteries often present a picturesque appearance. Graves are frequently visited by the women at intervals, for some months, and at such times the wail is renewed, and their bodies lacerated as at the interment. At Boga Lake, I saw a grave with a very neat hut of reeds made over it, surmounted by netting, and having a long curious serpentine double trench, of a few inches deep, surrounding it; possibly it might have been the burial place of the native mentioned by Major Mitchell, as having been shot by his black, Piper, at that lake.

Nets, but not implements, are sometimes buried with the natives; nor do the survivors ever like to use a net that has belonged to a man who is dead.

There are not any ceremonies attending the burial of young children; and the male relatives often neglect to attend at all, leaving it altogether to the women.

The natives have not much dread of going near to graves, and care little for keeping them in order, or preventing the bones of their friends from being scattered on the surface of the earth.

I have frequently seen them handling them, or kicking them with the foot with great indifference. On one occasion when out with an old native looking for horses before it was daylight, I came to a grave of no very old date, and where the boughs and bushes built over in the form of a hut were still remaining undisturbed; the weather was extremely cold, and the old man did not hesitate to ask me to pull down the boughs to make a fire, but would not do it himself.

On another occasion when a poor old woman had been deserted by the natives of Moorunde, and died a few days after being brought up to the station, I had great difficulty in getting the other natives to bury her, they would on no account touch the body; but after digging a hole, they got a long wiry branch of a tree, and one man taking hold of each end they bent the middle round the old woman's neck, and thus dragged her along the ground and threw her into the pit like a dog, all the time violently and continually spitting out in every direction to ward off, as they said, the infection.

[Note 83: "He tied a thong to her leg, avoiding the touch of that form which gave him birth, dragged the corpse to some bushes, and left the thong because it had been in contact with the body of his mother." —Moffat's South Africa, p. 306.]

Sometimes it happens that when a death occurs, the nearest grown up male relative, whose duty it would be to take the principal part in the ceremonies, or inflict punishment if evil agency is suspected to have caused the death, may be absent. In this case he

would have to discharge these duties upon the first occasion of his meeting with the supposed aggressors. The following is an instance which I witnessed.



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A relative of Tenberry, one of the principal natives of the Murray, had died when he was absent, and the son of the deceased was too young to revenge the sorcery which it was imagined had caused his father's death, it therefore became Tenberry's duty to do this upon the first occasion that offered. I was with him when the parties first came into the neighbourhood, and I witnessed the proceedings. Notice having been sent by Tenberry the evening before, to warn them to be ready, I accompanied him early in the morning towards the encampment of the natives, situated in a hollow near the water; when within about a hundred yards we saw from the rise all the natives seated below us in the valley. Tenberry now halted, and having taken a hasty survey of the group hung down his head upon his breast and raised a low mournful lamentation; after a time it ceased, and the wail was at once replied to and continued by women's voices in the camp: he now hastily went down to the camp still uttering his lamentations, and the whole body rose at his approach, and formed a large open circle around him. The natives who were supposed to have caused the death of his friend, formed a part of the circle and were armed with spears; behind them stood the orphan son of the deceased, probably in the light of an accuser; and behind the son were the widows, wailing and lamenting bitterly.

After taking the centre of the circle, Tenberry called for a spear, but no one offered one, he therefore took a long one from a native in the ring, who had evidently brought it for that purpose and yielded it unresistingly. Pacing with this weapon furiously up and down the circle, he advanced and retreated before the accused, brandishing the spear at them, and alternately threatening and wailing. No one replied, but the melancholy dirge was still kept up by the widows in the rear.

After sufficiently exciting himself in this manner for some time, he advanced with uplifted spear, and successively repeating his blows speared four or five persons among the accused natives in the left arm, each of them pushing forward his arm unflinchingly for the blow as he advanced upon them. Tenberry now again hung down his head and took up his lamentation for a short time, after which he paced about rapidly, vehemently haranguing, and violently gesticulating, and concluded by ordering all the natives present to separate their camps, and each tribe to make their own apart.

Mourning is performed by the men by cutting their beards [Note 84 at end of para.] and hair, and daubing the head and breast with a white pigment; among the women, by cutting and burning the hair close off [Note 85 at end of para.] to the head and plastering themselves with pipe-clay. In some cases, hot ashes are put upon the head to singe the hair to its very roots, and they then literally weep "in dust and ashes." Among some of the Murray tribes, a mourning cap is worn by the women, made two or three inches thick of carbonate of lime. It is moulded to the head when moist around a piece of net work; the weight is eight pounds and a half. (Pl. 1, fig. 17.)



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[Note 84: The custom among the Australians of putting dust or ashes on the head, of shaving the head, of clipping the beard, and of lacerating the body at death or in sign of mourning, appears very similar to the practices among the Israelites in the time of Moses. Vide Leviticus xix. 27, 28; Leviticus xxi. 5; Jeremiah xiviii. 30, 31, 32; Revelations xviii. 19, etc.]

[Note 85: The women among the American Indians also cut off the hair close to the head as a sign of mourning.—Vide Catlin, vol. i.]

The lamentations for the dead do not terminate with the burial; frequently they are renewed at intervals by the women, during late hours of the night, or some hours before day-break in the morning. Piercingly as those cries strike upon the traveller in the lonely woods, if raised suddenly, or very near him, yet mellowed by distance they are soothing and pleasing, awakening a train of thoughts and feelings, which, though sad and solemn, are yet such as the mind sometimes delights to indulge in. The names of the dead are never repeated by the natives among themselves, and it is a very difficult matter for a European to get them to break through this custom, nor will they do it in the presence of other natives. In cases where the name of a native has been that of some bird or animal of almost daily recurrence, a new name is given to the object, and adopted in the language of the tribe. Thus at Moorunde, a favourite son of the native Tenberry was called Torpool, or the Teal; upon the child's death the appellation of tilquaitch was given to the teal, and that of torpool altogether dropped among the Moorunde tribe.

The natives of New Holland, as far as yet can be ascertained, have no religious belief or ceremonies. A Deity, or great First Cause, can hardly be said to be acknowledged, and certainly is not worshipped by this people, who ascribe the creation to very inefficient causes. They state that some things called themselves into existence, and had the property of creating others. But upon all subjects of this nature their ideas are indistinct and indefinite, as they are not naturally a reasoning people, and by no means given to the investigation of causes or their effects; hence, if you inquire why they use such and such ceremonies, they reply, our fathers did so, and we do it; or why they believe so and so, our fathers told us it was so. [Note 86 at end of para.] They are not fond of entering upon abstruse subjects, and when they are induced to do it, it is more than possible, from our imperfect acquaintance with their language, and total ignorance of the character and bent of their thoughts upon such points, that we are very likely to misunderstand and misrepresent their real opinions. It appears to me that different tribes give a different account of their belief, but all generally so absurd, so vague, unsatisfactory, and contradictory, that it is impossible at present to say with any certainty what they really believe,

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or whether they have any independent belief at all. Mr. Moorhouse, who has taken great pains in his inquiries among the natives around Adelaide upon questions of this nature, states that they believe in a Soul or Spirit (itpitukutya), separate and distinct altogether from the body, which at death goes to the west, to a large pit, where the souls of all men go. When all are dead, the souls will return to their former place of residence, go to the graves of their forsaken bodies, and inquire, are these the bodies that we formerly inhabited? The bodies will reply, "we are not dead, but still living." The souls and bodies will not be re-united; the former will live in trees during the day, and at night alight on the ground, and eat grubs, lizards, frogs, and kangaroo rats, but not vegetable food of any description. The souls are never again to die, but will remain about the size of a boy eight years old.

[Note 86: "For that practice, they are, as far as I could learn, unable to give any other reason than that of its being the custom of their forefathers which they are therefore bound to follow."—Burchell's Bichuana tribes, vol. ii. p. 531.]

The account given me by some of the natives of the Murray of the origin of the creation, is, that there are four individuals living up among the clouds, called Nooreele, a father and his three male children, but there is no mother. The father is all-powerful, and of benevolent character. He made the earth, trees, waters, *etc.*, gave names to every thing and place, placed the natives in their different districts, telling each tribe that they were to inhabit such and such localities, and were to speak such and such a language. It is said that he brought the natives originally from some place over the waters to the eastward. The Nooreele never die, and the souls (ludko, literally a shadow) of dead natives will go up and join them in the skies, and will never die again. Other tribes of natives give an account of a serpent of immense size, and inhabiting high rocky mountains, which, they say, produced creation by a blow of his tail. But their ideas and descriptions are too incongruous and unintelligible to deduce any definite or connected story from them.

All tribes of natives appear to dread evil spirits, having the appearance of Blacks (called in the Murray dialect Tou, in that of Adelaide Kuinyo). They fly about at nights through the air, break down branches of trees, pass simultaneously from one place to another, and attack all natives that come in their way, dragging such as they can catch after them. Fire [Note 87 at end of para.] appears to have considerable effect in keeping these monsters away, and a native will rarely stir a yard by night, except in moonlight, without carrying a fire-stick. Under any circumstances they do not like moving about in the dark, and it is with the greatest difficulty that they are ever induced to go singly from one station to another, a mile or two distant, after night-fall. Notwithstanding this dread of they don't know exactly what, the natives do not let their fears prevent them moving about after dark, if any object is to be gained, or if several of them are together. By

moonlight they are in the habit of travelling from one place to another, as well as of going out to hunt opossums.

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[Note 87: Fire is produced by the friction of two pieces of wood or stick—generally the dry flower-stem of the *Xanthorrea*. The natives, however, usually carry a lighted piece of wood about with them, and do not often let it go out.]

Anything that is extraordinary or unusual, is a subject of great dread to the natives: of this I had a singular instance at Moorunde. In March, 1843, I had a little boy living with me by his father's permission, whilst the old man went up the river with the other natives to hunt and fish. On the evening of the 2nd of March a large comet was visible to the westward, and became brighter and more distinct every succeeding night. On the 5th I had a visit from the father of the little boy who was living with me, to demand his son; he had come down the river post haste for that purpose, as soon as he saw the comet, which he assured me was the harbinger of all kinds of calamities, and more especially to the white people. It was to overthrow Adelaide, destroy all Europeans and their houses, and then taking a course up the Murray, and past the Rufus, do irreparable damage to whatever or whoever came in its way. It was sent, he said, by the northern natives, who were powerful sorcerers, and to revenge the confinement of one of the principal men of their tribe, who was then in Adelaide gaol, charged with assaulting a shepherd; and he urged me by all means to hurry off to town as quickly as I could, to procure the man's release, so that if possible the evil might be averted. No explanation gave him the least satisfaction, he was in such a state of apprehension and excitement, and he finally marched off with the little boy, saying, that although by no means safe even with him, yet he would be in less danger than if left with me.

All natives of Australia believe in sorcery and witchcraft on the part of certain of their own tribe, or of others. To enable them to become sorcerers, certain rites must be undergone, which vary among the different tribes. Around Adelaide they have at one period to eat the flesh of young children, and at another that of an old man, but it does not appear that they partake more than once in their life of each kind. When initiated, these men possess extensive powers, they can cure or cause diseases, can produce or dissipate rain [Note 88 at end of para.], wind, hail, thunder, *etc.* They have many sacred implements or relics, which are for the most part carefully kept concealed from the eyes of all, but especially from the women, such as, pieces of rock crystal, said to have been extracted by them from individuals who were suffering under the withering influence of some hostile sorcerers; the *pringurru*, a sacred piece of bone (used sometimes for bleeding), *etc.* The latter, if burned to ashes in the fire, possesses mortiferous influence over enemies. If two tribes are at war, and one of either happens to fall sick, it is believed that the sickness has been produced by a sorcerer of the opposite tribe, and should the *pringurru* have been burnt, death must necessarily follow.

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[Note 88: Also an American superstition.—Vide Catlin, vol.i.p. 134. “Sorcerers or rain makers, for both offices are generally assumed by one individual.”—Moffat’s South Africa, p. 305.]

As all internal pains are attributed to witchcraft, sorcerers possess the power of relieving or curing them. Sometimes the mouth is applied to the surface where the pain is seated, the blood is sucked out, and a bunch of green leaves applied to the part; besides the blood, which is derived from the gums of the sorcerer, a bone is sometimes put out of the mouth, and declared to have been procured from the diseased part; on other occasions the disease is drawn out in an invisible form, and burnt in the fire, or thrown into the water; at others the patient is stretched upon the ground, whilst another person presses with his feet or hands upon the diseased part, or cold water is sprinkled over, and green leaves used as before. There are few complaints that the natives do not attempt to cure, either by charms or by specific applications: of the latter a very singular one is the appliance personally of the urine from a female—a very general remedy, and considered a sovereign one for most disorders. Bandages are often applied round the ankles, legs, arms, wrists, *etc.* sufficiently tight to impede circulation; suction is applied to the bites of snakes, and is also made use of by their doctors in drawing out blood from the diseased part, a string being tied to the hair, if it be the head that ails, or to any other part, and the opposite end is put into the sorcerer’s mouth, who then commences sucking and spitting out blood, which he declares comes from the patient. Blood letting is practised occasionally to relieve pains in the head, or oppression of the system. The operation is performed by opening a vein in the arm, with a piece of rock crystal in the same way as Europeans bleed.

Fractures of the extremities are treated with splints and bandages, as in Europe. Venereal ulcers are sprinkled with alkaline wood ashes, the astringent liquid of the nettle bark, or a macerated preparation from a particular kind of broad-leaved grass. Superficial wounds are left to themselves, and usually heal without much trouble. Malformations of the body are attributed to the influence of the stars, caused by the mother eating forbidden food during pregnancy, or if occurring after birth it is still caused by the stars, in consequence of forbidden food being eaten. The teeth of the native are generally regular and very beautiful, indeed, in their natural state, I have never seen a single instance of decayed teeth, among them. Among those, however, who have been living near Europeans for some years past, and whose habits and diet have been changed from simple to more artificial ones, a great alteration is taking place in this respect, and symptoms of decaying teeth are beginning to make their appearance among many.

Among other superstitions of the natives, they believe in the existence of an individual called in the Murrumbidgee Biam, or the Murray Biam-baitch-y, who has the form and figure of a black, but is deformed in the lower extremities, and is always either sitting cross-legged on the ground, or ferrying about in a canoe.

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From him the natives say they derive many of the songs sung at their dances; he also causes diseases sometimes, and especially one which indents the face like the effects of small pox. Another evil agency, dreaded by the natives, is a spirit of the waters, called ngook-wonga, it causes many diseases to those who go into the waters in unauthorised places, or at improper times, hence a native is very loth to go into water he is not accustomed to for the first time.

To counteract the evil effects produced by this spirit, there are persons particularly devoted to this branch of sorcery, the following is a case where I saw them exercise their powers. A boy of about fourteen had at the Murray river been seized with a severe attack of erysipelas in the lower part of one of his legs, from bathing and remaining in the water when heated. As this did not get better, it was ascribed to the evil agency of the Spirit of the Waters; and the Pachwonga or Pachwin were called in to cure him. They arrived late at night, three in number, and at once proceeded to the exercise of their duties. As soon as it was seen that the magicians were coming, the friends of the boy lifted him up, and carrying him some distance away from the camp, placed him on the ground by himself, and then ranged themselves in two rows upon either side, in a sitting posture, but at some distance behind the patient. The three magi now advanced in the form of a triangle, one leading and the other two behind, equidistantly apart. They were all painted, carried bunches of green reeds in their hands, which they kept shaking, and danced [Note 89 at end of para.] with a measured tread, keeping the right foot always in advance of the other as in a galopade, and singing a low solemn dirge, which was vehemently beat time to, by the natives behind thumping on the ground. Upon arriving at the boy, the leading native fell down on his knees close to him, and took hold of the diseased leg, the other two still dancing and singing around the patient. In a little time, one of the two fell down also on his knees on another side of the boy, leaving the third still dancing and singing around them. At last he fell down also on his knees in a triangular position with the others, the boy being in the centre. All three now commenced blowing, spitting, making curious gurgling kinds of noises, waving their green bunches of reeds, and pressing forcibly upon the diseased leg to make the patient give audible indications of the evil spirit leaving him. After some time, two of the three doctors got up again, danced and sung around the boy, and then once more assuming their kneeling positions, recommenced spitting and blowing, waving their bunches of reeds, and making the same curious noises, but louder than ever. Their exorcism at last was effectual, the evil spirit, in the shape of a sharp stone, was extracted from the limb, and driven into the ground; but it was too dark they said to see it. As soon as this agreeable news was announced, the friends of the boy came up and hastily removed him back to the camp, whilst the three doctors assuming the triangular position, sung and danced round the place where the boy had been laid, and then advancing in the same form towards the river, keeping the right foot always in advance, they at last fairly drove the spirit into the water and relieved the neighbourhood from so troublesome a visitor.

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[Note 89: "Dancing over him, shaking his frightful rattles, and singing songs of incantation, in the hopes to cure him by a charm."—Catlin's North American Indians, vol. i.p. 39.]

It was a long time before I lost a vivid impression of this ceremony; the still hour of the night, the naked savages, with their fancifully painted forms, their wild but solemn dirge, their uncouth gestures, and unnatural noises, all tended to keep up an illusion of an unearthly character, and contributed to produce a thrilling and imposing effect upon the mind.

At the Murray River, singular looking places are found sometimes, made by the natives by piling small stones close together, upon their ends in the ground, in a shape resembling the accompanying diagram, and projecting four or five inches above the ground. The whole length of the place thus inclosed, by one which I examined, was eleven yards; at the broad end it was two yards wide, at the narrow end one. The position of this singular looking place, was a clear space on the slope of a hill, the narrow end being the lowest, on in the direction of the river. Inside the line of stones, the ground was smoothed, and somewhat hollowed. The natives called it Mooyumbuck, and said it was a place for disenchanting an individual afflicted with boils. In other places, large heaps of small loose stones are piled up like small haycocks, but for what purpose I could never understand. This is done by the young men, and has some connection probably with their ceremonies or amusements.

In others, singular shaped spaces are inclosed, by serpentine trenches, a few inches deep, but for what purpose I know not, unless graves have formerly existed there.

Another practice of the natives, when travelling from one place to another, is to put stones up in the trees they pass, at different heights from the ground, to indicate the height of the sun when they passed. Other natives following, are thus made aware of the hour of the day when their friends passed particular points. Captain Grey found the same custom in Western Australia; vol. i. p. 113, he says:—

"I this day again remarked a circumstance, which had before this period elicited my attention, which was, that we occasionally found fixed on the boughs of trees, at a considerable height from the ground, pieces of sandstone, nearly circular in form, about an inch and a half in thickness, and from four to five in diameter, so that they resembled small mill-stones. What was the object of thus fashioning, and placing these stones, I never could conceive, for they are generally in the least remarkable spots. They cannot point out burial places, for I have made such minute searches, that in such case I must have found some of the bones; neither can they indicate any peculiar route through the country, for two never occur near one another."



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The power of sorcery appears always to belong, in a degree, to the aged, but it is assumed often by the middle aged men. It is no protection to the possessor, from attack, or injury, on the part of other natives. On the contrary, the greater the skill of the sorcerer, and the more extensive his reputation, the more likely is he to be charged with offences he is unconscious of, and made to pay their penalty. Sorcerers are not ubiquitous, but have the power of becoming invisible, and can transport themselves instantaneously to any place they please. Women are never sorcerers. It is a general belief among almost all the Aborigines, that Europeans, or white people, are resuscitated natives, who have changed their colour, and who are supposed to return to the same localities they had inhabited as black people. The most puzzling point, however, with this theory, appears to be that they cannot make out how it is that the returned natives do not know their former friends or relatives. I have myself often been asked, with seriousness and earnestness, who, among the Europeans, were their fathers, their mothers, and their other relatives, and how it is that the dead were so ignorant, or so forgetful, as not to know their friends when they again returned to the earth.

One old native informed me, that all blacks, when dead, go up to the clouds, where they have plenty to eat and drink; fish, birds, and game of all kinds, with weapons and implements to take them. He then told me, that occasionally individuals had been up to the clouds, and had come back, but that such instances were very rare; his own mother, he said, had been one of the favoured few. Some one from above had let down a rope, and hauled her up by it; she remained one night, and on her return, gave a description of what she had seen in a chaunt, or song, which he sung for me, but of the meaning of which I could make out nothing.

## Chapter VI

### **NUMBERS—DISEASES—CAUSE OF LIMITED POPULATION—CRIMES AGAINST EUROPEANS— AMONGST THEMSELVES—TREATMENT OF EACH OTHER IN DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD, ETC.**

There is scarcely any point connected with the subject of the Aborigines of New Holland, upon which it is more difficult to found an opinion, even approximating to the truth, than that of the aggregate population of the continent, or the average number of persons to be found in any given space. Nor will this appear at all surprising, when the character and habits of the people are taken into consideration. Destitute of any fixed place of residence, neither cultivating the soil, nor domesticating animals, they have no pursuits to confine them to any particular locality, or to cause them to congregate permanently in the same district. On the contrary, all their habits have an opposite tendency.



The necessity of seeking daily their food as they require it, the fact of that food not being procurable for any great length of time together in the same place, and the circumstance that its quality, and abundance, or the facility of obtaining it, are contingent upon the season of the year, at which they may visit any particular district, have given to their mode of life, an unsettled and wandering character.

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The casual observer, or the passing traveller, has but little, therefore, to guide him in his estimate of the population of the country he may be in. A district that may at one time be thinly inhabited, or even altogether untenanted, may at another be teeming with population. The wanderer may at one time be surrounded by hundreds of savages, and at another, in the same place he may pass on alone and unheeded.

At Lake Victoria, on the Murray, I have seen congregated upwards of six hundred natives at once, again I have passed through that neighbourhood and have scarcely seen a single individual; nor does this alone constitute the difficulty and uncertainty involved in estimating the numbers of the Aborigines. Such are the silence and stealth with which all their movements are conducted, so slight a trace is left to indicate their line of march, and so small a clue by which to detect their presence, that the stranger finds it impossible to tell from any thing that he sees, whether he is in their vicinity or not. I have myself often when travelling, as I imagined in the most retired and solitary recesses of the forest, been suddenly surprised by the unexpected appearance of large bodies of natives, without being in the least able to conjecture whence they had come, or how they obtained the necessaries of life, in what appeared to me an arid and foodless desert.

Captain Grey has observed in other parts of Australia, the same ingenuity and stealth manifested by them in either cloaking their movements, or concealing their presence, until circumstances rendered it in their opinion no longer necessary to preserve this concealment, vol. i. p. 147, he says: "Immediately numbers of other natives burst upon my sight, each tree, each rock, seemed to give forth its black denizen as if by enchantment; a moment before the most solemn silence pervaded these woods, we deemed that not a human being moved within miles of us, and now they rang with savage and ferocious yells, and fierce armed men crowded around us on every side, bent on our destruction."

Nor is it less difficult to arrive at the number of the population in those districts which are occupied by Europeans. In some, the native tribes rarely frequent the stations, in others, portions only of the different tribes are to be found; some belong to the district and others not. In all there is a difficulty in ascertaining the exact number of any tribe, or the precise limits to which their territory extends in every direction around. Even could these particulars be accurately obtained in a few localities, they would afford no data for estimating the population of the whole, as the average number of inhabitants to the square mile, would always vary according to the character of the country and the abundance of food.

Upon this subject Captain Grey remarks, vol. ii. p. 246, "I have found the number of inhabitants to a square mile to vary so much from district to district, from season to season, and to depend upon so great a variety of local circumstances, that I am unable to give any computation which I believe would even nearly approach to truth."

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Mr. Moorhouse, who has also paid much attention to this subject, in the neighbourhood of Adelaide, has arrived at the conclusion, that, in 1843, there were about sixteen hundred aborigines, in regular or irregular contact with the Europeans, in the province of South Australia; these he has classed as follows, viz.:—

In regular contact with Europeans,

Adelaide district 300  
Encounter Bay 230  
Moorunde 300  
Port Lincoln 60  
Hutt River 30

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920

In irregular contact with Europeans,

Adelaide —  
Encounter Bay 100  
Moorunde 200  
Port Lincoln 340  
Hutt River 40

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680

or together about 1600.

Taking in the southern districts of South Australia 120 miles from Adelaide, the northern ones 160, and the eastern one 200. Mr. Moorhouse estimates that there are altogether only about 3000 natives. This however, appears to me to be a considerably under-rated number, and I should rather incline to the opinion, that there are twice as many, if the Port Lincoln peninsula be added to the limits already mentioned. In the Port Lincoln district, Mr. Schurman conjectures there are about 400.

On the Murray River, which is, perhaps, the most densely populated part of the country, I imagine there are, from Moorunde, about three to four natives to every mile of river, which as it winds very considerably in its course, would give a large population to the square mile, if only the valley of the Murray was taken into account.

There are other tribes also frequenting the river occasionally, from the back scrubs on either side; but as these range through a great extent of country beyond the valley, and only sometimes come down there on a visit; I do not include them in the estimate.

At Moorunde itself I have sometimes had from four to five hundred collected, and among those, only a few, perhaps, from the very remote tribes.

At the Rufus and Lake Victoria, I have seen above six hundred together, where they had no other motive to collect in so large a party, than from custom, and for the enjoyment of festivity.

Large towns are frequently the centre of meeting for many, and very distant tribes. The facility of obtaining scraps by begging, small rewards for trifling jobs of work, donations from the charitable, and a variety of broken victuals, offal, *etc.* enable them to collect in large numbers, and indulge to the uttermost their curiosity in observing the novelties around them, in meeting strange tribes, and joining them either in war or festivity, in procuring tools, clothes, *etc.* to carry back and barter in their own districts, and for other similar objects. Thus, Adelaide is nearly always occupied by tribes from one part or other of the country: on an average, it will support probably six hundred in the way I have described, though occasionally eight hundred have met there. The following returns of the numbers who have attended the annual muster on the Queen's birthday, when bread and beef have been distributed, will show how the ratio has gone on increasing during the last five years.

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In 1840 there were present 283 men, women, and children.

1841 there were present 374 men, women, and children.

1842 there were present 400 men, women, and children.

1843 there were present 450 men, women, and children.

1844 there were present 793 men, women, and children.

In the Murray district, where it has been customary, since the first establishment of the post at Moorunde, to issue a certain quantity of flour once in the month (at the full moon) to every native who chose to come in to receive it, the increase in attendance has been progressively going on, viz.

2 issues in 1841 the average attendance were 52 men, women, and children 12 issues in 1842 the average attendance were 94 men, women, and children 10 issues in 1843 the average attendance were 136 men, women, and children 9 issues in 1844 the average attendance were 171 men, women, and children

Occasionally nearly 500 natives have been present at these monthly issues of flour, and the reason that the average attendance is not greater, is, that immediately after collecting at Moorunde, at the full of the moon, to receive their flour, from 100 to 300 would usually set off to Adelaide, where there are so many objects of interest and attraction, and re-remain there for several months at a time, and especially during the winter. As fast, too, as one party returned to their own districts, another would go into town, and thus the average number would be constantly kept down. A third reason why the musters do not appear so large as they otherwise would, is that many of the more distant natives come down at other times than the full moon, and I have then been obliged to deviate from my usual custom, and issue flour to them at the periods when they arrived. The number of natives attending such extraordinary issues do not appear in the periodical returns.

In endeavouring to estimate the numbers and proportions of the sexes, and children, almost as great a difficulty exists as in that of obtaining their aggregate numbers. This arises from the fact of the more distant tribes who visit Europeans stations, frequently leaving their younger wives, or little children at home, with aged relatives, whilst they themselves go to a distance. In all the periodical, or regular issues of flour at the time of full moon, I have accurately kept lists of all who attended. The gross totals of thirty-three issues are as follows:—

Men 1266

Women 1330

Boys 930

Girls 551

Infants 52

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4129



From this it is apparent, first, that the women attending the monthly meetings at the Murray have been, on the whole, about five and a half per cent in excess of the men, an extraordinary and unusual circumstance, as compared with the results obtained at other places. I can only account for this upon the supposition before given, that when large bodies of natives leave Moorunde for Adelaide, more men than women go away, and that consequently a larger proportion of females is left behind. Mr. Moor-house remarks, upon this point, that he has found the males to average seventy per cent more than the females, among the Adelaide tribes. My own observation leads me to the opinion that upon the Murray the two sexes are as nearly equal in numbers as may be.

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Secondly, it would appear, that of the Moorunde issues, the number of girls attending has been little more than one half that of the boys. This may, perhaps, arise in some measure from females assuming the duties of women, and being classed as such, at an age when males would still be considered as only boys. The principal reason, however, must, as before, be ascribed to a greater number of girls being left behind by the more distant tribes when they come to visit Moorunde.

Thirdly, from the list I have given, it seems that to each woman there would be about  $1\frac{1}{3}$  child. Upon this subject Mr. Moorhouse remarks, that his investigation has led to the conclusion that each woman has, on an average, five children born (nine being the greatest number known), but that each mother only rears, upon an average, two; and this I think, upon the whole, would be a tolerably correct estimate.

There is one point connected with the return I have given, peculiarly striking, as it shews the comparatively small increase that now appears to be going on among the more numerous tribes of the Aborigines, I allude to the fact of there only having been fifty-two young infants among 1330 women. By infants I mean such as had to be carried in the arms, for those who could walk at all have been classed among the boys and girls.

I have never known a case of twins among the Aborigines, and Mr. Moorhouse informs me that no case has ever come under his observation; but Captain Grey found such to occur sometimes in Western Australia. On the number and proportion of the sexes he observes, that 4.6 seemed to be the average number of children born to each woman, and that there was one female to every 1.3 males. With respect to the duration of life among the Aborigines, Captain Grey says, vol. ii. p. 246-248—"With regard to the age occasionally attained by the natives, I believe very erroneous ideas have been prevalent, for so far am I from considering them to be short lived, that I am certain they frequently attain the age of seventy years and upwards." "Yet were these instances of longevity contrasted with the great number of deaths which take place during the period of infancy, there can be no doubt whatever that the average duration of life amongst these savage tribes falls far short of that enjoyed by civilized races."

These remarks, as far as my observation has extended, apply to the natives of New Holland generally. I have frequently met with many venerable, white-headed men among the Aborigines, who could not, I think, have been less than eighty years of age, and who yet retained the full vigour of mind, and the bold, upright, though now wasted form, that had characterised them in the pride of manhood; but about sixty-five appears perhaps to be the average age attained by the old.

The second inference is more than borne out by the statement already recorded, that for every five children born on an average to each mother, two only are reared, and these subject to all the casualties and dangers which savage life is exposed to.

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[Note 90: This can of course only apply to tribes tolerably well known to Europeans, and more or less frequently coming in contact with them. Of tribes in their natural state we can have no accurate data, and but few passing notes even that are worthy of confidence. Generally I have found children to be numerous among tribes who have never had intercourse with Europeans' and it is a well known fact that the increase of numbers in aboriginal tribes is checked in proportion to the frequency, or the extent of their communication with Europeans. At Flinders island to which 210 Van Diemen's Land natives were removed from Van Diemen's Land in 1835, this is singularly exemplified. In 1842 Count Strzelecki says, page 353—"And while each family of the interior of New South Wales, uncontaminated by contact with the whites, swarms with children, those of Flinders island, had during eight years an accession of only fourteen in number."]

Upon inquiry into the causes which tend to prevent population going on in an increasing ratio among the natives of Australia, the following appear to be the most prominent. First, polygamy, and the illicit and almost unlimited intercourse between the sexes, habits which are well known to check the progress of population, wherever they prevail.

Secondly. Infanticide, which is very general, and practised to a great extent, especially among the younger and favourite women.

Thirdly. Diseases, to which in a savage state young children are peculiarly liable, such as dysentery, cold, and their consequences, *etc.*

[Note 91: Huic accedit, ex quo illis sunt immisti Europaei, lues venerea. Morbum infantibus matres afflant, et ingens multitudo quotannis inde perit.]

Fourthly. Wars and quarrels, occurring sometimes from the most trivial circumstances, and often ending in deaths, or wounds that terminate in death.

The diseases to which the natives are subject, are with the exception of those induced by artificial living, as gout, rheumatism, *etc.* very similar to those which afflict Europeans, the principal being the result of inflammation, acute, or chronic, arising from exposure to the cold, and which affects most generally the bronchiae, the lungs, and the pleura. Phthisis occasionally occurs, as does also erysipelas. Scrofula has been met with, but very rarely. A disease very similar to the small-pox, and leaving similar marks upon the face, appears formerly to have been very prevalent, but I have never met with an existing case, nor has Mr. Moorhouse ever fallen in with one. It is said to have come from the eastward originally, and very probably may have been derived in the first instance from Europeans, and the infection passed along from one tribe to another: it has not been experienced now for many years.



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[Note 92: Ex morbis quos patiuntur ab adventu Europaeorum longe frequentissima et maxime fatalis est lues venerea. An hic morbus indigenis, priusquam illis immiscebuntur Europaei erat notus, sciri nunc minime potest. Ipsi jamdiu ex oriente adductum dicunt, ex quo maxime probabile videtur, eum, origine prima ex Europa, inde de gente in gentem per totam poene continentem esse illatam. Neque dubium eum in gentibus iis quibus non immiscentur Europaei, neque frequentem esse, nec acrem, eorum autem per immistionem terribilem in modum augescere. Quinetiam ii sunt indigenarum mores, ut, adveniat modo forma sub pessima morbus, velox et virulentus qualis nusquam alias illico latissime effluat. Licet bene sciant hae gentes, hunc, sicut ejus modi alii morbum per contactum contractum esse illis tamen pestem cujus indies spectantur tantae tamque terribiles offensiones, vitare minime curae est. Vidi egomet plurimos non modo aegrotorum in tentoriis otiari, verum etiam foedatus ita secure induere vestes aut iisdem in stragulis cubare, ac si optima ibi adesset sanitas. Mihi stationem publicam ponendi causa ad “Morrandi” in mensa Octobris, 1841, advenienti, occurrebant populi morbis poene liberi formam atque membra bene formati; postea autem ex frequenti cum oppido et proximis stationibus commercio, circa Octobrem 1844, morbos quam maxime horridos contraxerant. Inde eo tempore moribundi erant plurimi, nonnulli mortui, paucique ex iis, qui frequenter coibant, ex omni aetate et sexu hujusce pestis formis omnino expertes erant. Apud indigenas morbus hic eodem fere modo quo apud Europaeos sese ostendere videtur variis tamen ex causis etiam magis odiosum, eo praesertim quod pustulae rotundae, magnitudinem fere uncialem habentes, simul in cute exsurgunt. His gradatim, cum pure effluente, pars media expletur, et inde magis magisque crescentibus et dispersis corporis universi superficies tabe ac scabie laborat, quae propinquantibus simul horrorem ac nauseam movent. Ulcera haec aliquando infra sex vel octo menses ipsa se cohaerent; plerumque autem incitamentorum et vi causticorum ad locum adhibita infra hebdomadas tres sanantur. Nec minus apud indigenas quam apud Europaeos, remedium hujusoe morbi speciale: medicamenta sunt mercurialia, majore tamen illis cum periculo, tum propter eorum mores, quum quod plerumque sub dio vivunt, omni absente medicina. Post annum primum aut alterum morbus evanescit, interdum mortem affert. Semper autem aegrotis miseris cruciatus maximus et dolores perpetui inde flunt. Moorhousi de morbo hoc opiniones in paucis a meis experimentis dissident, quum ille num glandem penis aut inguinis, principio nunquam, glandem autem penis rarissime vel secundo attingere arbitrabatur. Ego autem et hoc et illud in ripis Murray fluminis vidi.]

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Many natives of deformed persons are occasionally to be met with, especially in the extremities. I have seen natives tall, and perfect, and well built in the body and limbs, from the head down to the knees: but from that point downwards, shrivelled and blighted, presenting but skin and bone. Many are blind in one eye, some in both; sometimes this appears the effect of inflammation, or of cataract; at others, it may be the result of accident. Among those natives inhabiting the sandy drifts along the western coast, where the sand is always circling about in a perfect shower, I have no doubt but that many become blind from its effects.

In October, 1839, Mr. Moorhouse found nine inhabitants in two huts to the south; out of these, five were quite blind, and one had lost one eye; they were occupied in making nets.

Deaf and dumb persons are not often found among the Aborigines, but I have met with instances of this kind. One of the most intelligent natives I ever met with, was a deaf and dumb youth at the Wimmera. From this poor boy, I could more readily and intelligibly obtain by signs a description of the country, its character, and localities, than from any native I ever met with, whose language I was at the time quite unacquainted with.

The blind, or the infirm, are generally well treated, and taken care of when young, but as soon as they advance in years, or become an impediment to the movements of the tribe, they are abandoned at once by their people, and left to perish.

The crimes committed by the natives against Europeans do not bear any proportion, either numerically, or in magnitude, to their number, as a people, and the circumstances of their position. When we consider the low state of morals, or rather, the absence of all moral feeling upon their part, the little restraint that is placed upon their community, by either individual authority, or public opinion, the injuries they are smarting under, and the aggressions they receive, it cannot but be admitted that they are neither an ill disposed, nor a very vindictive people. The following are the returns of the convictions of natives in South Australia for the years 1842 and 1843, viz. :—

*Supreme court.*

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### OFFENCE. 1842 1843 1844

Larceny 2 0 2

Assault with intent to murder 2 0 0

Wilful murder 0 3 1

Sheep stealing 1 2 1  
Cattle stealing 0 1 2

*Resident magistrate's court.*

Assault 0 3 3  
Breaking windows 1 0 0  
Intoxication 3 0 0  
Injuring park trees 0 0 2

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9 9 11

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In the colony of New South Wales, the return of all the trials of the Aborigines, from 10th February, 1837, to the 24th July, 1843, amounted to thirty-three cases, and implicated sixty-one individuals. The offences were chiefly murder and assault, or stealing sheep and cattle. In ten cases only, out of thirty-three, convictions took place, and nineteen individuals were sentenced, *viz.*, twelve to death, six to transportation for ten years, and one to a flogging. [Note 93: For particulars vide Papers on the Aborigines of Australian Colonies, printed for the House of Commons, August 9th, 1844.]

Among the natives, but few crimes are committed against each other; in fact, it would be somewhat difficult to define what their idea of crime would be, for that which is offensive on the part of another is considered a virtue in themselves. Accustomed to act upon the impulse of the moment, and to take summary vengeance for injury, real or imagined, their worst deeds are but in accordance with their own standard of right, having no moral sense of what is just or equitable in the abstract, their only test of propriety must in such cases be, whether they are numerically, or physically strong enough to brave the vengeance of those whom they may have provoked, or injured. Custom has, however, from time immemorial, usurped the place of laws, and with them, perhaps, is even more binding than they would be. Through custom's irresistible sway has been forged the chain that binds in iron fetters a people, who might otherwise be said to be without government or restraint. By it, the young and the weak are held in willing subjection to the old and the strong. Superstitious to a degree they are taught from earliest infancy to dread they know not what evil or punishment, if they infringe upon obligations they have been told to consider as sacred. All the better feelings and impulses implanted in the human heart by nature, are trampled upon by customs, which, as long as they remain unchanged, must for ever prevent them from rising in the scale of civilization and improvement, or to use the apt and expressive language of Captain Grey upon this point, vol. ii. p. 217 :—

“He (the native) is in reality subjected to complex laws, which not only deprive him of all free agency of thought, but at the same time, by allowing no scope for the development of intellect, benevolence, or any other great moral qualification, they necessarily bind him down in a hopeless state of barbarism, from which it is impossible for him to emerge, so long as he is enthralled by these customs, which, on the other hand, are so ingeniously devised as to have a direct tendency to annihilate any effort that is made to overthrow them.”

Those customs regulate all things, the acquisition and disposal of wives, the treatment of women, of the elders, the acquiescence of the younger members of a tribe in any measure that may have been decided upon by the old men, the rules which guide the international intercourse between different tribes, the certain restrictions or embargoes that are put upon different kinds of food or at certain ages, the fear of sorcery or witchcraft if they transgress the orders of the elders, or break through the ordinances that have been imposed upon them, and many other similar influences.

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In their intercourse with each other I have generally found the natives to speak the truth and act with honesty, and they will usually do the same with Europeans if on friendly terms with them. In their treatment of each other, and in the division of food, policy and custom have induced them to be extremely polite and liberal. Old men are especially well off in this respect, as the younger people always give them the best and largest share of everything. Males generally are generous and liberal to each other in sharing what food they have, but it is not often that the females participate in the division. When following their usual pursuits upon the Murray, I have seen the men after an hour or two's fishing with the nets, sit down and devour all they had caught, without saving anything for their family or wives, and then hurry about noon to the camps to share in what had been procured by the women, who usually begin to return at that hour, with what they have been able to collect. Favourite kinds of food are also frequently sent as presents from one male to another, and at other times two parties will meet and exchange the different kinds they respectively bring. Among the younger people I have often seen a poor hungry fellow, who had by his skill or perseverance obtained some small article of food, compelled by the rules of savage politeness to share out the petty spoil among a group of expectant sharks around, whilst he whose skill or labour had procured it dared hardly taste it, and was sure to come in for the smallest share.

Naturally, I do not think they are bloodthirsty; custom or example may sometimes lead them on to shed blood, but it is usually in accordance with their prejudices or to gratify the momentary excitement of passion. With many vices and but few virtues, I do not yet think the Australian savage is more vicious in his propensities or more virulent in his passions than are the larger number of the lower classes of what are called civilized communities. Well might they retort to our accusations, the motives and animus by which too many of our countrymen have been actuated towards them.

I have remarked that as far as my observation has enabled me to judge, the natives are rarely guilty of offences (which they deem such,) towards members of their own tribes. There are many acts, however, which according to our ideas of right and wrong, are acts of the greatest cruelty and tyranny, which they exercise towards each other, though sanctioned by custom, and enforced by daily practice. Such are the cruelties inflicted upon the women, who are looked upon in the light of slaves, and mercilessly beaten or speared for the most trifling offences. No one under any circumstances ever attempts to take the part of a female, and consequently they are maltreated and oppressed in a shocking degree. Does a native meet a woman in the woods and violate her, he is not the one made to feel the vengeance of the husband, but the poor victim whom he has abused. Is there hard or disagreeable work of any kind to be done—the woman is compelled to do it. Is there a scarcity of food at the camp when the husband comes home hungry—the wife is punished for his indolence and inactivity.

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[Note 94: In February 1842, Mr. Gouger, then Colonial Secretary at Adelaide, caused a dog belonging to a native to be shot for some cause or other I am not acquainted with. The animal had been left by its master in the charge of his wife, and as soon as he learnt that it was dead, he speared her for not taking better care of it.]

The complete subserviency of the younger people of both sexes in the savage community, to the older or leading men, is another very serious evil they labour under. The force of habit and of traditional custom has so completely clouded their otherwise quick perceptions, that they blindly yield to whatever the elders may require of them; they dare not disobey, they dare not complain of any wrong or indignity they may be subjected to this has been and will be the greatest bar to their civilization or improvement until some means are taken to free them from so degrading a thralldom, and afford that protection from the oppression of the strong and the old which they so greatly require.

On the Murray river, or amongst the Adelaide natives I am not aware that any stated punishments are affixed to specific crimes, except that of spearing in the arm to expiate deaths. Vengeance appears usually to be summarily executed and on the spot, according to the physical strength or number of friends of the individual injured; otherwise it is made a cause of quarrel between tribes, and a battle or disturbance of some kind takes place. This appears to be one great point of distinction between the practice of some of the tribes in Southern and Western Australia. Captain Grey says in reference to the latter place, (vol. ii. p. 243.)

“Any other crime may be compounded for, by the criminal appearing and submitting himself to the ordeal of having spears thrown at him by all such persons as conceive themselves to have been aggrieved, or by permitting spears to be thrust through certain parts of his body; such as through the thigh, or the calf of the leg, or under the arm. The part which is to be pierced by a spear, is fixed for all common crimes, and a native who has incurred this penalty, sometimes quietly holds out his leg for the injured party to thrust his spear through.”

This custom does not appear to hold among the tribes of South Australia, with whom I have come in contact; but I have often been told by natives of tribes in New South Wales, that they practised it, although an instance of the infliction of the punishment never came under my own observation.

Injuries, when once overlooked, are never revenged afterwards. Tribes may compel members to make restitution, as in the case of stealing a wife; but I have never known an instance of one of their number being given up to another tribe, for either punishment or death. Occasionally they have been induced to give up guilty parties to Europeans; but to effect this, great personal influence on the part of the person employed is necessary to ensure success. Though they are always ready to give up or point out transgressors, if belonging to other tribes than their own.

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### Chapter VII.

Language, dialects, customs, *etc.*—*general similarity throughout the continent—causes of differences—route by which the natives have overspread the country, etc.*

During the last few years much has been done towards an examination and comparison of the dialects spoken by the aboriginal tribes of Australia in different portions of the continent. The labours of Mr. Threlkeld, of Captain Grey, of Messrs. Teichelman and Schurmann, of Mr. Meyer, of Mr. Schurman, with the occasional notes of visitors and travellers, have done much to elucidate this subject, and have presented to the world vocabularies of the Hunter's River and Lake Macquarie districts in New South Wales; of Swan River and King George's Sound in Western Australia; of Adelaide, of Encounter Bay, and of Port Lincoln, in South Australia; besides occasional phrases or scanty manuals of various other dialects spoken in different districts. From these varied contributions it would appear that a striking coincidence exists in the personal appearance, character, customs, traditions, dialects, *etc.* among the many and remotely separated tribes scattered over the surface of New Holland. Each of these, no doubt, varies in many particulars from the others, and so much so some times, as to lead to the impression that they are essentially different and distinct. [Note 95 at end of para.] Upon close examination, however, a sufficient general resemblance is usually found to indicate that all the tribes have originally sprung from the same race, that they have gradually spread themselves over the whole continent from some one given point; which appears, as far as we can infer from circumstantial evidence, to have been somewhere upon the northern coast. There are some points of resemblance which, as far as is yet known, appear to be common to most of the different dialects with which we are acquainted. Such are, there being no generic terms as tree, fish, bird, *etc.*, but only specific ones as applied to each particular variety of tree, fish, bird, *etc.* The cardinal numbers, being only carried up to three, there being no degrees of comparison except by a repetition to indicate intensity, or by a combination of opposite adjectives, to point out the proportion intended, and no distinction of genders, if we except an attempt to mark one among those tribes who give numerical names to their children, according to the order of their birth, as before mentioned. [Note 96: Chap. IV. nomenclature.] All parts of speech appear to be subject to inflections, if we except adverbs, post-fixes, and post-positions. Nouns, adjectives, pronouns and verbs have all three numbers, singular, dual and plural. The nominative agent always precedes an active verb. When any new object is presented to the native, a name is given to it, from some fancied similarity to some object they already know, or from some peculiar quality or attribute it may possess; thus, rice is in the Moorunde dialect called "yeelilee" or "maggots," from an imagined resemblance between the two objects.



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[Note 95: Catlin remarks the existence of a similar number and variety in the dialects of the American Indians, but appears to think them radically different from one another.]

The most singular and remarkable fact, connected with the coincidence of customs or dialect, amongst the Aborigines, is that it exists frequently to a less degree among tribes living close to one another, than between those who are more remotely separated. The reason of this apparent anomaly would seem to be, that those tribes now living near to one another, and among whom the greatest dissimilarity of language and customs is found to exist, have originally found their way to the same neighbourhood by different lines of route, and consequently the greatest resemblances in language and custom, might naturally be expected to be met with, (as is in reality the case), not between tribes at present the nearest to each other, but between those, who although now so far removed, occupy respectively the opposite extremes of the lines of route by which one of them had in the first instance crossed over the continent.

Without entering into an elaborate analysis, of either the structure or radical derivation of the various dialects we are acquainted with, I shall adduce a few instances in each, of words taken from the vocabularies I have mentioned before, for King George's Sound, Adelaide, Encounter Bay, and Port Lincoln, and supply them myself from other dialects, including those meeting on the Murray or at the Darling, to shew the degree of similarity that exists in language.

In selecting the examples for comparison, I have taken first the personal pronouns and numerals, as being the words which usually assimilate more closely in the different dialects, than any other. Secondly, those words representing objects which would be common to all tribes, and which from their continual recurrence, and daily use, might naturally be supposed to vary the least from each other, if the original language of all were the same, but which, if radically different in any, render the subject still more difficult and embarrassing.

### *Dialects*

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[Note: At this point in the book a table appears, which lists common English words and the equivalent word as taken from the vocabularies of aborigines from various locations. This table has not been reproduced in full, however, a few entries are given below.]

English Western Adelaide Encounter Parnkalla Aiawong  
Australia Bay (Port Lincoln) (Moorundie)

I Nganya Ngaii Ngaape Ngai, ngatto Ngappo  
Thou Nginnee Ninna Nginte Ninna Ngurru  
She Bal Pa Kitye Panna Nin



We (Ye) Nganneel Ngadlu Ngane Ngarrinyalbo Ngenno  
They Balgoon Parna Kar Yardna Ngau-o  
We two Ngal-li Ngadli Ngele Ngadli

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Ngel-lo

You two Newball Niwa Ngurle Nuwalla Ngupal

They two Boala Purla Kengk Pudlanbi Dlau-o

One Gyne Kumande Yammalaitye Kuma Meiter

Two Kardura Purlaitye Ning Kaiengg Kuttara Tang kul

Many Partanna Towata Ruwar Kulbarri Neil

Few Warrang Kutyonde — — Baupalata

Upon comparison of the different dialects given in the two foregoing tables, and which comprise an extent of country, embracing fully one half of the continent of Australia, it will be apparent that a sufficient degree of resemblance exists to justify the conclusion, that they were derived from one and the same original. It is true, that in many respects, there are sometimes even radical differences in some of the words of various dialects; but as Captain Grey judiciously remarks, if the comparison in such cases be extended, and the vocabulary of each enlarged, there will always be found points of resemblance, either in the dialects compared, or in some intermediate dialect, which will bear out the conclusion assumed. [Note 97 at end of para.] This view is still further strengthened, by including in the comparison the weapons, habits, customs, and traditions, of the various tribes.

[Note 97. I may here refer to a curious mathematical calculation, by Dr. Thomas Young, to the effect, that if three words coincide in two different languages, it is ten to one they must be derived in both cases from some parent language, or introduced in some other manner. "Six words would give more," he says, "than seventeen hundred to one, and eight near 100,000; so that in these cases, the evidence would be little short of absolute certainty."—*Vestiges of the Creation*, p. 302.]

It must be admitted, however, that where the languages spoken by two tribes, appear to differ greatly, there is no key common to both, or by which a person understanding one of them thoroughly, could in the least degree make out the other, although an intimate acquaintance with one dialect and its construction, would undoubtedly tend to facilitate the learning of another. A strong illustration of this occurs at Moorunde, where three dialects meet, varying so much from each other, that no native of any one of the three tribes, can understand a single word spoken by the other two, except he has learnt their languages as those of a foreign people.

The dialects I allude to, are first that of the Murray river, called the "Aiawong" and which is spoken with slight variations from the Lake Alexandrina, up to the Darling. Secondly, the "Boraipar," or language of the natives to the east of the Murray, and which appears in its variations to branch into that of the south-eastern tribes; and thirdly, the "Yak-kumban," or dialect spoken by the natives, inhabiting the country to the north-west and north of the Murray, and which extends along the

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range of hills from Mount Bryant to the Darling near Laidley's Ponds, and forms in its variations the language of the Darling itself; these tribes meet upon the Murray at Moorunde, and can only communicate to each other by the intervention of the Aiwong dialect, which the north-western or south-eastern tribes are compelled to learn, before they can either communicate with each other, or with the natives of the Murray, at their common point of rendezvous.

To the tables already given, it is thought desirable to add two of the dialects, spoken in the country to the eastward of South Australia, and which were published for the House of Commons, with other papers on the Aborigines, in August 1844.

[Note: At this point in the book two table appear, with the following headings. These tables have not been reproduces in this eBook.]

*A specimen of the difference of dialects spoken by the native tribes of port Phillip.*

*Specimen of five dialects spoken by the aborigines of the north-western district.*

Captain Flinders observed the same difference to exist in various parts of New Holland, which he visited, and yet that judicious navigator inclined to the opinion that all the various tribes had originally one common origin. Vol. ii. p. 213-14, he says,

"I do not know that the language of any two parts of Terra Australis, however near, has been found to be entirely the same; for even at Botany Bay, Port Jackson, and Broken Bay, not only the dialect, but many words are radically different; and this confirms one part of an observation, the truth of which seems to be generally admitted, that although similarity of language in two nations proves their origin to be the same, yet dissimilarity of languages is no proof of the contrary position.

"The language of Caledon Bay (north-west coast) may therefore be totally different to what is spoken on the east and south coasts, and yet the inhabitants have one common origin; but I do not think that the language is absolutely and wholly different, though it certainly was no better understood by Bongarrco (a Sydney native) than by ourselves. In three instances I found a similarity. The personal pronoun of Port Jackson, 'Ngia' (I), was used here, and apparently in the same sense. When inquiry was made after the axe, the natives replied 'yehangeree-py,' making signs of beating, and py signifies to beat in the Port Jackson language. The third instance was that of the lad Woga calling to Bongarree in the boat, which after he had done several times without being answered, he became angry, and exclaimed Bongarree-gah in a vehement manner, as Bongarree himself would have done in a similar case."

Captain Grey, in speaking of the Aborigines of New Holland, says (vol. ii. p. 209),

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"One singularity in the dialects spoken by the Aborigines in different portions of Australia is, that those of districts widely removed from one another, sometimes assimilate very closely, whilst the dialects spoken in the intermediate ones differ considerably from either of them. The same circumstances take place with regard to their rights and customs."

And again, after comparing some of the dialects of South Australia and New South Wales with those of Western Australia, Captain Grey says (vol. ii. p. 216),

"Having thus traced the entire coast line of the continent of Australia, it appears that a language the same in root is spoken throughout this vast extent of country, and from the general agreement in this, as well as in personal appearance, rites and ceremonies, we may fairly infer a community of origin for the Aborigines."

Had we a collected and an authentic account of the dialects, weapons, habits, customs, and traditions of all the tribes of Australia with whom Europeans have already been in close or friendly contact, and which, with very few exceptions, would embrace the circuit of the whole continent, we should have a mass of valuable and interesting information, that would enable us, not only to form a probable opinion as to the community of origin of the various tribes, and the point from which they first overspread the continent, but also to guide us in conjecturing the routes which the various offsets have taken from the parent tribe, the places of contact where they have met from opposite extremities of the continent, and the gradual change which has taken place in the habits, customs, and dialects of each.

In the absence of many links necessary to form a connection, we can at present only surmise conclusions, which otherwise might have been almost certainly deduced.

Connecting, however, and comparing all the facts with which we are acquainted, respecting the Aborigines, it appears that there are still grounds sufficient to hazard the opinion, that it is not improbable that Australia was first peopled on its north-western coast, between the parallels of 12 degrees and 16 degrees S. latitude. From whence we might surmise that three grand divisions had branched out from the parent tribe, and that from the offsets of these the whole continent had been overspread.

The first division appears to have proceeded round the north-western, western, and south-western coast, as far as the commencement of the Great Australian Bight. The second, or central one, appears to have crossed the continent inland, to the southern coast, striking it about the parallel of 134 degrees E. longitude. The third division seems to have followed along the bottom of the Gulf of Carpentaria to its most south-easterly bight, and then to have turned off by the first practicable line in a direction towards Fort Bourke, upon the Darling. From these three divisions various offsets and ramifications

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would have been made from time to time as they advanced, so as to overspread and people by degrees the whole country round their respective lines of march. Each offset appearing to retain fewer or more of the original habits, customs, *etc.* of the parent tribe in proportion to the distance traversed, or its isolated position, with regard to communication with the tribes occupying the main line of route of its original division; modified also, perhaps, in some degree, by the local circumstances of the country through which it may have spread.

Commencing with the parent tribe, located as I have supposed, first upon the north-west coast, we find, from the testimony of Captain Flinders and Dampier, that the male natives of that part of the country, have two front teeth of the upper jaw knocked out at the age of puberty, and that they also undergo the rite of circumcision; but it does not appear that any examination was made with sufficient closeness to ascertain, whether [Note 98: Vide Note 78.] any other ceremony was conjoined with that of circumcision. How far these ceremonies extend along the north-western or western coasts we have no direct evidence, but at Swan River, King George's Sound, and Cape Arid, both customs are completely lost, and for the whole of the distance intervening between these places, and extending fully six hundred miles in straight line along the coast, the same language is so far spoken, that a native of King George's Sound, who accompanied me when travelling from one point to the other, could easily understand, and speak to any natives we met with. This is, however, an unusual case, nor indeed am I aware that there is any other part of Australia where the same dialect continues to be spoken by the Aborigines, with so little variation, for so great a distance, as in the colony of Western Australia.

Following round the southern coast easterly, the head of the Great Bight is the first point at which any great change appears to occur, and even here it is less in the character, language, and weapons of the natives, than in their ceremonial observances. For the first time the rite of circumcision is observed, and conjoined with it the still more extraordinary practice to which I have before alluded. The ceremony of knocking out the two upper front teeth of boys arrived at the age of puberty, is not, however, adopted. We have already noticed, that for six hundred miles to the west and north-west from the Great Bight, circumcision is unknown. The tribes, therefore, who practise it, cannot have come from that direction, neither are they likely to have come from the eastward, for after crossing the head of the Port Lincoln peninsula, and descending towards Adelaide, we find the rite of circumcision alone is practised, without any other ceremony in connection with it. Now, in a change of habits or customs, originating in the wandering, unsettled life of savages, it is very likely, that many of their original customs may gradually be dropped

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or forgotten; but it is scarcely probable, that they should be again revived by their descendants, after a long period of oblivion, and when those tribes from whom they more immediately proceeded, no longer remembered or recognised such ceremonials. By extending the inquiry still further to the east, the position I have assumed is more forcibly borne out, for the rite of circumcision itself then becomes unknown. It is evident, therefore, that the Adelaide or Port Lincoln natives could not have come along either the eastern or western coasts, and retained customs that are there quite unknown, neither could they have come across the country inland, in the direction of the Darling, for the ceremonies alluded to are equally unknown there. They must then have crossed almost directly from the north-western coast, towards the south-eastern extremity of the great Australian Bight. And from them the Adelaide natives would appear to be a branch or offset.

Returning to the north-west coast, and tracing down the route of the third division of the parent family, from the south-east Bight of Carpentaria, towards Fort Bourke upon the Darling, we shall find, that by far the greatest and most fertile portion of New Holland appears to have been peopled by it. In its progress, offsets and ramifications would have branched off in every direction along the various ranges or watercourses contiguous to the line of route. All the rivers running towards the eastern coast, together with the Nammoy, the Gwyder, the Castlereagh, Macquarie, Bogan, Lochlan, Darling, Hume, Goulburn, *etc.* with their many branches and tributaries, would each afford so many routes for the different sub-divisions of the main body, to spread over the varied and fertile regions of Eastern, South-eastern, and part of Southern Australia. As tribe separated from tribe, each would retain, in a greater or less degree, some of the language, habits, or customs of the original division; but such points of resemblance would naturally again undergo many changes or modifications, in proportion to the time, distance, or isolated character of the separation. If we look at the progress of any two parties of natives, branching off upon different rivers, and trace them, either upwards or downwards, we shall find, that the further they went, the more isolated they would become, and the less likely to come again in contact with each other, or with the original division from which they separated. We may, therefore, naturally expect a much greater variety of dialects or customs in a country that is much intersected by rivers, or ranges, or by any features that tend to produce the isolating effect that I have described, than in one whose character has no such tendency; and this in reality we find to be the case. In Western and South-western Australia, as far as the commencement of the Great Bight, the features and character of the country appear to be but little diversified, and here, accordingly, we find the language of the natives radically the same, and their weapons, customs, and ceremonies very similar throughout its whole extent; but if, on the other hand, we turn to Eastern, South-eastern, and part of Southern Australia, we find the dialects, customs, and weapons of the inhabitants, almost as different as the country itself is varied by the intersection of ranges and rivers.

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The division I have supposed as taking a south-easterly course from the Gulf of Carpentaria, would appear early to have lost the rite of circumcision; but to have retained among some of its branches, the practice of knocking out the front teeth of the upper jaw. Thus, those who made their way to Port Jackson and to Hunter's River, and to some of the southern parts of New South Wales, still retained the practice of knocking out one of the front teeth at the age of puberty; but at Keppel's, Harvey's, and Glass-House bays, on the north-east coast, at Twofold bay on the south-east, at Port Phillip on the south, and upon the rivers Darling and Murray, of the interior, no such rite is practised. It is clear, therefore, that when the continent was first peopled, the natives of Sydney or Hunter's River could not have come round the north-east coast by Keppel's or Harvey's bays, and retained a ceremony that is there lost; neither could the Murrumbidgee or southern districts of New South Wales, have been peopled from Port Phillip, or from South Australia, or by tribes passing up the Murray for the same reason. It is not demanding too much, therefore, to suppose that the general lines of route taken by the Aborigines in spreading over the continent of Australia, have been somewhat analogous to those I have imagined, or that we can fairly account for any material differences there may be in the dialects, customs, or weapons of the different tribes, by referring them to the effect of local circumstances, the length of time that may have elapsed since separation, or to the isolated position in which they may have been placed, with regard to that division of the parent tribe from which they had seceded.

At present our information respecting the customs, habits, weapons and dialects of the various tribes is too limited and too scattered to enable us to trace with accuracy the division to which each may have originally belonged, or the precise route by which it had arrived at its present location; but I feel quite confident that this may be done with tolerable certainty, when the particulars I have referred to shall be more abundantly and correctly recorded.

It is at least a subject of much interest, and one that is well worthy the attention of the traveller or the philanthropist. No one individual can hope personally to collect the whole material required; but if each recorded with fidelity the facts connected with those tribes, with whom he personally came in contact, a mass of evidence would soon be brought together that would more than suffice for the purpose required.

## Chapter VIII.

**EFFECTS OF CONTACT WITH EUROPEANS—ATTEMPTS AT IMPROVEMENT AND CIVILIZATION—ACCOUNT OF SCHOOLS—DEFECTS OF THE SYSTEM.**



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Some attempts have been made in nearly all the British Settlements of Australia to improve the condition of the aboriginal population; the results have, however, in few cases, met the expectations of the promoters of the various benevolent schemes that have been entered upon for the object; nor have the efforts hitherto made succeeded in arresting that fatal and melancholy effect which contact with civilization seems ever to produce upon a savage people. It has already been stated, that in all the colonies we have hitherto established upon the continent, the Aborigines are gradually decreasing in number, or have already disappeared in proportion to the time their country has been occupied by Europeans, or to the number of settlers who have been located upon it.

Of the blighting and exterminating effects produced upon simple and untutored races, by the advance of civilization upon them, we have many and painful proofs. History records innumerable instances of nations who were once numerous and powerful, decaying and disappearing before this fatal and inexplicable influence; history *will* record, I fear, similar results for the many nations who are now struggling; alas, how vainly, against this desolating cause. Year by year, the melancholy and appalling truth is only the more apparent, and as each new instance multiplies upon us, it becomes too fatally confirmed, until at last we are almost, in spite of ourselves, forced to the conviction, that the first appearance of the white men in any new country, sounds the funeral knell of the children of the soil. In Africa, in the country of the Bushmen, Mr. Moffat says—

“I have traversed those regions, in which, according to the testimony of the farmers, thousands once dwelt, drinking at their own fountains, and killing their own game; but now, alas, scarcely is a family to be seen! It is impossible to look over those now uninhabited plains and mountain glens without feeling the deepest melancholy, whilst the winds moaning in the vale seem to echo back the sound, ‘Where are they?’”

Another author, with reference to the Cape Colony, remarks—

“The number of natives, estimated at the time of the discovery at about 200,000, are stated to have been reduced, or cut off, to the present population of about 32,000, by a continual system of oppression, which once begun, never slackened.”

Catlin gives a feeling and melancholy account of the decrease of the North American Indians, [Note 99: Vide Catlin’s American Indians, vol. i. p. 4 and 5, and vol. ii. p. 238.] and similar records might be adduced of the sad fate of almost every uncivilized people, whose country has been colonized by Europeans. In Sydney, which is the longest established of all our possessions in New Holland, it is believed that not a single native of the original tribes belonging to Port Jackson is now left alive. [Note 100 at end of para.] Advancing from thence towards the interior



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a miserable family or two may be met with, then a few detached groups of half-starved wretches, dependant upon what they can procure by begging for their daily sustenance. Still further, the scattered and diseased remnants [Note 101 at end of para.], of once powerful, but now decayed tribes are seen interspersed throughout the country, until at last upon arriving at the more remote regions, where the blighting and annihilating effects of colonization have not yet overtaken them, tribes are yet found flourishing in their natural state, free from that misery and diminution which its presence always brings upon them.

[Note 100: "In the first year of the settlement of New South Wales, 1788, Governor Phillip caused the amount of the population of Port Jackson to be ascertained, by every cove in it being visited by different inspectors at the same time. The number of natives found in this single harbour was 130, and they had 67 boats. At the same time it was known that many were in the woods making new canoes. From this and other data, Governor Phillip estimated the population between Botany Bay and Broken Bay inclusive, at 1500."—Aboriginal Protection Society's Report, May 1839, p. 13.

In Report of the same Society for July 1839, page 71, Mr. Threlkeld says—"Of one large tribe in the interior four years ago there were 164 persons—there are now only three individuals alive!!"]

[Note 101: "The whole eastern country, once thickly peopled, may now be said to be entirely abandoned to the whites, with the exception of some scattered families in one part, and of a few straggling individuals in another; and these once so high spirited, so jealous of their independence and liberty, now treated with contempt and ridicule even by the lowest of the Europeans; degraded, subdued, confused, awkward, and distrustful, ill concealing emotions of anger, scorn, and revenge—emaciated and covered with filthy rags;—these native lords of the soil, more like spectres of the past than living men, are dragging on a melancholy existence to a yet more melancholy doom."—STRZELECHI'S *N. S. Wales*, p.350.]

It is here that the native should be seen to be appreciated, in his native wilds, where he alone is lord of all around him. To those who have thus come into communication with the Aborigines, and have witnessed the fearless courage and proud demeanour which a life of independence and freedom always inspires, it cannot but be a matter of deep regret to see them gradually dwindling away and disappearing before the presence of Europeans. As the ravages of a flood destroy the country through which it takes its course, and which its deposit ought only to have fertilized, [Note 102 at end of para.] so the native, who ought to be improved by a contact with Europeans, is overwhelmed and swept away by their approach. In Van Diemen's Land the same result has been produced as at Sydney, but in a more extended and exterminating manner.[Note

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103 at end of para.] There, instead of a few districts, the whole island is depopulated of its original inhabitants, and only thirty or forty individuals, the banished remnant of a once numerous people, are now existing as exiles at Flinders Island, to tell the tale of their expatriation. [Note 104 at end of para.] In Western Australia the same process is gradually but certainly going on among the tribes most in contact with the Europeans. In South Australia it is the same; and short as is the time that this province has been occupied as a British Colony, the results upon the Aborigines are but too apparent in their diminished numbers, in the great disproportion that has been produced between the sexes, and in the large preponderance of deaths over births. A miserably diseased condition, and the almost total absence of children, are immediate consequences of this contact with Europeans. The increase or diminution of the tribes can only be ascertained exactly in the different districts, by their being regularly mustered, and lists kept of the numbers and proportion of the sexes, births, deaths, *etc.*

[Note 102: "Hard indeed is the fate of the children of the soil, and one of the darkest enigmas of life lies in the degradation and decay wrought by the very civilization which should succour, teach, and improve."—*Athenaeum*.]

[Note 103: "That the Aboriginal Tasmanian was naturally mild and inoffensive in disposition, appears to be beyond doubt. A worm, however, will turn, and the atrocities which were perpetrated against these unoffending creatures may well palliate the indiscriminate, though heart-rending slaughter they entailed. Such was the character of the Tasmanian native before roused by oppression, and ere a continued and systematic hostility had arisen between the races—ere 'their hand was against every man, and every man's hand against them.'" —MARTYN'S *colonial Magazine*, May, 1840.]

[Note 104: "At the epoch of their deportation, in 1835, the number of the natives amounted to 210. Visited by me in 1842, that is, after the interval of seven years, they mustered only fifty-four individuals." —*Strzelecki's new south Wales*, p. 352

Respecting the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land, who were thus forcibly removed, Mr. Chief Protector Robinson (who removed them) observes (Parliamentary Report, p. 198), "When the natives were all assembled at Flinders Island, in 1835, I took charge of them, and have continued to do so ever since. I did not find them retaining that ferocious character which they displayed in their own country; they shewed no hostility, nor even hostile recollection towards the whites. Unquestionably these natives assembled on the island were the same who had been engaged in the outrages I have spoken of; many of them, before they were removed, pointed out to me the spots where murders and other acts of violence had been committed; they made no secret of acknowledging their participation in such acts, and only considered them a just retaliation for wrongs done to them or their progenitors. On removal to the island they appeared to forget all these facts; they could not of course fail to remember them, but they never recurred to them."]

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In April, 1843, or only six and a half years after South Australia had first been occupied, the Protector of the Aborigines in Adelaide ascertained that the tribes, properly belonging to that neighbourhood, consisted of 150 individuals, in the following proportions, namely, 70 men, 39 women, and 41 children. Now, at the Murray, among a large number of natives who, until 1842, were comparatively isolated from Europeans, and among whom are frequently many different tribes, I found by an accurate muster every month at Moorunde for a period of three years, that the women, on an average, were equally numerous with the men, from which I infer that such is usually the case in their original and natural state. Taking this for granted, and comparing it with the proportions of the Adelaide tribe, as given above, we shall find that in six years and a half the females had diminished from an equality with the males, to from 70 to 80 per cent. less, and of course the tribe must have sustained also a corresponding diminution with respect to children.

[Note 105: This result seems to be generally borne out by the few accurate returns that have hitherto been made on the subject. In Mr. Protector Parker's report for his district, to the north-west of Port Phillip (for January, 1843), that gentleman gives a census of 375 male natives, and 295 female, which gives an excess of about 26 per cent. of males over females. In 1834 Mr. Commissioner Lambie gives a census, for the district of Manero, of 416 males and 321 females, or an excess of the former over the latter of nearly 45 per cent. It would appear that the disproportion of the sexes increases in a ratio corresponding to the length of time a district has been occupied by settlers and their stock, and to the density of the European population residing in it. Official returns for four divisions of the Colony of New South Wales, give a decrease of the proportion of females to males of fifteen per cent. in two years. Vide Aborigines Protection Society Report, July, 1839, p. 69. In the same Report, p. 70, Mr. Threlkeld states, that the Official Report for one district gives only two women to 28 men, two boys, and no girls.]

Again, in 1844, the Protector ascertained from the records he had kept that, in the same tribe, there were, in four years, twenty-seven births and *fifty* deaths, which shews, beyond all doubt, the gradual but certain destruction that was going on among the tribe. If no means can be adopted to check the evil, it must eventually lead to their total extermination.

By comparing the twenty-seven births in four years with the number of women, thirty-nine, it appears that there would be annually only one child born among every six women: a result as unnatural as it is evidently attributable to the increased prostitution that has taken place, with regard both to Europeans and other native tribes, whom curiosity has attracted to the town, but whom the Adelaide tribe were not in the habit of meeting at all, or, at least, not in such familiar intercourse prior to the arrival of the white people. This single cause, with the diseases and miseries which it entails upon the Aborigines, is quite sufficient to account for the paucity of births, and the additional number of deaths that now occur among them.

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In the Moorunde statistics, given Chapter *vi.*, the very small number of infants compared with the number of women is still more strongly illustrated; but in this case only those infants that lived and were brought up by their mothers to the monthly musters were marked down; many other births had, doubtless, taken place, where the children had died, or been killed, but of which no notice is taken, as it would have been impossible under the circumstances of such a mixture of tribes, and their constantly changing their localities, to have obtained an accurate account of all.

Under the circumstances of our intercourse with the Aborigines as at present constituted, the same causes which produced so exterminating an effect in Sydney and other places, are still going on in all parts of Australia occupied by Europeans, and must eventually lead to the same result, if no controlling measures can be adopted to prevent it.

Many attempts, upon a limited scale, have already been made in all the colonies, but none have in the least degree tended to check the gradual but certain extinction that is menacing this ill-fated people; nor is it in my recollection that throughout the whole length and breadth of New Holland, a single real or permanent convert to Christianity has yet been made amongst them, by any of the missionaries engaged in their instruction, many of whom have been labouring hopelessly for many years.

In New South Wales, one of the oldest and longest established missions in Australia was given up by the Rev. Mr. Threlkeld, after the fruitless devotion of many years of toil. [Note 106 at end of para.] Neither have the efforts hitherto made to improve the physical circumstances or social relations of the Aborigines been attended with any better success. None have yet been induced permanently to adopt our customs, or completely to give up their wandering habits, or to settle down fixedly in one place, and by cultivating the ground, supply themselves with the comforts and luxuries of life. It is not that the New Hollander is not as apt and intelligent as the men of any other race, or that his capacity for receiving instruction, or appreciating enjoyment is less; on the contrary, we have the fullest and most ample testimony from all who have been brought much into contact with this people that the very contrary is the case: a testimony that is completely borne out by the many instances on record, of the quickness with which natives have learned our language, or the facility with which temporarily they have accommodated themselves to our habits and customs.

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[Note 106: Vide Parliamentary Reports on Australian Aborigines, 9th of August, 1844, pages 160 and 161.—“In submitting to this decision, it is impossible not to feel considerable disappointment to the expectations formerly hoped to be realized in the conversion of some at least of the Aborigines in this part of the colony, and not to express concern that so many years of constant attention appear to have been fruitlessly expended. It is however, perfectly apparent that the termination of the mission has arisen solely from the Aborigines becoming extinct in these districts, and the very few that remain elsewhere are so scattered, that it is impossible to congregate them for instruction; and when seen in the towns, they are generally unfit to engage in profitable conversation. The thousands of Aborigines, if ever they did exist in these parts, decreased to hundreds, the hundreds have lessened to tens, and the tens will dwindle to units before a very few years will have passed away.”]

“This mission to the Aborigines has ceased to exist, not from want of support from the British Government, nor from the inclination of the agent, but purely from the Aborigines themselves becoming extinct in these parts; and in leaving this scene of much solitariness, privation, and trial, it is earnestly hoped that He who fixes the bounds of our habitation, apparently in Sydney for a season, will guide our feet through life to his glory, and provide support for a numerous family, so that the ‘ministry be not blamed.’”]

On the natural intelligence of the native children, Mr. Moorhouse remarks, after several years practical experience:—

“They are as apt as European children so far as they have been tried, but they have not been put to abstract reasoning. Their perceptive powers are large, as they are much exercised in procuring food, *etc.* Anything requiring perception only is readily mastered, the alphabet will be known in a few lessons; figures are soon recognised, and the quantities they represent, but addition from figures alone always presents difficulties for a while, but in a little time, however, it is understood.”

Upon the same subject, Captain Grey remarks, vol. ii. p. 374.

“They are as apt and intelligent as any other race of men I am acquainted with; they are subject to the same affections, appetites, and passions as other men.”

Innumerable cases might be adduced, where native boys, or young men, and sometimes even females, have been taken into the employment of the settlers, and have lived with them as active and useful servants for many months, and occasionally even years. Unfortunately, however, in all such cases, they have eventually returned again to their savage life, and given up the customs and habits they had assumed. The same result has occurred among the many children who have been educated at the various schools established for their instruction, in the different Colonies. Numerous examples

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might be given of the great degree of proficiency made; and often, of many of the scholars being in such a state of forwardness and improvement, as reasonably to sanction the expectation, that they might one day become useful and intelligent members of the community: this hope has, however, hitherto, in almost every instance, been sooner or later disappointed, and they have again descended from the civilized to the savage state. What can be the causes then, that have operated to produce such unfavourable results?

If we admit, and it is admitted by all whose experience best qualifies them to give an opinion, that the Australian is fully equal in natural powers and intelligence, to the generality of mankind; it is very evident, that where so little success has hitherto attended any attempts to improve him, either morally or socially, there must either be some radical defects in the systems adopted, or some strongly counteracting causes to destroy their efficiency. I believe, that to both these circumstances, may be traced the results produced.

The following remarks, by Captain Grey, upon this subject, point out some of the evils to which the natives are subject, and in a great degree, account for the preference they appear to give to their own wild life and habits. (Vol. 2. pp. 367 to 371.) He says:—

“If we inquire into the causes which tend to detain them in their present depressed condition, we shall find that the chief one is—‘prejudice’ The Australians have been most unfairly represented as a very inferior race, in fact as one occupying a scale in the creation which nearly places them on a level with the brutes, and some years must elapse, ere a prejudice so firmly rooted as this can be altogether eradicated, but certainly a more unfounded one never had possession of the public mind.

“Amongst the evils which the natives suffer in their present position, one is an uncertain and irregular demand for their labour, that is to say, they may one day have plenty of means for exerting their industry afforded them by the settlers, and the next their services are not required; so that they are necessarily compelled to have recourse to their former irregular and wandering habits.

“Another is the very insufficient reward for the services they render. As an example of this kind, I will state the instance of a man who worked during the whole season, as hard and as well as any white man, at getting in the harvest for some settlers, and who only received bread, and sixpence a day, whilst the ordinary labourers would earn at least fifteen shillings. In many instances, they only receive a scanty allowance of food, so much so, that some settlers have told me that the natives left them because they had not enough to eat.

“The evil consequence of this is, that a native finding he can gain as much by the combined methods of hunting and begging, as he can by working, naturally prefers the former and much more attractive mode of procuring subsistence, to the latter one.



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"Many of the natives have not only a good idea of the value of money, but even hoard it up for some particular purpose; several of them have shewn me their little treasure of a few shillings, and have told me it was their intention to save more until they had enough to buy a horse, a gun, or some wished-for article, but their improvidence has always got the better of their thriftiness, and this sum has eventually been spent in treating their friends to bread and rice.

"Another evil is the very extraordinary position in which they are placed with regard to two distinct sets of laws; that is they are allowed to exercise their own laws upon one another, and are again held amenable to British law where British subjects are concerned. Thus no protection is afforded them by the British law against the violence or cruelty of one of their own race, and the law has only been hitherto known to them as the means of punishment, but never as a code from which they can claim protection or benefit.

"The following instances will prove my assertion: In the month of October 1838, I saw early one morning some natives in the public street in Perth, in the act of murdering a native woman, close to the store of the Messrs. Habgood: many Europeans were present, amongst others a constable; but there was no interference on their part until eventually the life of the woman was saved by the courage of Mr. Brown, a gardener in Perth, who rushed in amongst the natives, and knocked down the man who was holding her; she then escaped into the house of the Messrs. Habgood, who treated the poor creature with the utmost humanity. She was, however, wounded in several places in the most severe and ghastly manner.

"A letter I received from Mr. A. Bussel, (a settler in the southern part of the colony,) in May, 1839, shews that the same scenes are enacted all over it. In this case, their cow-keeper, (the native whose burial is narrated at p. 330,) was speared by the others. He was at the time the hired servant of Europeans, performing daily a stated service for them; yet they slew him in open day-light, without any cause of provocation being given by him.

"Again, in October, 1838, the sister of a settler in the northern district, told me that shortly before this period, she had, as a female servant, a most interesting little native girl, not more than ten or eleven years of age. This girl had just learned all the duties belonging to her employment, and was regarded in the family as a most useful servant, when some native, from a spirit of revenge, murdered this inoffensive child in the most barbarous manner, close to the house; her screams were actually heard by the Europeans under whose protection, and in whose service she was living, but they were not in time to save her life. This same native had been guilty of many other barbarous murders, one of which he had committed in the district of the Upper Swan, in the actual presence of Europeans. In June, 1839, he was still at large, unmolested, even occasionally visiting Perth.



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“Their fondness for the bush and the habits of savage life, is fixed and perpetuated by the immense boundary placed by circumstances between themselves and the whites, which no exertions on their part can overpass, and they consequently relapse into a state of hopeless passive indifference.

“I will state a remarkable instance of this:—The officers of the Beagle took away with them a native of the name of Miago, who remained absent with them for several months. I saw him on the North-west coast, on board the Beagle, apparently perfectly civilized; he waited at the gun-room mess, was temperate (never tasting spirits), attentive, cheerful, and remarkably clean in his person. The next time I saw him was at Swan River, where he had been left on the return of the Beagle. He was then again a savage, almost naked, painted all over, and had been concerned in several murders. Several persons here told me,—“you see the taste for a savage life was strong in him, and he took to the bush again directly.” Let us pause for a moment and consider.

“Miago, when he was landed, had amongst the white people none who would be truly friends of his,—they would give him scraps from their table, but the very outcasts of the whites would not have treated him as an equal,—they had no sympathy with him,—he could not have married a white woman,—he had no certain means of subsistence open to him,—he never could have been either a husband or a father, if he had lived apart from his own people;—where, amongst the whites, was he to find one who would have filled for him the place of his black mother, whom he is much attached to?—what white man would have been his brother?—what white woman his sister? He had two courses left open to him,—he could either have renounced all natural ties, and have led a hopeless, joyless life amongst the whites,—ever a servant,—ever an inferior being;—or he could renounce civilization, and return to the friends of his childhood, and to the habits of his youth. He chose the latter course, and I think that I should have done the same.”

Such are a few of the disadvantages the natives have to contend with, if they try to assimilate in their life and habits to Europeans, nor is there one here enumerated, of which repeated instances have not come under my own observation. If to these be added, the natural ties of consanguinity, the authority of parents, the influence of the example of relatives and friends, and the seducing attraction which their own habits and customs hold out to the young of both sexes; first, by their offering a life of idleness and freedom, to a people naturally indolent and impatient of restraint; and secondly, by their pandering to their natural passions: we shall no longer wonder that so little has been effected towards ameliorating their condition, or inducing them to adopt habits and customs that deprive them of those indulgences.

In New South Wales and Port Phillip, the Government have made many efforts in behalf of the Aborigines; for a series of years past, and at present, the sum of about ten thousand pounds, is annually placed upon the estimates, towards defraying the salaries

of a Chief Protector, and several subordinate ones, and for other expenses connected with the natives.

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[Note: Not included in the eBook, Table on pages 428-9: *Abstract of expenditure in N.S.W on account of the aborigines from 1821 to 1842 inclusive.*]

In Western Australia a sum of money is also devoted annually towards defraying the salaries of two Protectors, and other expenses connected with the department.

I am not, however, personally aware, what the particular arrangements may be that have latterly been adopted in either of these colonies, for the benefit of the Aborigines, or the degree of success which may have attended them. I believe, however, that in both places, more has been attempted, within the last three or four years, than had ever been the case before. What the eventual result may be it is impossible to tell, but with the past experience before me, I cannot persuade myself, that any real or permanent good will ever be effected, until the influence exercised over the young by the adults be destroyed, and they are freed from the contagious effects of their example, and until means are afforded them of supporting themselves in a new condition, and of forming those social ties and connections in an improved state, which they must otherwise be driven to seek for among the savage hordes, from which it is attempted to reclaim them.

In South Australia many efforts have been made in behalf of the Aborigines, and an anxious desire for their welfare has frequently been exhibited on the part of the Government, and of many of the colonists. For the year 1845 the sum of 820 pounds is noted in the estimates for the Aboriginal Department. This sum is distributed as follows:

—

Salary of Protector	300 pounds
Master of Native School at Walkerville	100
Matron of School at Native Location	20
Provisions	150
Donation to Lutheran Mission	100
Miscellaneous	150

—

Total 820 pounds

There are three native schools established in the province. The first is that at the native location in the town of Adelaide, commenced in December, 1839, by Mr. Klose, one of the Dresden missionaries. The average attendance of children has been about sixteen, all of whom have latterly been lodged as well as fed at the school. The progress made by the children may be stated to have been as follows: on the 16th February, 1844—

14 were able to read polysyllables. 2 were able to read monosyllables. 2 could repeat the cardinal numbers. 14 were in addition. 3 in subtraction. 9 in multiplication. 2 in division.

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Most of the children could repeat the Lord's Prayer and Commandments, and they were able to narrate the history of the Creation, the fall of our first parents, and other portions of the Old and New Testament. A few were able to write these subjects to dictation. In geography many of the scholars knew the ordinary divisions of the earth, its shape, diameter, circumference, and the names of the continents, oceans, seas, gulfs, *etc. etc.* together with the general description of the inhabitants of each part, as to colour, *etc.* Of the girls, fourteen had been taught to sew, and have made upwards of fifty garments for themselves, besides several shirts for Europeans.

Mr. Klose receives as salary 33 pounds per annum from the Government, and a remittance from his society at Dresden. The matron of the establishment also receives 20 pounds from the Government. The average expense of provisions for each child per week, amounts to two shillings and ten pence. The cost of clothing each child per year is 2 pounds. Until very recently this school was taught in the native language; but English is now adopted, except in lecturing from Scripture, when the native language is still retained.

At Walkerville, about one mile from North Adelaide, another school has been established under the superintendence of Mr. Smith, since May, 1844. Up to October of the same year the average attendance of children had been sixty-three. In that short time the progress had been very satisfactory; all the children had passed from the alphabetical to the monosyllabic class, and most had mastered the multiplication table; eighteen could write upon the slate, and six upon paper; twelve girls had commenced sewing, and were making satisfactory progress.

They go four times in the week to the council chamber to be instructed by gratuitous teachers. On Sunday evening service is performed according to the Church of England by Mr. Fleming, and the children are said to be attentive and well-behaved. The Methodists of the New Connection have them also under spiritual instruction in the morning and afternoon of each Sabbath, assisted by persons of other religious denominations.

All instruction is given in English; their food is cooked by the elder children, (who also provide the firewood,) and distributed by themselves under the master's eye. The cook is said to take good care of himself, and certainly his appearance does not belie the insinuation, for he is by far the fattest boy in the lot. The school building is a plain, low cottage, containing a school-room, a sleeping-room for the male children, another for the female, and apartments for the master and mistress. There is also an old out-building attached, where the children perform their ablutions in wet weather. Mr. and Mrs. Smith receive 100 pounds. per annum from the Colonial Government for their services. The children of this school have not yet been generally provided

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with other clothing than a small blanket each. The third school was only just commenced at Encounter Bay, where it has been established through the influence and exertions of Mr. Meyer, one of the missionaries. The Government give 20 pounds per annum, and the settlers of the neighbourhood 100 bushels of wheat, and some mutton. Six or eight children are expected to be lodged and boarded at this school, with the means at present existing.

Besides the establishment of schools, there is a Protector resident in Adelaide to take the management of the aboriginal department, to afford medical assistance and provisions to such of the aged or diseased as choose to apply for them, and to remunerate any natives who may render services to the Government, or the Protectorate. At Moorunde, upon the Murray, the natives are mustered once a month by the Resident magistrate, and two pounds and a half of flour issued to each native who chooses to attend. This is occasionally done at Port Lincoln, and has had a very beneficial effect. Once in the year, on the Queen's birthday, a few blankets are distributed to some of the Aborigines at Adelaide, Moorunde, Encounter Bay, and Port Lincoln, amounting in all to about 300. Four natives are also provisioned by the Government as attaches to the police force at different out-stations, and are in many respects very useful.

Exclusive of the Government exertions in behalf of the Aborigines, there are in the province four missionaries from the Lutheran Missionary Society at Dresden, two of whom landed in October 1838, and two in August 1840. Of these one is stationed at the native location, and (as has already been stated) acts as schoolmaster. A second is living twelve miles from Adelaide, upon a section of land, bought by the Dresden Society, with the object of endeavouring to settle the natives, and inducing them to build houses upon the property, but the plan seems altogether a failure. It was commenced in November 1842, but up to November 1844 natives had only been four months at the place; and on one occasion a period of nine months elapsed, without their ever visiting it at all, although frequently located at other places in the neighbourhood.

A third missionary is stationed at Encounter Bay, and is now conducting a school, mainly established through his own exertions and influence.

The fourth is stationed at Port Lincoln. All the four missionaries have learned the dialects of the tribes where they are stationed, and three have published vocabularies and grammars as the proof of their industry.

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Such is the general outline of the efforts that have hitherto been made in South Australia, and the progress made. It may be well to inquire, what are likely to be the results eventually under the existing arrangements. From the first establishment of the schools, until June 1843, the children were only instructed at the location, their food was given to them to take to the native encampments to cook, and they were allowed to sleep there at night. The natural consequence was, that the provisions intended for the sonolars were shared by the other natives, whilst the evil influence of example, and the jeers of their companions, did away with any good impression produced by their instruction. I have myself, upon going round the encampments in Adelaide by night, seen the school-children ridiculed by the elder boys, and induced to join them in making a jest of what they had been taught during the day to look upon as sacred.

A still more serious evil, resulting from this system was, that the children were more completely brought into the power, and under the influence of the parents, and thus their natural taste for an indolent and rambling life, was constantly kept up. The boys naturally became anxious to participate and excel in the sports, ceremonies, or pursuits of their equals, and the girls were compelled to yield to the customs of their tribe, and break through every lesson of decency or morality, which had been inculcated.

Since June, 1843, the system has so far been altered, that the children, whilst under instruction, are boarded and lodged at the school houses, and as far as practicable, the boys and girls are kept separate. There are still, however, many evils attending the present practice, most of which arise from the inadequacy of the funds, applicable to the Aborigines, and which must be removed before any permanent good can be expected from the instruction given. The first of these, and perhaps one of the greatest, is that the adult natives make their encampments immediately in the neighbourhood of the schools, whilst the children, when out of school, roam in a great measure at will, or are often employed collecting firewood, *etc.* about the park lands, a place almost constantly occupied by the grown up natives, there is consequently nearly as much intercourse between the school children and the other natives, and as great an influence exercised over them by the parents and elders, as if they were still allowed to frequent the camps.

Another evil is, that no inducement is held out to the parents, to put their children to school, or to allow them to remain there. They cannot comprehend the advantage of having their children clothed, fed, or educated, whilst they lose their services; on the contrary, they find that all the instruction, advice, or influence of the European, tends to undermine among the children their own customs and authority, and that when compelled to enforce these upon them, they themselves

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incur the odium of the white men. Independently, however, of this consideration, and of the natural desire of a parent to have his family about him, he is in reality a loser by their absence, for in many of the methods adopted for hunting, fishing, or similar pursuits, the services even of young children are often very important. For the deprivation of these, which he suffers when his children are at school, he receives no equivalent, and it is no wonder therefore, that by far the great majority of natives would prefer keeping their children to travel with them, and assist in hunting or fishing. It is a rare occurrence, for parents to send, or even willingly [Note 107 at end of para.] to permit their children to go to school, and the masters have consequently to go round the native encampments to collect and bring away the children against their wishes. This is tacitly submitted to at the time, but whenever the parents remove to another locality, the children are informed of it, and at once run away to join them; so that the good that has been done in school, is much more rapidly undone at the native camp. I have often heard the parents complain indignantly of their children being thus taken; and one old man who had been so treated, but whose children had run away and joined him again, used vehemently to declare, that if taken any more, he would steal some European children instead, and take them into the bush to teach them; he said he could learn them something useful, to make weapons and nets, to hunt, or to fish, but what good did the Europeans communicate to his children?

[Note 107: "Mr. Gunter expressed very decidedly his opinion, that the blacks do not like Mr. Watson, and that they especially do not like him, *since he has taken children from them by force*: he would himself like to have some children under his care, *if he could procure them by proper means*."—Memorandum respecting Wellington Valley, by Sir G. Gipps, November 1840.]

A third, and a very great evil, is that, after a native boy or girl has been educated and brought up at the school, no future provision is made for either, nor have they the means of following any useful occupation, or the opportunity of settling themselves in life, or of forming any domestic ties or connections whatever, save by falling back again upon the rude and savage life from which it was hoped education would have weaned them. It is unnatural, therefore, to suppose that under existing circumstances they should ever do other than relapse into their former state; we cannot expect that individuals should isolate themselves completely from their kind, when by so doing they give up for ever all hope of forming any of those domestic ties that can render their lives happy.



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Such being the very limited, and perhaps somewhat equivocal advantages we offer the Aborigines, we can hardly expect that much or permanent benefit can accrue to them; and ought not to be disappointed if such is not the case. [Note 108 at end of para.] At present it is difficult to say what are the advantages held out to the natives by the schools, since they have no opportunity of turning their instruction to account, and must from necessity relapse again to the condition of savages, when they leave school. Taken as children from their parents, against the wishes of the latter, there are not means sufficient at the schools for keeping them away from the ill effects of the example and society of the most abandoned of the natives around. They are not protected from the power or influence of their parents and relatives, who are always encouraging them to leave, or to practise what they have been taught not to do. The good that is instilled one day is the next obliterated by evil example or influence. They have no future openings in life which might lead them to become creditable and useful members of society; and however well disposed a child may be, there is but one sad and melancholy resource for it at last, that of again joining its tribe, and becoming such as they are. Neither is there that disinclination on the part of the elder children to resume their former mode of life and customs that might perhaps have been expected; for whilst still at school they see and participate enough in the sports, pleasures, or charms of savage life to prevent their acquiring a distaste to it; and when the time arrives for their departure, they are generally willing and anxious to enter upon the career before them, and take their part in the pursuits or duties of their tribe. Boys usually leave school about fourteen, to join in the chase, or learn the practice of war. Girls are compelled to leave about twelve, through the joint influence of parents and husbands, to join the latter; and those only who have been acquainted with the life of slavery and degradation a native female is subject to, can at all form an opinion of the wretched prospect before her.

[Note 108: The importance of a change in the system and policy adopted towards the Aborigines, and the urgent necessity for placing the schools upon a different and better footing, appears from the following extract from a despatch from Governor Hutt to Lord Stanley, 21st January, 1843, in which the difficulties and failure attending the present system are stated. Mr. Hutt says (Parliamentary Reports, p. 416). "It is to the schools, of course, that we must look for any lasting benefit to be wrought amongst the natives, and I regret most deeply the total failure of the school instituted at York, and the partial failure of that at Guilford, both of which at *first* promised so well. The fickle disposition of these people, in youth as in older years, incapacitate them from any long continued exertions, whether of learning



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or labour, whilst from the roving lives of the parents in search of food, the children, if received into the schools, must be entirely supported at the public expense. This limits the sphere of our operations, by restricting the number of the scholars who can thus be taken charge of. Through the kindly co-operation of the Wesleyan Society at Perth, and the zealous pastoral exertions of the Rev. Mr. King at Fremantle, the schools at both these places have been efficiently maintained; but in the country, and apart from the large towns, to which the Aborigines have an interest in resorting in large numbers for food and money, the formation of schools of a lasting character will be for some time a work of doubt and of difficulty.”]

There are two other points connected with the natives to which I will briefly advert: the one, relative to the language in which the school children are taught, the other, the policy, or otherwise, of having establishments for the natives in the immediate vicinity of a town, or of a numerous European population.

With respect to the first, I may premise, that for the first four years the school at the location in Adelaide was conducted entirely in the native tongue. To this there are many objections.

First, the length of time and labour required for the instructor to master the language he has to teach in.

Secondly, the very few natives to whom he can impart the advantages of instruction, as an additional school, and another teacher would be required for every tribe speaking a different dialect.

Thirdly, the sudden stop that would be put to all instruction if the preceptor became ill, or died, as no one would be found able to supply his place in a country where, from the number, and great differences of the various dialects, there is no inducement to the public to learn any of them.

Fourthly, that by the children being taught in any other tongue than that generally spoken by the colonists, they are debarred from the advantage of any casual instruction or information which they might receive from others than their own teachers, and from entering upon duties or relations of any kind with the Europeans among whom they are living, but whose language they cannot speak.

Fifthly, that, by adhering to the native language, the children are more deeply confirmed in their original feelings and prejudices, and more thoroughly kept under the influence and direction of their own people.

Among the colonists themselves there have scarcely been two opinions upon the subject, and almost all have felt, that the system originally adopted was essentially wrong. It has recently been changed, and the English is now adopted instead of the native language. I should not have named this subject at all, had I not been aware that the missionaries themselves still retain their former impressions, and that although they have yielded to public opinion on this point, they have not done so from a conviction of its utility.

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The second point to which I referred,—the policy, or otherwise, of having native establishments near a populous European settlement, is a much more comprehensive question, and one which might admit, perhaps, of some reasons on both sides, although, upon the whole, those against it greatly preponderate.

The following are the reasons I have usually heard argued for proximity to town.

1st. It is said that the children sooner acquire the English language by mixing among the towns people. This, however, to say the least, is a very negative advantage, for in such a contact it is far more probable that they will learn evil than good; besides, if means were available to enable the masters to keep their scholars under proper restrictions, there would no longer be even the opportunity for enjoying this very equivocal advantage.

2nd. It is stated that the natives are sooner compelled to give up their wandering habits, as there is no game near a town. This might be well enough if they followed any better employment, but the contrary is the case; and with respect to the school-children, the restriction would be the correction of a bad habit, which they ought never to be allowed to indulge in, and one which might soon be done away with entirely if sufficient inducement were held out to the parents to put their children to school, and allow them to remain there.

3rd. It is thought that a greater number of children can be collected in the vicinity of a town than elsewhere. This may perhaps be the case at present, but would not continue so if means were used to congregate the natives in their own proper districts.

4th. It is said that provisions and clothing are cheaper in town and more easily procured than elsewhere. This is the only apparently valid reason of the whole, but it is very questionable whether it is sufficient to counterbalance the many evils which may result from too close a contiguity to town, and especially so as far as the adults are concerned. With respect to the children, if kept within proper bounds, and under proper discipline, it is of little importance where they may be located, and perhaps a town may for such purposes be sometimes the best. With the older natives however it is far different, and the evils resulting to them from too close contact with a large European population, are most plainly apparent; in,—

1st. The immorality, which great as it is among savages in their natural state, is increased in a tenfold degree when encouraged and countenanced by Europeans, and but little opening is left for the exercise of missionary influence or exertions.

2nd. The dreadful state of disease which is superinduced, and which tends, in conjunction with other causes as before stated, to bring about the gradual extinction of the race.



3rd. The encouragement a town affords to idleness, and the opportunities to acquire bad habits, such as begging, pilfering, drinking, *etc.* the effects of which must also have a very bad moral tendency upon the children.

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The town of Adelaide appears capable of supporting about six hundred natives on an average. Many of these obtain their food by going errands, by carrying wood or water, or by performing other light work of a similar kind. Many are supported by the offal of a place where so much animal food is consumed; but by far the greater number are dependent upon charity, and some few even extort their subsistence from women or children by threats, if they have the opportunity of doing so without fear of detection.

The number of natives usually frequenting the town of Adelaide averages perhaps 300, but occasionally there are even as many as 800. These do not belong to the neighbourhood of the town itself, for the Adelaide tribe properly so called only embraces about 150 individuals. The others come in detached parties from almost all parts of the colony. Some from the neighbourhood of Bonney's Well, or 120 miles south; some from the Broughton, or 120 miles north; some from the upper part of the Murray, or nearly 200 miles east. Thus are assembled at one spot sometimes portions of tribes the most distant from each other, and whose languages, customs and ceremonies are quite dissimilar. If any proof were wanted to shew the power of European influence in removing prejudices or effecting a total revulsion of their former habits and customs, a stronger one could scarcely be given than this motley assembly of "all nations and languages." In their primitive state such a meeting could never take place; the distant tribes would never have dreamt of attempting to pass through the country of the intermediate ones, nor would the latter have allowed a passage if it had been attempted.

I have remarked that in Adelaide many of the natives support themselves by light easy work, or going errands; there are also a dozen, or fourteen young men employed regularly as porters to storekeepers with whom they spend two-thirds of their time, and make themselves very useful. At harvest time many natives assist the settlers. At Encounter Bay during 1843, from 70 to 100 acres of wheat or barley, were reaped by them; at Adelaide from 50 to 60 acres, and at Lynedoch Valley they aided in cutting and getting in 200 acres. Other natives have occasionally employed themselves usefully in a variety of ways, and one party of young men collected and delivered to a firm in town five tons of mimosa bark up to December 1843. At the native location during the year 1842, three families of natives assisted by the school-children, had dug with the spade the ground, and had planted and reaped more than one acre of maize, one acre of potatoes, and half an acre of melons, besides preparing ground for the ensuing year. On the Murray River native shepherds and stock-keepers have hitherto been employed almost exclusively, and have been found to answer well. Most of the settlers in that district have one or more native youths constantly living at their houses.

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In concluding an account of the present state and prospects of the Aborigines and of the efforts hitherto made on their behalf, I may state that I am fully sensible that to put the schools upon a proper footing and to do away with the serious disadvantages I have pointed out as at present attending them, or to adopt effective means for assembling, feeding, or instructing the natives in their own respective districts would involve a much greater expenditure than South Australia has hitherto been able to afford from her own resources; and I have therefore called attention to the subject, not for the purpose of censuring what it is impossible to remedy without means; but in the sincere and earnest hope that an interest in behalf of a people who are generally much misrepresented, and who are certainly in justice entitled to expect at our hands much more than they receive, will be excited in the breasts of the British public, who are especially their debtors on many accounts.

I am aware that the subject of the Aborigines is one of a very difficult and embarrassing nature in many respects, and I know that evils and imperfections will occasionally occur, in spite of the utmost efforts to prevent them. No system of policy can be made to suit all circumstances connected with a subject so varied and perplexing, and especially so, where every new arrangement and all benevolent intentions are restrained or limited, by the deficiency of pecuniary means to carry out the object in a proper manner. Already the subject of apprenticing the natives, or teaching them a trade, has been under the consideration of the Government, but has been delayed from being brought into operation by the want of funds sufficient to carry the object into effect. It is intended, I believe, to make the experiment as soon as means are available for that purpose.

My duties as an officer of the Government having been principally connected with the more numerous, but distant tribes of the interior, I can bear testimony to the anxious desire of the Government to promote the welfare of the natives.

I have equal pleasure in recording the great interest that prevails on their behalf among their numerous friends in the colonies, and the general kindness and good feeling that have been exhibited towards them on the part of a large proportion of the colonists of Australia. It is in the hope that this good feeling may be promoted and strengthened that I have been led to enter into the details of the preceding pages. In bringing before the public instances of a contrary conduct or feeling, I by no means wish to lead to the impression that such are now of very frequent or general occurrence, and I trust my motives may not be misunderstood. My sole, my only wish has been to bring about an improvement in the terms of intercourse, which subsists between the settlers and the Aborigines. Whilst advocating the cause of the latter, I am not insensible to the claims of

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the former, who leaving their native country and their friends, cheerfully encounter the inconveniences, toils, privations, and dangers which are necessarily attendant upon founding new homes in the remote and trackless wilds of other climes. Strongly impressed with the advantages, and the necessity of colonization, I am only anxious to mitigate its concomitant evils, and by effecting an amelioration in the treatment and circumstances of the Aborigines, point out the means of rendering the residence or pursuits of the settler among an uncivilized community, less precarious, and less hazardous than they have been. My object has been to shew the result, I may almost say, the necessary result of the system at present in force, when taking possession of and occupying a country where there are indigenous races. By shewing the complete failure of all efforts hitherto made, to prevent the oppression and eventual extinction of these unfortunate people, I would demonstrate the necessity of remodelling the arrangements made on their behalf, and of adopting a more equitable and liberal system than any we have yet attempted.

I believe that by far the greater majority of the settlers in all the Australian Colonies would hail with real pleasure, the adoption of any measures calculated to remove the difficulties, which at present beset our relations with the Aborigines; but to be effectual, these measures, at the same time that they afford, in some degree, compensation and support to the dispossessed and starving native—must equally hold out to the settler and the stockholder that security and protection, which he does not now possess, but which he is fairly entitled to expect, under the implied guarantee given to him by the Government, when selling to him his land, or authorizing him to locate in the more remote districts of the country.

From a long experience, and an attentive observation of what has been going on around me, I am perfectly satisfied, that unless some great change be made in our system, things will go on exactly as they have done, and in a few years more not a native will be left to tell the tale of the wrongs and sufferings of his unhappy race. I am equally convinced that all one-sided legislation—all measures having reference solely to the natives must fail. The complete want of success attending the protecting system, and all other past measures, clearly shew, that unless the interests of the two classes can be so interwoven and combined, that both may prosper together; no real good can be hoped for from our best efforts to ameliorate the condition of the savage. In all future plans it is evident that the native must have the inducements and provocations to crime destroyed or counteracted, as far as it may be practicable to effect this, and the settler must be convinced that it is his interest to treat the native with kindness and consideration, and must be able to feel that he is no longer exposed to risk of life or property for injuries or aggressions, which, as an individual, he has not induced.

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I have now nearly discharged the duty I have undertaken—a duty which my long experience among the natives, and an intimate acquaintance with their peculiarities, habits, and customs, has in a measure almost forced upon me. In fulfilling it, I have been obliged to enter at some length upon the subject, to give as succinct an account as I could of the unfavourable impressions that have often, but unjustly, been entertained of the New Hollanders: of the difficulties and disadvantages they have laboured under, of the various relations that have subsisted, or now subsist between them and the colonists, of the different steps that have been adopted by the Government or others, to ameliorate their condition, and of the degree of success or otherwise that has attended these efforts. I have stated, that from the result of my own experience and observation, for a long series of years past, from a practical acquaintance with the character and peculiarities of the Aborigines, and after a deliberate and attentive consideration of the measures that have been hitherto pursued, I have unwillingly been forced to the conviction, that some great and radical defect has been common to all; that we have not hitherto accomplished one single, useful, or permanent result; and that unless a complete change in our system of policy be adopted for the future, there is not the slightest hope of our efforts being more successful in times to come, than they have been in times past. That I am not alone or singular in the view which I take on this subject, may be shewn from various sources, but most forcibly from the opinions or statements of those, who from being upon the spot, and personally acquainted with the real facts of the case, may be supposed to be most competent to form just conclusions, and most worthy of having weight attached to their opinions. The impression on the public mind in the colonies, with respect to the general effect of the measures that have heretofore been adopted, may be gathered from the many opinions or quotations to which I have already referred in my remarks; many others might be adduced, if necessary, but one or two will suffice.

The following extract is from a speech by A. Forster, Esq. at a meeting held to celebrate the anniversary of the South Australian Missionary Society, on the 6th September, 1843, and at which the Governor of the Colony presided:—

“This colony had been established for nearly seven years, and during the whole of that time the natives had been permitted to go about the streets in a state of nudity. [Note 109 at end of para.] This was not only an outrage on decency and propriety, but it was demoralising to the natives themselves. Like Adam, after having come in contact with the tree of knowledge, they had begun to see their own nakedness, and were ashamed of it. If they could give them a nearer approach to humanity by clothing them, if they could make them look like men, they would then, perhaps, begin to think like men. What he complained of was, not that they were in a low and miserable condition, but that no effort had been made to rescue them from that condition.”



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[Note 109: And yet a law is passed, subjecting natives, who appear thus, to punishment!—How are they to clothe themselves?]

“The circumstances, too, of the aborigines called upon them for increased exertion. They were wasting away with disease—they were dying on the scaffold—they were being shot down in mistake for native dogs, and their bleeding and ghastly heads had been exhibited on poles, as scare-crows to their fellows.”

The report of the Missionary Society, read on the same occasion, says,

“Though it is undeniable that there is much to discourage in the small results which can yet be reckoned from these efforts, and a variety of secondary means might be brought to bear with great advantage on the condition of the natives, still we must exercise faith in the power of the Spirit of God, over the most savage soul, in subduing the wicked passions and inclining the heart unto wisdom by exalted views of a future state, and of the divine character and will.”

Captain Grey's opinion of the little good that had ever been accomplished, may be gathered from the following quotation, and which is fully as applicable to the state of the natives in 1844, as it was in 1841. Vol. ii. p. 366, he says,

“I wish not to assert, that the natives have been often treated with wanton cruelty, but I do not hesitate to say, that no real amelioration of their condition has been effected, and that much of negative evil, and indirect injury has been inflicted on them.”

Upon the same subject, the Committee of Management of the Native School at Perth, Swan River, Western Australia, state in their 3rd Annual Report, dated 1844.

“With regard to the physical condition of the native children, and those who are approaching to mature life, it may be observed, that they are somewhat improving, though slowly, we trust surely. We find that to undo is a great work; to disassociate them from their natural ideas, habits, and practices which are characteristic of the bush life, is a greater difficulty, for notwithstanding the provisions of sleeping berths in good rooms, also of tables, *etc.* for their use, and which are peculiar to civilised life, and with which they are associated, yet they naturally verge towards, and cling to aboriginal education, and hence to squat on the sand to eat, to sleep a night in the bush, to have recourse to a Byly-a-duck man for ease in sickness; these to them seem reliefs and enjoyments from these restraints which civilized life entails upon them.”

“With regard to the mental improvement of the native children, we cannot say much.”

“As to the religious state of the pupils in the institution we have signs, improvements, and encouragements, which say to us, ‘Go on.’”

The following quotation from Count Strzelecki's work only just published (1845), shews the opinion of that talented and intelligent traveller, after visiting various districts of New South Wales, Port Phillip, Van Diemen's Land, and Flinders' Island, and after a personal acquaintance with, and experience among the Aborigines:—

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“Thus, in New South Wales, since the time that the fate of the Australasian awoke the sympathies of the public, neither the efforts of the missionary, nor the enactments of the Government, and still less the Protectorate of the “Protectors,” have effected any good. The attempts to civilize and christianize the Aborigines, from which the preservation and elevation of their race was expected to result, *have utterly failed*, though it is consolatory, even while painful, to confess, that *neither the one nor the other attempt has been carried into execution, with the spirit which accords with its principles.*”

With such slight encouragement in colonies where the best results are supposed to have been obtained, and with instances of complete failure in others, it is surely worth while to inquire, why there has been such a signal want of success?—and whether or not any means can be devised that may hold out better hopes for the future? I cannot and I would not willingly believe, that the question is a hopeless one. The failure of past measures is no reason that future ones should not be more successful, especially when we consider, that all past efforts on behalf of the Aborigines have entirely overlooked the wrongs and injuries they are suffering under from our mere presence in their country, whilst none have been adapted to meet the exigencies of the peculiar relations they are placed in with regard to the colonists. The grand error of all our past or present systems—the very fons et origo mali appears to me to consist in the fact, that we have not endeavoured to blend the interests of the settlers and Aborigines together; and by making it the interest of both to live on terms of kindness and good feeling with each, bring about and cement that union and harmony which ought ever to subsist between people inhabiting the same country. So far, however, from our measures producing this very desirable tendency, they have hitherto, unfortunately, had only a contrary effect. By our injustice and oppression towards the natives, we have provoked them to retaliation and revenge; whilst by not affording security and protection to the settlers, we have driven them to protect themselves. Mutual distrusts and mutual misunderstandings have been the necessary consequence, and these, as must ever be the case, have but too often terminated in collisions or atrocities at which every right-thinking mind must shudder. To prevent these calamities for the future; to check the frightful rapidity with which the native tribes are being swept away from the earth, and to render their presence amidst our colonists and settlers, not as it too often hitherto has been, a source of dread and danger, but harmless, and to a certain extent, even useful and desirable, is an object of the deepest interest and importance, both to the politician and to the philanthropist. I have strong hopes, that means may be devised, to bring about, in a great measure, these very desirable results; and I would suggest, that such means only should be tried, as from being just in principle, and equally calculated to promote the interests of both races, may, in their practical adoption, hold out the fairest prospect of efficacy and success.

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## Chapter IX.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF SYSTEM ADOPTED TOWARDS THE NATIVES.**

In the preceding chapters I have given a general outline of the character, manners, and customs of the Aborigines of Australia, and of the effects produced upon them by a contact with civilization.

I have thus endeavoured to lay before the public their present state and future prospects, and as far as I am able, have attempted to explain what appear to me the reasons that so little success has hitherto attended Missionary, or other efforts, in their behalf. I would sincerely hope, that the accounts which I have given, may not be altogether useless; but that a certain knowledge of the real position of the natives, of the just claims they have upon us, and of the little prospect that exists of any real or permanent good being effected for them, until a great alteration takes place in our system, and treatment, may be the means of attracting attention to their condition, and of enlisting the sympathy of my fellow-countrymen in their cause.

Englishmen have ever been ready to come forward to protect the weak, or the oppressed; nor could they lend their aid to promote a greater, or a nobler work, than that of endeavouring, to arrest the decay, and avert the destruction which at present threatens the aboriginal races of our Australian colonies; and to try at least to bring within the pale of christianity and civilization, a people hitherto considered as the lowest, and most irreclaimable of mankind, but whose natural capabilities and endowments, are, I feel assured, by no means inferior to those of the most favoured nations.

I shall now briefly suggest such alterations and additions, in the system of instruction and policy adopted towards them, as appear to me likely to prove beneficial.

I am aware, that in carrying out the improvements I propose, a greatly increased expenditure on behalf of the natives would be necessary, beyond what has hitherto been allowed by any of the Colonial Governments.

It appears to me, however, that they are justly entitled to expect, at our hands, some compensation for the injuries our presence unavoidably inflicts, and some alleviation of the consequent miseries they are suffering under.

If we are sincere in our desires and efforts to promote the improvement, or prevent the decay of this unfortunate people, we are bound to make our measures sufficiently comprehensive to hold out some reasonable hope of success, otherwise our labour and money are only thrown away.



I do not believe that there is any one practically acquainted with the present state of our relations with the Aborigines, and the system adopted towards them, its working, defects, and inaptitude to overcome opposing difficulties, who would conscientiously assert that there is the least prospect of any greater benefits resulting in future than have been realized up to the present time.

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There is another reason, independently of justice or humanity, one which, with some, may perhaps have more weight, as a motive for extending and amending our policy towards the natives. I mean self-interest. If our measures were calculated to afford them that protection which we claim for ourselves; and in place of those resources we have deprived them of, to offer to them a certain and regular supply of food in their respective districts, their wandering habits would be partially restrained, and a degree of influence and authority acquired over the whole aboriginal population, in contact with Europeans, which would counteract their natural propensities. The flocks and herds of the settlers, and the lives of his family and servants, would be as unmolested and uninjured as among our own people. There would no longer occur those irritating aggressions, or bloody retaliations, which have too often taken place heretofore, between the black and the white man; and the misfortune of always having the border districts in a state of excitement and alarm, would be avoided, whilst the expense and inconvenience of occasionally sending large parties of military and police, to coerce or punish transgressors that they can rarely meet with, would be altogether dispensed with.

Unfortunately, the system I propose has been so little tried in Australia, that but few instances of its practical results can be adduced. There is one instance, however, which, from its coming nearer to it than any other, may serve to exemplify the success that might be expected. The case I allude to, is that of the establishment of the Government post at Moorunde, upon the Murray, in October 1841, by His Excellency Governor Grey. The circumstances which led to the formation of this post, arose from the disturbed and dangerous state the river route from New South Wales was in at the time, from the fearful losses that had occurred both of life and property, and the dread entertained by many, that the out-stations, which were formed along the line of hills fronting the Murray, would be subject to irruptions from the natives.

Between the 16th of April, and 27th of August, or in about four months, four several affrays had taken place between the Aborigines and Europeans, in which many of the latter had been killed, and stock, drays, and other property, had been taken to a great value, (in one instance alone amounting to 5,000 sheep, besides drays and stores); on the other hand the sacrifice of native life had been very great, and was admitted in one case, to have amounted to thirty individuals, exclusive of many who were perhaps mortally wounded. Four different parties had been sent up the river during this short period, to punish aggressions. or protect property. In one of these the Europeans were worsted and driven back by the natives, in another a number amounting to sixty-eight Europeans, were absent for upwards of six weeks, at an immense expense, and were then obliged to return without bringing in a single culprit from the offending tribes.

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[Note 110: In this latter case, the Commissioner of Police, and the greater number of his men, accompanied the expedition, leaving of course the colony unprotected, and ordinary civil arrangements at a stand still until their return. I have already remarked, the little chance there is, of either the police or military ever succeeding in capturing native offenders, and how very frequently it has occurred, that in their attempts to do so, either through mistake, or from mismanagement, they have very often been guilty of most serious and lamentable acts of injury and aggression upon the innocent and the unoffending. As a mere matter of policy, or financial arrangement, I believe it would in the long run, be prudent and economical, to adopt a liberal and just line of treatment towards the Aborigines. I believe by this means, we should gain a sufficient degree of influence, to induce them always to *give up offenders themselves*; and I believe that this is the *only means* by which we can ever hope to ensure their *capture*.]

The line of route had become unsafe and dangerous for any party coming from New South Wales; a feeling of bitter hostility, arising from a sense of injury and aggression, had taken possession both of the natives and the Europeans, and it was evident for the future, that if the European party was weak, the natives would rob and murder them, and if otherwise, that they would commit wholesale butchery upon the natives. It was to remedy this melancholy state of affairs, that the Government station at Moorunde was established, and his Excellency the Governor, did me the honour to confide to my management the carrying out the objects proposed.

The instructions I received, and the principles upon which I attempted to carry out those instructions, were exclusively those of conciliation and kindness. I made it my duty to go personally amongst the most distant and hostile tribes, to explain to them that the white man wished to live with them, upon terms of amity, and that instead of injuring, he was most anxious to hold out the olive branch of peace.

By the liberality of the Government, I had it in my power once every month, to assemble all the natives who chose to collect, whether from near or more distant tribes, and to give to each a sufficiency of flour to last for about two days, and once in the year, at the commencement of winter, to bestow upon some few of the most deserving, blankets as a protection against the cold.

How far success attended the system that was adopted, or the exertions that were made, it is scarcely perhaps becoming in me to say: where the object, however, is simply and solely to try to benefit the Aborigines, and by contrasting the effects of different systems, that have been adopted towards them, to endeavour to recommend the best, I must, even at the risk of being deemed egotistical, point out some of the important and beneficial results that accrued at Moorunde.

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In the first place, I may state that the dread of settling upon the Murray, has so far given place to confidence, that from Wellington (near the Lake), to beyond the Great South Bend, a distance of more than 100 miles, the whole line of river is now settled and occupied by stock, where, in 1841, there was not a single European, a herd of cattle, or a flock of sheep; nay, the very natives who were so much feared then, are looked upon now as an additional inducement to locate, since the services of the boys or young men, save in great measure the expense of European servants. There are few residents on the Murray, who do not employ one or more of these people, and at many stations, I have known the sheep or cattle, partially, and in some instances, wholly attended to by them.

For three years I was resident at Moorunde, and during the whole of that time, up to November, 1844, not a single case of serious aggression, either on the persons or property of Europeans had ever occurred, and but very few offences even of a minor character. The only crime of any importance that was committed in my neighbourhood, was at a sheep station, about 25 miles to the westward, where some few sheep were stolen, by a tribe of natives during the absence or neglect of the men attending them. By a want of proper care and precaution, temptation was thrown in the way of the natives, but even then, it was only some few of the young men who were guilty of the offence; none of the elder or more influential members of the tribe, having had any thing to do with it. Neither did the tribe belong to the Murray river, although they occasionally came down there upon visits. There was no evidence to prove that the natives had stolen the sheep at all; the only fact which could be borne witness to, was that so many sheep were missing, and it was supposed the natives had taken them. As soon as I was made acquainted with the circumstances, I made every inquiry among the tribe suspected, and it was at once admitted by the elder men that the youths had been guilty of the offence. At my earnest solicitations, and representations of the policy of so doing, the culprits, five in number, *were brought in and delivered up by their tribe*. No evidence could be procured against them, and after remanding them from time to time as a punishment, I was obliged to discharge them.

I may now remark, that upon inquiry into the case, and in examining witnesses against the natives, it came out in evidence, that at the same station, and not long before, a native *had been fired at*, (with what effect did not appear,) simply because he *seemed* to be going towards the sheep-folds, which were a long way from the hut, and were directly in the line of route of any one either passing towards Adelaide, or to any of the more northern stations. Another case occurred about the same time, and at



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the same station, where an intelligent and well-conducted native, belonging to Moorunde, was sent by a gentleman at the Murray to a surgeon, living about sixty miles off, with a letter, and for medicines. The native upon reaching this station, which he had to pass, was *assaulted and opposed by A man, armed with A musket*, and if not fired at, (which he said he was,) was at least intimidated, and driven back, and *prevented from going for the medicines for the individual who was ill*. I myself knew the native who was sent, to be one of the most orderly and well-conducted men we had at the Murray; in fact he had frequently, at different times, been living with me as an attache to the police force.

In the second place, I may state, that during the time I have held office at Moorunde, I have frequently visited on the most friendly terms, and almost alone, the most distant and hostile tribes, where so short a time before even large and well-armed bodies of Europeans could not pass uninterrupted or in safety. Many of those very natives, who had been concerned in affrays or aggressions, have since travelled hundreds of miles and encountered hunger and thirst and fatigue, to visit a white man's station in peace, and on friendly terms.

Thirdly, I may observe, that ever since I went to the Murray, instead of shewing signs of enmity or hostility, the natives have acted in the most kind and considerate manner, and have upon all occasions, when I have been travelling in less known and more remote districts, willingly accompanied me as guides and interpreters, introducing me from one tribe to another, and explaining the amicable relations I wished to establish. In one case, a native, whom I met by himself, accompanied me at once, without even saying good-bye to his wife and family, who were a mile or two away, and whom, as he was going to a distance of one hundred and fifty miles and back, he was not likely to see for a great length of time. He was quite content to send a message by the first native he met, to say where he was going. In my intercourse with the Aborigines I have always noticed that they would willingly do any thing for a person whom they were attached to. I have found that an influence, amounting almost to authority, is produced by a system of kindness; and that in cases where their own feelings and wishes were in opposition to the particular object for which this influence might be exercised, that the latter would almost invariably prevail. Thus, upon one occasion in Adelaide, where a very large body of the Murray natives were collected to fight those from Encounter Bay, I was directed by the Government to use my influence to prevent the affray. Upon going to their encampment late at night, I explained the object of my visit to them, and requested them to leave town in the morning, and return to their

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own district, (90 miles away.) In the morning I again went to the native camp, and found them all ready, and an hour afterwards there was not one in Adelaide. Another strong instance of the power that may be acquired over the natives occurred at Moorunde, in 1844:—Several tribes were assembled in the neighbourhood, and were, as I was told, going to fight. I walked down towards their huts to see if this was the case, but upon arriving at the native camps I found them deserted, and all the natives about a quarter of a mile away, on the opposite side of a broad deep sheet of water caused by the floods. As I reached the edge of the water I saw the opposing parties closing, and heard the cry of battle as the affray commenced; raising my voice to the utmost, I called out to them, and was heard, even above the din of combat. In a moment all was as still as the grave, a canoe was brought for me to cross, and I found the assembled tribes fully painted and armed, and anxiously waiting to know what I was going to do. It was by this time nearly dark, and although I had no fears of their renewing the fight again for the night, I knew they would do so early in the morning; I accordingly directed them to separate, and remove their encampments. One party I sent up the river, a second down it, a third remained where they were, and two others I made recross the water, and go up to encamp near my own residence. All this was accomplished solely by the influence I had acquired over them, for I was alone and unarmed among 300 natives, whose angry passions were inflamed, and who were bent upon shedding each others' blood.

By the assistance of the natives, I was enabled in December 1843, to ascend the Darling river as far as Laidley's Ponds (above 300 miles from Moorunde) when accompanied only by two other Europeans, and should have probably been enabled to reach Mount Lyell (100 miles further) but that a severe attack of illness compelled me to return. My journey up the Darling had, however, this good effect, that it opened a friendly communication with natives who had never before come in contact with the white man, except in enmity or in contest, and paved the way for a passage upon friendly terms of any expedition that might be sent by that route to explore the continent. Little did I anticipate at the time, how soon such an expedition was to be undertaken, and how strongly and how successfully the good results I so confidently hoped for were to be fully tested.

In August 1844, Captain Sturt passed up the Murray to explore the country north-west of the Darling, and whilst at Moorunde, on his route, was supplied with a Moorunde boy to accompany his party to track stock, and also with a native of the Rufus named And-buck, to go as guide and interpreter to the Darling. The latter native had accompanied me to Laidley's Ponds in December 1843, and had come down to Moorunde, according to a promise he then made me, to visit me in the winter, and go again with me up the Darling,

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if I wished it. At Laidley's Ponds I found the natives very friendly and well conducted, and one of them, a young man named Topar, was of such an open intelligent disposition that although my own acquaintance with him was of very short duration, I did not hesitate to recommend him strongly to my friend Captain Sturt, as likely to be a willing and useful assistant. The following report from Captain Sturt, dated from Laidley's Ponds, will best shew how far I was justified in expecting that a friendly intercourse might be maintained even with the Darling natives, and to what distance the influence of the Government station at Moorunde had extended, upon the conciliatory system that had been adopted, limited though it was by an inadequacy of funds to provide for such a more extended and liberal treatment of the Aborigines as I should wish to have adopted.

"Sir,—Feeling assured that the Governor would be anxious to hear from me as soon as possible after the receipt of my letters from Lake Victoria, I should have taken the earliest opportunity of forwarding despatches to his Excellency after I had ascertained whether the reports I had heard of the massacre of a party of overlanders at the lagoons on the Darling was founded in fact or not; but having been obliged to cross over from the ana-branch of the Darling to that river itself for water,—and its unlooked-for course having taken me greatly to the eastward, I had no opportunity by which to send to Moorunde, although I was most anxious to allay any apprehensions my former letter might have raised as to the safety of my party. I tried to induce several natives to be the bearers of my despatches, but they seemed unwilling to undertake so long a journey; the arrival, therefore, of a messenger from Moorunde was a most welcome occurrence, as he proposes returning to that place immediately, and will be the bearer of this communication to you.

"In continuing, for his Excellency's information, the detail of the proceedings of the expedition under my orders since I last addressed you, I have the honour to state that I had advanced a considerable way up the Darling before I ascertained satisfactorily the true grounds of the report I had heard at Lake Victoria, and was enabled to dismiss all further anxiety on the subject from my mind.

"It referred to the affray which took place on the Darling, opposite to Laidley's Ponds, between Major Mitchell and the natives; and I conclude that the circumstance of our being about to proceed to the same place, recalled a transaction which had occurred eight years ago to their minds; for we can trace a connection between the story we heard at the Lake, and what we have heard upon the spot; but all the circumstances were at first told to us with such minuteness, that coupling them with the character Major Mitchell has given of the Darling natives, and the generally received opinion of their ferocity and daring, we could hardly refuse giving a certain degree

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of credit to what we heard; more especially as it was once or twice confirmed by natives with whom we communicated on our way up the river. I really feared we should come into collision with these people, despite my reluctance to proceed to extremities; but it will be satisfactory to his Excellency, as I trust it will to Lord Stanley, to know that we have passed up the Darling on the most friendly terms with the native tribes, insomuch that I may venture to hope that our intercourse with them will be productive of much good. So far from the show of any hostility, they may have invariably approached us unarmed, nor have we seen a weapon in the hands of a native since we touched upon the river. *They have constantly slept at our fires, and shewn by their manner that they had every confidence in us, bringing their wives and children to the camp, nor at any time giving us the least annoyance, but always shewing A willingness to save us trouble, and to do whatever we desired them to do. Nothing indeed could have been more satisfactory to us than our intercourse with these poor people, or more amusing than the spirits and feelings to which they have given way before us, when uncontrolled by fear. Many indeed have continued with us for some time, and have evinced sincere and marked sorrow at leaving us.* I have made it a rule to give blankets to the old and infirm, and tomahawks and knives to the young men, and they perfectly understand the reason of this distinction. Finding too, that they consider kangaroos as their own property, we have almost invariably given them all the animals the dogs have killed, and have endeavoured to convince them that we wish to be just, and have the kindest feelings toward them. In this humane duty I have been most cordially assisted both by Mr. Poole and Mr. Browne, and I must add, by the conduct of my men towards the natives, which reflects very great credit upon them. *We have received very great assistance from our guides, who have always smoothed the way to our communication with the different tribes;* and I have earnestly to recommend Nadbuck, who has accompanied

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us from Moorunde to this place, to the favour of the Governor, and to request that he may be rewarded in such manner as his Excellency thinks fit, from the funds of the expedition. We find that Mr. Eyre's influence has extended to this place, and that he is considered in the highest light by all the natives along the Darling. In their physical condition they are inferior to the natives of the Murray in size and strength, but we have seen many very handsome men, and, although diminutive in stature, exceedingly well proportioned. The tribe at Williorara, Laidley's Ponds, numbers about eighty souls; the greater proportion women and children. One of them, Topar, accompanies us to the hills with another native, Toonda, who has been with us since we left Lake Victoria, and who is a native of this tribe. He is a very singular and remarkable man, and is rather aged, but still sinewy and active; Topar is young, and handsome, active, intelligent, and exceedingly good natured;—with them I hope we shall be able to keep up our friendly relations with the natives of the interior.

“I have to request that you will thank his Excellency for the prompt assistance he would have afforded us; but I am sure it will be as gratifying to him as it is to us to know that it is not required.

“As I reported to you in my letter of the 17th of September, I left Lake Victoria on the following day, and crossing the country in a south-easterly direction, reached the Murray after a journey of about fifteen miles, over plains, and encamped on a peninsula formed by the river and a lagoon, and on which there was abundance of feed. We had observed numerous tracks of wild cattle leading from the brush across the plains to the river, and at night our camp was surrounded by them. I hoped, therefore, that if I sent out a party in the morning. I should secure two or three working bullocks, and I accordingly detached Mr. Poole and Mr. Browne, with Flood, my stockman, and Mack, to run them in; but the brush was too thick, and in galloping after a fine bull, Flood's carbine went off, and carried away and broke three of the fingers of his right hand. This unfortunate accident obliged me to remain stationary for a day; but we reached the junction of the ana-branch of the Darling with the Murray, on the 23rd, and then turned for the first time to the northward.

“We found the ana-branch filled by the back waters of the Murray, and ran up it for two days, when the water in it ceased, and we were obliged to cross over to the Darling, which we struck on an east course, about eighteen miles above its junction with the Murray. It had scarcely any water in its bed, and no perceptible current—but its neighbourhood was green and grassy, and its whole aspect pleasing. On the 27th, we thought we perceived a stronger current in the river, and observed small sticks and grass floating on the water, and we were consequently led to believe that there was a fresh in it; and as we had had rain, and saw that the clouds

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hung on the mountains behind us, we were in hopes the supply the river was receiving came from Laidley's Ponds. On the following morning the waters of the Darling were half-bank high, and from an insignificant stream it was at once converted into a broad and noble river, sweeping everything away on its turbid waters at the rate of these or four miles an hour. The river still continues to rise, and is fast filling the creeks and lagoons on either side of it. The cattle enjoy the most luxuriant feed on the banks of the river—there being abundance of grass also in the flats, which far surpass those of the Murray both in richness of soil, and in extent. I cannot but consider the river as a most valuable feature of the interior: many a rich and valuable farm might be established upon it. Its seasons appear to be particularly favourable, for we have had gentle rains ever since we came upon it. Its periodical flooding is also at a most favourable period of the year, and its waters are so muddy that the deposit must be rich, and would facilitate the growth of many of the inter-tropical productions, as cotton, indigo—the native indigo growing to the height of three feet—maize, or flax; whilst, if an available country is found in the interior, the Darling must be the great channel of communication to it. The country behind the flats is sandy and barren, but it would in many places support a certain number of stock, and might be found to be of more value than appearances would justify me in stating, and I would beg to be understood, in speaking of the Darling, that I only speak of it as I have seen it. The summer sun probably parches up the vegetation and unclothes the soil; but such is the effect of summer heat in all similar latitudes, and that spot should be considered the most valuable where the effect of solar heat can be best counteracted by natural or artificial means. I had hoped, as I have stated, that the Darling was receiving its accession of waters from the Williorara (Laidley's Ponds); but on arriving on its banks we were sadly disappointed to find, instead of a mountain stream, a creek only connects the river with Cowandillah Lake; instead of supplying the Darling with water it was robbing it, and there was scarcely a blade of vegetation on its banks. I was, therefore, obliged to return to the Darling, and to encamp until such time as I should determine on our next movement. From some hills above the camp, we had a view of some ranges to the north-west and north, and I detached Mr. Poole on the 4th to ascertain the nature of the country between us and them, before I ventured to remove the party; more especially as the natives told us the interior beyond the ranges was perfectly impracticable. This morning Mr. Poole returned, and informed me that, from the top of the ranges he ascended, he had a view of distant ranges to the north and north-west, as far as he could see; that from south-west to west to 13 degrees east of north, there was water extending,



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amidst which there were numerous islands; that there was a very distant high peak, which appeared to be surrounded by water, which shewed as a dark blue line along the horizon. The country between him and the more distant ranges appeared to be level, and was similar in aspect to the plains we had traversed when approaching the hills, which were covered with spear grass, a grass of which the animals are fond, and thin green shrubs.

“I will not venture a conjecture as to the nature of the country whose features have been thus partially developed to us. How far these waters may stretch, and what the character of the ranges is, it is impossible to say, but that there is a good country at no great distance, I have every reason to hope. Mr. Poole states that the small scolloped parroquets passed over his head from the north-west in thousands; and he observed many new birds. I am therefore led to hope, that, as these first are evidently strong on the wing on their arrival here, that the lands from which they come are not very remote from us. So soon as I shall have verified my position in a satisfactory manner,—which a clouded sky has hitherto prevented my doing,—we shall move to the ranges, and leaving my drays in a safe place, shall proceed with the horse teams to a closer examination of the country, and, if I should find an open sea to north-west, shall embark upon it with an ample supply of provisions and water, and coast it round. The reports of the fine interior, which we have heard from the natives, are so contradictory, that it is impossible to place any reliance in them; but Toonda informs us that the water Mr. Poole has seen is fresh—but as we are not more than two hundred and fifteen feet above the sea, and are so near Lake Torrens, I can hardly believe that such can be the case. It is a problem, however, that will now very soon be solved, and I most sincerely trust this decided change in the barrenness of the land will lead us to a rich and available country.

“I have great pleasure in reporting to you the continued zeal and anxiety of my officers, and the cheerful assistance they render me. I have found Mr. Piesse of great value, from his regular and cautious issue of the stores and provisions; and Mr. Stewart extremely useful as draftsman. Amongst my men, I have to particularise Robert Flood, my stockman, whose attention to the horses and cattle has mainly insured their fitness for service and good condition; and I have every reason to feel satisfied with the manner in which the men generally perform their duties.

“I have to apologize for the hurried manner in which this letter is written, and beg to subscribe myself,

“Sir, your most obedient servant,

“*Charles sturt.*”

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With reference to the above report, I may mention in explanation, that, after I had accompanied the exploring party as far as the Rufus, and returned from thence to Moorunde, a rumour was brought to Captain Sturt by some natives from the Darling, of a massacre said to have taken place up that river near Laidley's Ponds. From being quite unacquainted with the language not only of the Darling natives, but also of the Rufus interpreter or the Moorunde boy, Captain Sturt's party had been only able to make out the story that was told to them by signs or by the aid of such few words of English as the boy might have learnt at Moorunde. They had naturally fallen into some error, and had imagined the natives to be describing the recent murder of a European party coming down the Darling with stock, instead of their narrating, as was in reality the case, an old story of the affray with Major Mitchell some years before. As Captain Sturt was still at the Rufus (150 miles from Moorunde) when he received the account, as he imagined, of so sanguinary an affray, he felt anxious to communicate the occurrence to the Colonial Government as early as possible, and for this purpose, induced two natives to bring down despatches to Moorunde. Upon their arrival there, the policeman was absent in town, and I had no means of sending in the letters to the Government, but by natives. Two undertook the task, and walked from Moorunde to Adelaide with the letters, and brought answers back again to the station within five days, having walked 170 miles in that period, Moorunde being 85 miles from Adelaide.

Again upon the Government wishing to communicate with Captain Sturt, letters were taken by the natives up to the Rufus, delivered over to other natives there, and by them carried onwards to Captain Sturt, reaching that gentleman on the eleventh day after they been sent from Moorunde, at Laidley's Ponds, a distance of 300 miles.

By this means a regular intercourse was kept up with the exploring party, entirely through the aid and good feeling of the natives, up to the time I left the colony, in December, 1844, when messengers who had been sent up with despatches were daily expected back with answers. For their very laborious and harassing journeys, during which they must suffer both some degree of risk in passing through so many other tribes on their line of route, and of hunger and other privations in prosecuting them, the messengers are but ill requited; the good feeling they displayed, or the fatigues they went through, being recompensed only by the present of a *small blanket and A few pounds of flour*. With these facts before us can we say that these natives are a ferocious, irreclaimable set of savages, and destitute of all the better attributes of humanity? yet are they often so maligned. The very natives, who have now acted in such a friendly manner, and rendered such important services to Europeans, are the *same natives* who were engaged in the plundering of their property, and taking away their lives when coming over land with stock. Such is the change which has been effected by kindness and conciliation instead of aggression and injury; and such, I think, I may in fairness argue, would generally be the result if *similar means* were more frequently resorted to.



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As yet Moorunde is the only place where the experiment has been made of assembling the natives and giving food to them; but as far as it has been tried, it has been proved to be eminently successful. I am aware that the system is highly disapproved of by many of the colonists, and the general feeling among them appears to be that nothing should be given where nothing is received, or in other words, that a native should never have any thing given to him until he does some work for it. I still maintain that the native has a right to expect, and that we are *in justice bound* to supply him with food in any of those parts of the country that we occupy, and to do this, too, *without* demanding or requiring any other consideration from him than we have *already* received when we *took from him* his possessions and his hunting grounds. It may be all very proper to get him to work a little if we can—and, perhaps, that *might* follow in time, but we have no right to force him to a labour he is unused to, and *which he never had to perform in his natural state*, whilst we have a right to supply him with what he has been accustomed to, *but of which we had deprived him—food*.

If in our relations with the Aborigines we wish to preserve a friendly and bloodless intercourse; if we wish to have their children at our schools to be taught and educated; if we hope to bring the parents into a state that will better adapt them for the reception of christianity and civilization; or if we care about staying the rapid and lamentable ravages which a contact with us is causing among their tribes, we must endeavour to do so, by removing, as far as possible, all sources of irritation, discontent, or suffering. We must adopt a system which may at once administer to their wants, and at the same time, give to us a controlling influence over them; such as may not only restrain them from doing what is wrong, but may eventually lead them to do what is right—an influence which I feel assured would be but the stronger and more lasting from its being founded upon acts of justice and humanity. It is upon these principles that I have based the few suggestions I am going to offer for the improvement of our policy towards the natives. I know that by many they will be looked upon as chimerical or impracticable, and I fear that more will begrudge the means necessary to carry them into effect; but unless something of the kind be done—unless some great and radical change be effected, and some little compensation made for the wrongs and injuries we inflict—I feel thoroughly satisfied that all we are doing is but time and money lost, that all our efforts on behalf of the natives are but idle words—*voces et preterea nihil*—that things will still go on as they have been going on, and that ten years hence we shall have made no more progress either in civilizing or in christianizing them than we had done ten years ago, whilst every day and every hour is tending to bring about their certain and total extinction.

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### SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ABORIGINES.

1st. It appears that the most important point, in fact almost the only essential one, in the first instance, is to gain such an influence or authority over the Aborigines as may be sufficient to enable us to induce them to adopt, or submit to any regulations that we make for their improvement, and that to effect this, the means must be suited to their circumstances and habits.

2ndly. It is desirable that the means employed should have a tendency to restrain their wandering habits, and thus gradually induce them to locate permanently in one place.

3rdly. It is important that the plan should be of such a nature as to become more binding in its influence in proportion to the length of time it is in operation.

4thly. It should hold out strong inducements to the parents, willingly to allow their children to go to, and remain at the schools.

5thly. It should be such as would operate, in some degree, in weaning the natives from towns or populous districts.

6thly. It should offer some provision for the future career of the children upon their leaving school, and its tendency should be of such a character as to diminish, as far as practicable, the attractions of a savage life.

7thly. It is highly important that the system adopted should be such as would add to the security and protection of the settlers, and thereby induce their assistance and co-operation, instead, as has too often been the case hitherto with past measures, of exciting a feeling of irritation and dislike between the two races.

I believe that all these objects might be accomplished, in a great degree, by distributing food regularly to all the natives, in their respective districts.

[Note 111: The whole of my remarks on the Aborigines having been hurriedly compiled, on board ship, during the voyage from Australia, it was not until my arrival in England that I became aware that a plan somewhat similar to this in principle, was submitted to Lord John Russell by a Mr. J. H. Wedge, and was sent out to the colony of New South Wales, to be reported upon by the authorities. I quote the following extract from Mr. La Trobe's Remarks on Mr. Wedge's letter, as shewing an opinion differing from my own (Parliamentary Papers, p. 130). "With reference to the supply of food and clothing, it has not been hitherto deemed advisable to furnish them indiscriminately to all natives visiting the homesteads. In one case, that of the Western Port District, the assistant protector has urged that this should be the case; but I have not felt myself sufficiently

convinced of the policy or expediency of such measure to bring it under his Excellency's notice."]

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I have previously shewn, that from the injuries the natives sustain at our hands, in a deprivation of their usual means of subsistence, and a banishment from their homes and possessions, there is at present no alternative for them but to remain the abject and degraded creatures they are, begging about from house to house, or from station to station, to procure food, insulted and despised by all, and occasionally tempted or driven to commit crimes for which a fearful penalty is enacted, if brought home to them. I have given instances of the extent to which the evils resulting from the anomalous state of our relations with them are aggravated by the kind of feeling which circumstances engender on the part of the Colonists towards them. I have pointed out the tendency of their own habits and customs, to prevent them from rising in the scale of improvement, until we can acquire an influence sufficient to counteract these practices; and I have shewn that thus situated, oppressed, helpless, and starving, we cannot expect they should make much progress in civilization, or pay great regard to our instructions, when they see that we do not practice what we recommend, and that we have one law for ourselves and another for them. The good results that have been produced when an opposite and more liberal system has been adopted (limited as that system was) has also been stated. It is only fair to assume, therefore, that these beneficial effects may be expected to accrue in an increasing ratio in proportion to our liberality and humanity.

My own conviction is, that by adopting the system I recommend, an almost unlimited influence might be acquired over the native population. I believe that the supplying them with food would gradually bring about the abandonment of their wandering habits, in proportion to the frequency of the issue, that the longer they were thus dependent upon us for their resources, the more binding our authority would be; that when they no longer required their children to assist them in the chase or in war, they would willingly allow them to remain at our schools; that by only supplying food to natives in their own districts they would, in some measure, be weaned from the towns; that by restraining the wandering habits of the parents in this way, there would be fewer charms and less temptation to the children to relapse from a comparative state of civilization into one of barbarism again; and that, by supplying the wants of the natives, and taking away all inducements to crime, a security and protection would be afforded to the settlers which do not now exist, and which, under the present system, can never be expected, until the former have almost disappeared before their oppressors.

Many subordinate arrangements would be necessary to bring the plan into complete operation, and from its general character it could not, perhaps, be carried out every where at once, but if such arrangements were made, only in a few districts every year, much would be done towards eventually accomplishing the ends desired.

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At Moorunde flour was only regularly issued once in the month, but that is not often enough to attain the full advantages of the system, still less to remedy the evils the natives are subject to, or restrain their wandering propensities. Upon the Murray the natives are peculiarly situated, and have greater facilities for obtaining their natural food than in any other part of the country. They were consequently in a position more favourable for making an experiment upon, than those of the inland districts, where a native is often obliged to wander over many miles of ground for his day's subsistence, and where large tribes cannot remain long congregated at the same place. In these it would therefore be necessary to make the issues of food much more frequently, and I would proportion this frequency to the state of each district with regard to the number of Europeans, and stock in it; and the facility there might be for procuring native food. On the borders of the colony, where the natives are less hemmed in, the issue might take place once every fortnight, gradually increasing the number of the issues in approaching towards Adelaide as a centre. At the latter, and in many other of the districts where the country is thoroughly occupied by Europeans, it would be necessary, as it would only be just, to supply the natives with food daily, and I would extend this arrangement gradually to all the districts, as funds could be obtained for that purpose. It is possible that if means at the same time were afforded of teaching them industrial pursuits, a proportion of the food required might eventually be raised by themselves, but it would not be prudent to calculate upon any such resources at first.

Having now explained what I consider the first and most important principle, to be observed in all systems devised for the amelioration of the Aborigines, *viz.* that of endeavouring to adapt the means employed to the acquisition of a strong controlling influence over them, and having shewn how I think this might best be obtained, I may proceed to mention a few collateral regulations, which would be very essential to the effective working of the system proposed.

First. It would be necessary for the sake of perspicuity to suppose the country divided into districts, agreeing as nearly as could be ascertained with the boundaries of the respective tribes. In these districts a section or two of land, well supplied with wood and water, should be chosen for the Aborigines; such lands, if possible, to be centrally situated with regard to the tribes intended to assemble there, but always having reference to their favourite places of resort, or to such as would afford the greatest facilities for procuring their natural food. I do not apprehend that these stations need be very numerous at first: for the whole colony of South Australia nine or ten would probably be sufficient at present; thus stations such as I have described, at Adelaide, Encounter Bay, The Coorong, Moorunde, the Hutt River, Mount Bryant, Mount Remarkable, and Port Lincoln would embrace most of the tribes of Aborigines at present in contact with the settlers; others could be added, or these altered, as might be thought desirable or convenient.

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Secondly. In order to carry due weight when first established, and until the natives get well acquainted with Europeans and their customs, it would be essential that each station should be supported by two or more policemen. These might afterwards be reduced in number, or withdrawn, according to the state of the district.

[Note 112: "It is absolutely necessary, for the cause of humanity and good order, that such force should exist; for as long as distant settlers are left unprotected, and are compelled to take care of and avenge themselves, so long must great barbarities necessarily be committed, and the only way to prevent great crimes on the part of the natives, and massacres of these poor creatures, as the punishment of such crimes, is to check and punish their excesses in their infancy; it is only after becoming emboldened by frequent petty successes that they have hitherto committed those crimes, which have drawn down so fearful a vengeance upon them."—*Grey*, vol ii. p. 379.]

Under any circumstances a police is necessary in all the country districts, nor do I think on the whole, many more policemen would be required than there are at out-stations at present. They would only have to be quartered at the native establishments.

Thirdly. It would be absolutely requisite to have experienced and proper persons in charge of each of the locations; as far as practicable, it would undoubtedly be the most desirable to have these establishments under missionaries. In other cases they might be confided to the protectors of the Aborigines, and to the resident or police magistrates. All officers having such charge should be deemed *ex-officio* to be protectors, and as many should be in the commission of the peace as possible.

Many other necessary and salutary regulations, would naturally occur in so comprehensive a scheme, but as these belong more to the detail of the system, it may be desirable to allude only to a few of the most important.

It would be desirable to keep registers at all the stations, containing lists of the natives frequenting them, their names, and that of the tribe they belong to.

Natives should not be allowed to leave their own districts, to go to Adelaide, or other large towns, unless under passes from their respective protectors, and if found in Adelaide without them, should be taken up by the police and slightly punished.

[Note 113: Natives, from a distance, are in the habit of going at certain times of the year into Adelaide, and remaining three or four months at a time. They are said by Europeans to plunder stations on the line of route backwards and forwards, and to threaten, and intimidate women and children living in isolated houses near the town. There is no doubt but that they have sometimes driven away the natives properly belonging to Adelaide, and have been the means, by their presence, of a great decrease in the attendance of the children of the Adelaide tribes at the school. The

protector has more than once been obliged to make official representations on this subject, and to request that measures might be taken to keep them away.]

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Deaths, Births, and Marriages, should be duly registered, and a gratuity given on every such occasion, to ensure the regulation being attended to.

Rewards should be given, (as an occasional present, of a blanket for instance), to such parents as allowed their children to go to and remain at school during the year.

Rewards should be bestowed for delivering up offenders, or for rendering any other service to the Government.

Light work should be offered to such as could be induced to undertake it, and rewards, as clothing, or the like, should be paid in proportion to the value of the work done, and *beyond the mere providing them with food.*

Gifts might also be made to those parents, who consented to give up the performance of any of their savage or barbarous ceremonies upon their children.

Young men should be encouraged to engage themselves in the service of settlers, as shepherds or stockkeepers, and the masters should be induced to remunerate their services more adequately than they usually do.

The elder natives should be led as far as could be, to make articles of native industry for sale, as baskets, mats, weapons, implements, nets, *etc.*, these might be sent to Adelaide and sold periodically for their benefit.

Such and many other similar regulations, would appear to be advantageous, and might be adopted or altered from time to time, as it should be deemed desirable.

Upon the subject of schools for the native children, it appears that much benefit would be derived from having them as far separated as possible from other natives, and that the following, among others, would be improvements upon the plans in present use.

1st. That the school buildings should be of such size and arrangement, as to admit of all the scholars being lodged as well as boarded, and of the boys and girls having different sleeping rooms.

2ndly. That the schools should have a sufficiency of ground properly enclosed around them, for the play-grounds, and that no other natives than the scholars should be admitted within those precincts, except in the presence of the master, when relatives come to see each other; but that on no account should any natives be permitted to encamp or sleep within the school grounds.

3rdly. That the children should not be allowed or encouraged to roam about the towns, begging, or to ramble for any purpose outside their boundaries, where they are likely to come under the influence of the other natives. This is particularly necessary with



respect to girls, indeed the latter should never be allowed to be absent from school at all, by themselves.

4thly. To compensate in some degree, for what may at first appear to them an irksome or repulsive restraint, playthings should occasionally be provided for those children who have behaved well, and all innocent amusement be encouraged, and as often as might be convenient, the master should accompany his scholars out into the country for recreation, or through the town, or such other public places, as might be objects of interest or curiosity.

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5thly. That a stimulus to exertion, should be excited by prizes, being given to children distinguishing themselves at certain stages of their progress, such as a superior article of dress, a toy, or book, or whatever might be best adapted to the age or disposition of the child.

6thly. That parents should never be allowed to withdraw the children, contrary to their wishes, after having once consented to allow them to remain there.

7thly. That children of both sexes, after having received a proper degree of instruction, and having attained a certain age, should be bound out as apprentices for a limited term of years, to such as were willing to receive them, proper provision being made for their being taught some useful occupation, and being well treated.

8thly. Encouragement should be offered to those who have been brought up at the schools to marry together when their apprenticeships are out, and portions of land should be preserved for them and assistance given them in establishing themselves in life. At first perhaps it might be advisable to have these settlements in the form of a village and adjoining the school grounds, so that the young people might still receive the advantage of the advice or religious instruction of the missionaries or such ministers as attended to this duty at the schools.

9thly. The children should be taught exclusively in the English language and on Sundays should always attend divine service at some place of public worship, accompanied by their masters.

In carrying into effect the above or any other regulations which might be found necessary for the welfare and improvement of the children. I believe that a sufficient degree of influence would be acquired over the parents by the system of supplying them with food, which I have recommended to induce a cheerful consent, but it would be only prudent to have a legislative enactment on the subject, that by placing the school-children under the guardianship of the protectors, they might be protected from the influence or power of their relatives; after these had once fully consented to their being sent to school to be educated.

[Note 114: "The best chance of preserving the unfortunate race of New Holland lies in the means employed for training their children: the education given to such children should consist in a very small part of reading and writing. Oral instruction in the fundamental truths of the Christian religion will be given by the missionaries themselves. The children should be taught early; the boys to dig and plough, and the trades of shoemakers, tailors, carpenters and masons; the girls to sew and cook and wash linen, and keep clean the rooms and furniture. The more promising of these children might be placed, by a law to be framed for this purpose, under the guardianship of the Governor and placed by him at a school, or in apprenticeship, in the more settled parts of the colony. Thus early trained, the capacity of the race for the duties and

employments of civilized life would be fairly developed.”—Letter from Lord John Russell to Sir G. Gipps; Parliamentary Report on Aborigines, p. 74.]

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There is yet another point to be considered with respect to the Aborigines, and upon the equitable adjustment of which hinges all our relations with this people, whilst upon it depends entirely our power of enforcing any laws or regulations we may make with respect to them, I allude to the law of evidence as it at present stands with respect to persons incompetent to give testimony upon oath.

It is true that in South Australia an act has very recently passed the legislative council to legalize the unsworn testimony of natives in a court of justice, but in that act there occurs a clause which completely neutralizes the boon it was intended to grant, and which is as follows, "Provided that no person, whether an Aboriginal or other, *shall be convicted of any offence* by any justice or jury upon the *sole testimony* of any such uncivilized persons." 7 and 8 Victoria, section 5.

Here then we find that if a native were ill-treated or shot by an European, and the whole tribe able to bear witness to the fact, no conviction and no punishment could ensue: let us suppose that in an attempt to maltreat the native, the European should be wounded or injured by him, and that the European has the native brought up and tried for a murderous attack upon him, how would it fare with the poor native? the oath of the white man would overpower any exculpatory unsworn testimony that the native could bring, and his conviction and punishment would be (as they have been before) certain and severe.

Without attempting to assign a degree of credence to the testimony of a native beyond what it deserves, I will leave it to those who are acquainted with Colonies, and the value of an oath among the generality of storekeepers and shepherds, to say how far their *sworn* evidence is, in a moral point of view, more to be depended upon than the unsworn parole of the native. I would ask too, how often it occurs that injuries upon the Aborigines are committed by Europeans in the presence of those competent to give a *convicting testimony*, (unless where all, being equally guilty, are for their own sakes mutually averse to let the truth be known)? or how often even such aggressions take place under circumstances which admit of circumstantial evidence being obtained to corroborate native testimony?

Neither is it in the giving of evidence alone, that the native stands at a disadvantage as compared with a white man. His case, whether as prosecutor or defendant, is tried before a jury of another nation whose interests are opposed to his, and whose prejudices are often very strong against him.

I cannot illustrate the position in which he is placed, more forcibly, than by quoting Captain Grey's remarks, vol. ii. p. 381, where he says:—

"It must also be borne in mind, that the natives are not tried by a jury of their peers, but by a jury having interests directly opposed to their own, and who can scarcely avoid being in some degree prejudiced against native offenders."

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The opinion of Judge Willis upon this point may be gathered from the following extract, from an address to a native of New South Wales, when passing sentence of death upon him:—

“The principle upon which this court has acted in the embarrassing collisions which have too frequently arisen between the Aborigines and the white Europeans, has been one of reciprocity and mutual protection. On the one hand, the white man when detected (*which I fear seldom happens*), has been justly visited with the rigour of the law, for aggressions on the helpless savages; and, on the other, the latter has been accountable for outrages upon his white brethren. As between the Aborigines themselves, the court has never interfered, for obvious reasons. Doubtless, in applying the law of a civilized nation to the condition of a wild savage, innumerable difficulties must occur. The distance in the scale of humanity between the wandering, houseless man of the woods, and the civilized European, is immeasurable! *For protection, and for responsibility in his relation to the white man the black is regarded as A British subject.* In theory, this sounds just and reasonable; but in practice, how incongruous becomes its application! As a British subject, he is presumed to know the laws, for the infraction of which he is held accountable, and yet he is shut out from the advantage of its protection when brought to the test of responsibility. As a British subject, he is entitled to be tried by his *peers*. Who are the peers of the black man? Are those, of whose laws, customs, language, and religion, he is wholly ignorant—nay, whose very complexion is at variance with his own—*his peers*? He is tried in his native land by a race new to him, and by laws of which he knows nothing. Had you, unhappy man! had the good fortune to be born a Frenchman, or had been a native of any other country but your own, the law of England would have allowed you to demand a trial by half foreigners and half Englishmen. But, by your lot being the lowest, as is assumed, in the scale of humanity, you are inevitably placed on a footing of fearful odds, when brought into the sacred temple of British justice. Without a jury of your own countrymen—without the power of making adequate defence, by speech or witness—you are to stand the pressure of every thing that can be alleged against you, and your only chance of escape is, not the strength of your own, but the weakness of your adversary’s case. Surrounded as your trial was with difficulties, everything, I believe, was done that could be done to place your case in a proper light before the jury. They have come to a conclusion satisfactory, no doubt, to their consciences. Whatever might be the disadvantages under which you laboured, they were convinced, as I am, that you destroyed

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the life of Dillon; and as there was nothing proved to rebut the presumption, of English law, arising from the fact of homicide being committed by you, they were constrained to find you guilty of murder. There may have been circumstances, if they could have been proved, which would have given a different complexion to the case from that of the dying declaration of the deceased, communicated to the Court through the frail memory of two witnesses, who varied in their relation of his account of the transaction. This declaration, so taken, was to be regarded as if taken on oath, face to face with your accuser; and, although you had not the opportunity of being present at it, and of cross-examining the dying man, yet by law it was receivable against you.”

In vol. ii. p 380, Captain Grey says:—

“I have been a personal witness to a case in which a native was most undeservedly punished, from the circumstance of the natives, who were the only persons who could speak as to certain exculpatory facts, not being permitted to give their evidence.”

Under the law lately passed in South Australia, the evidence of natives would be receivable in a case of this kind, in palliation of the offence. Although it is more than questionable how far such evidence would weigh against the white man’s oath; but for the purpose of obtaining redress for a wrong, or of punishing the cruelty, or the atrocity of the European [Note 115 at end of para.], no amount of native evidence would be of the least avail. Reverse the case, and the sole unsupported testimony of a single witness, will be quite sufficient to convict even unto death, as has lately been the case in two instances connected with Port Lincoln, where the natives have been tried at different times for murder, convicted, and two of them hung, upon the testimony of one old man, who was the only survivor left among the Europeans, but who, from the natural state of alarm and confusion in which he must have been upon being attacked, and from the severe wounds he received, could not have been in an advantageous position, for observing, or remarking the identity of the actual murderers, among natives, who, even under more favourable circumstances are not easily recognizable upon a hasty view, and still less so, if either they, or the observer, are in a state of excitement at the time. Is it possible for the natives to be blind to the unequal measure of justice, which is thus dealt out, and which will still continue to be so as long as the law remains unchanged?

[Note 115: Governor Hutt remarks, in addressing Lord Glenelg on this subject:—“In furtherance of the truth of these remarks, I would request your Lordship particularly to observe, that here is one class of Her Majesty’s subjects, who are *debarred A true and fair trial by jury*, whose evidence is inadmissible in a court of justice, and who consequently may be the victims of any of the most outrageous cruelty and violence, and yet be *unable, from the forms and requirements of the law*, to obtain redress, and

whose quarrels, ending sometimes in bloodshed and death, it is unjust, as well as inexpedient, to interfere with.

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“A jury ought to be composed of a man’s own peers. Europeans, in the case of a native criminal, cannot either in their habits or sympathies be regarded as such, and his countrymen are incapable of understanding or taking upon themselves the office of juror.”]

I have no wish to give the native evidence a higher character than it deserves, but I think that it ought not to be rendered unavailable in a prosecution; the degree of weight or credibility to be attached to it, might be left to the court taking cognizance of the case, but if it is consistent and probable, I see no reason why it should not be as strong a safeguard to the black man from injury and oppression, as the white man’s oath is to him. There are many occasions on which the testimony of natives may be implicitly believed, and which are readily distinguishable by those who have had much intercourse with this people—unaccustomed to the intricacies of untruth, they know not that they must be consistent to deceive, and it is therefore rarely difficult to tell when a native is prevaricating.

Among the natives themselves, the evil effects resulting from the inability of their evidence to produce a conviction are still more apparent and injurious. [Note 116 at end of para.] It has already been shewn how highly important it is to prevent the elders from exercising an arbitrary and cruel authority over the young and the weak, and how necessary that the latter should feel themselves quite secure from the vengeance of the former, when endeavouring to throw off the trammels of custom and prejudice, and by embracing our habits and pursuits, making an effort to rise in the scale of moral and physical improvement. Whatever alteration therefore we may make in our system for the better, or however anxious we may be for the welfare and the improvement of the Aborigines, we may rest well assured that our efforts are but thrown away, as long as the natives are permitted with impunity to exercise their cruel or degrading customs upon each other, unchecked and unpunished. We may feel equally certain that these oppressions and barbarities can never be checked or punished but by means of their own unsupported testimony against each other, and until this can be legally received, and made available for that purpose, there is no hope of any lasting or permanent good being accomplished.

[Note 116: Upon the inability of natives to give evidence in a court of justice, Mr. Chief Protector Robinson remarks, in a letter to His Honour, the Superintendent of Port Phillip, dated May, 1843—“The legal disabilities of the natives have been a serious obstacle to their civil protection; and I feel it my duty, whilst on this subject, respectfully to bring under notice the necessity that still exists for some suitable system of judicature for the governance and better protection of the aboriginal races. ’As far as personal influence went, the aboriginal natives have been protected from acts of injustice, cruelty,



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and oppression; and their wants, wishes, and grievances have been faithfully represented to the Government of the colony,' and this, under the circumstances, was all that could possibly be effected. There is, however, reason to fear that the destruction of the aboriginal natives has been accelerated from the known fact of their being incapacitated to give evidence in our courts of law. I have frequently had to deplore, when applied to by the Aborigines for justice in cases of aggression committed on them by white men, or by those of their own race, my inability to do so in consequence of their legal incapacity to give evidence. It were unreasonable, therefore, under such circumstances, to expect the Aborigines would respect, or repose trust and confidence in the Protectors, or submit to the governance of a department unable efficiently to protect or afford them justice. Nor is it surprising they should complain of being made to suffer the higher penalties of our law, when deprived (by legal disability) of its benefits. Little difficulty has been experienced in discovering the perpetrator where the blacks have been concerned, even in the greater offences, and hence the ends of justice would have been greatly facilitated by aboriginal evidence. It is much to be regretted the Colonial Act of Council on aboriginal evidence was disallowed."]

The following very forcible and just remarks are from Captain Grey's work, vol. ii. pages 375 to 378:—

"I would submit, therefore, that it is necessary from the moment the Aborigines of this country are declared British subjects, they should, as far as possible, be taught that the British laws are to supersede their own, so that any native who is suffering under their own customs, may have the power of an appeal to those of Great Britain; or to put this in its true light, that all authorized persons should, in all instances, be required to protect a native from the violence of his fellows, even though they be in the execution of their own laws.

"So long as this is not the case, the older natives have at their disposal the means of effectually preventing the civilization of any individuals of their own tribe, and those among them who may be inclined to adapt themselves to the European habits and mode of life, will be deterred from so doing by their fear of the consequences, that the displeasure of others may draw down upon them.

"So much importance am I disposed to attach to this point, that I do not hesitate to assert my full conviction, that whilst those tribes which are in communication with Europeans are allowed to execute their barbarous laws and customs upon one another, so long will they remain hopelessly immersed in their present state of barbarism: and however unjust such a proceeding might at first sight appear, I believe that the course pointed out by true humanity would be, to make them from the very commencement amenable to the British laws, both as regards themselves and Europeans; for I hold it to be imagining a contradiction to suppose, that individuals subject to savage and

barbarous laws, can rise into a state of civilization, which those laws have a manifest tendency to destroy and overturn.

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"I have known many instances of natives who have been almost or quite civilized, being compelled by other natives to return to the bush; more particularly girls, who have been betrothed in their infancy, and who, on approaching the years of puberty, have been compelled by their husbands to join them.

"To punish the Aborigines severely for the violation of laws of which they are ignorant, would be manifestly cruel and unjust; but to punish them in the first instance slightly for the violation of these laws would inflict no great injury on them, whilst by always punishing them when guilty of a crime, without reference to the length of period that had elapsed between its perpetration and their apprehension, at the same time fully explaining to them the measure of punishment that would await them in the event of a second commission of the same fault, would teach them gradually the laws to which they were henceforth to be amenable, and would shew them that crime was always eventually, although it might be remotely, followed by punishment.

"I imagine that this course would be more merciful than that at present adopted; viz. to punish them for a violation of a law they are ignorant of, when this violation affects a European, and yet to allow them to commit this crime as often as they like, when it only regards themselves; for this latter course teaches them, not that certain actions, such, for instance, as murder, *etc.* are generally criminal, but only that they are criminal when exercised towards the white people, and the impression, consequently excited in their minds is, that these acts only excite our detestation when exercised towards ourselves, and that their criminality consists, not in having committed a certain odious action, but in having violated our prejudices."

Many instances have come under my own personal observation, where natives have sought redress both against one another and against Europeans, but where from their evidence being unavailable no redress could be afforded them. Enough has however been now adduced to shew the very serious evils resulting from this disadvantage, and to point out the justice, the policy, the practicability, and the necessity of remedying it.

In bringing to a close my remarks on the Aborigines, their present condition and future prospects, I cannot more appropriately or more forcibly conclude the subject than by quoting that admirable letter of Lord Stanley's to Governor Sir G. Gipps, written in December, 1842; a letter of which the sentiments expressed are as creditable to the judgment and discrimination, as they are honourable to the feelings and humanity of the minister who wrote it, and who, in the absence of personal experience, and amidst all the conflicting testimony or misrepresentation by which a person at a distance is ever apt to be assailed and misled, has still been able to separate the truth from falsehood, and to arrive at a rational, a christian, and a just opinion, on a subject so fraught with difficulties, so involved in uncertainty, and so beset with discrepancies.

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In writing to Sir G. Gipps, Lord Stanley says (Parliamentary Reports, pp. 221, 2, 3):—

*“Downing-street, 20th December, 1842.*

*“Sir,*

*“I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatches of the dates and numbers mentioned in the margin, reporting the information which has reached you in respect to the aboriginal tribes of New South Wales, and the result of the attempts which have been made, under the sanction of Her Majesty’s Government, to civilize and protect these people.*

*“I have read with great attention, but with deep regret, the accounts contained in these despatches. After making every fair allowance for the peculiar difficulty of such an undertaking, it seems impossible any longer to deny that the efforts which have hitherto been made for the civilization of the Aborigines have been unavailing; that no real progress has yet been effected, and that there is no reasonable ground to expect from them greater success in future. You will be sensible with how much pain and reluctance I have come to this opinion, but I cannot shut my eyes to the conclusion which inevitably follows from the statements which you have submitted to me on the subject.*

*“Your despatch of the 11th March last, No. 50, contains an account of the several missions up to that date, with reports likewise from the chief Protector and his assistants, and from the Crown Land Commissioners. The statements respecting the missions, furnished not by their opponents, nor even by indifferent parties, but by the missionaries themselves, are, I am sorry to say, as discouraging as it is possible to be. In respect to the mission at Wellington Valley, Mr. Gunther writes in a tone of despondency, which shews that he has abandoned the hope of success. The opening of his report is indeed a plain admission of despair; I sincerely wish that his facts did not bear out such a feeling. But when he reports, that after a trial of ten years, only one of all who have been attached to the mission ‘affords some satisfaction and encouragement;’ that of the others only four still remain with them, and that these continually absent themselves, and when at home evince but little desire for instruction; that ‘their thoughtlessness, and spirit of independence, ingratitude, and want of sincere, straightforward dealing, often try us in the extreme;’ that drunkenness is increasing, and that the natives are ‘gradually swept away by debauchery and other evils arising from their intermixture with Europeans,’ I acknowledge that he has stated enough to warrant his despondency, and to shew that it proceeds from no momentary disappointment alone, but from a settled and reasonable conviction.*

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“Nor do the other missions hold out any greater encouragement. That at Moreton Bay is admitted by Mr. Handt to have made but little progress, as neither children nor adults can be persuaded to stay for any length of time; while that at Lake Macquarie had, at the date of your despatch, ceased to exist, from the extinction or removal of the natives formerly in its vicinity. The Wesleyan Missionaries at Port Phillip, notwithstanding an expenditure in 1841 of nearly 1,300 pounds, acknowledge that they are ‘far from being satisfied with the degree of success which has attended our labours,’ and ‘that a feeling of despair sometimes takes possession of our minds, and weighs down our spirits,’ arising from the frightful mortality among the natives.

“In the face of such representations, which can be attributed neither to prejudice nor misinformation, I have great doubts as to the wisdom or propriety of continuing the missions any longer. I fear that to do so would be to delude ourselves with the mere idea of doing something; which would be injurious to the natives, as interfering with other and more advantageous arrangements, and unjust to the colony, as continuing an unnecessary and profitless expenditure.

“To this conclusion I had been led by your despatch, No. 50, but anticipating that the protectorate system would promise more beneficial results, I postponed my instructions in the matter until I should receive some further information.

“Your despatches of the 16th and 20th May have furnished that further information, although they contradict the hopes which I had been led to entertain. After the distinct and unequivocal opinion announced by Mr. La Trobe, supported as it is by the expression of your concurrence, I cannot conceal from myself that the failure of the system of protectors has been at least as complete as that of the missions.

“I have no doubt that a portion of this ill success, perhaps a large portion, is attributable to the want of sound judgment and zealous activity on the part of the assistant protectors. Thus the practice of collecting large bodies of the natives in one spot, and in the immediate vicinity of the settlers, without any previous provision for their subsistence or employment, was a proceeding of singular indiscretion. That these people would commit depredations rather than suffer want, and that thus ill-blood, and probably collisions, would be caused between them and the settlers, must, I should have thought, have occurred to any man of common observation; and no one could have better reason than Mr. Sievwright to know his utter inability to control them. When such a course could be adopted, I am not surprised at your opinion that the measures of the protectors have tended ‘rather to increase than allay the irritation which has long existed between the two races.’

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“But after allowing for the effect of such errors, and for the possibility of preventing their recurrence, there is yet enough in Mr. La Trobe’s reports to shew that the system itself is defective, at least in the hands of those whose services we are able to command. I am unwilling, at this distance from the scene, and without that minute local knowledge which is essential, to give you any precise instructions as to the course which under present circumstances should be pursued: but I have the less hesitation in leaving the matter in your hands, because your whole correspondence shews that no one feels more strongly than yourself the duty as well as the policy of protecting, and, if possible, civilizing these Aborigines, and of promoting a good understanding between them and the white settlers. At present, though I am far from attributing to the white settlers generally an ill disposition towards the natives, there is an apparent want of feeling among them, where the natives are concerned, which is much to be lamented. Outrages of the most atrocious description, involving sometimes considerable loss of life, are spoken of, as I observe in these papers, with an indifference and lightness which to those at a distance is very shocking. I cannot but fear that the feeling which dictates this mode of speaking, may also cause the difficulty in discovering and bringing to justice the perpetrators of the outrages which from time to time occur. With a view to the protection of the natives, the most essential step is to correct the temper and tone adopted towards them by the settlers. Whatever may depend on your own personal influence, or on the zealous co-operation of Mr. La Trobe, will I am sure be done at once, and I will not doubt that your efforts in this respect will be successful. In regard to the missions and the protectors, I give you no definite instructions. If at your receipt of this despatch you should see no greater prospect of advantage than has hitherto appeared, you will be at liberty to discontinue the grants to either as early as possible; but if circumstances should promise more success for the future, the grants may be continued for such time as may be necessary to bring the matter to a certain result. In the meantime, agreeing as I do, in the general opinion, that it is indispensable to the protection of the natives that their evidence should, to a certain extent at least, be received in the courts of law, I shall take into my consideration the means by which this can be effected in the safest and most satisfactory manner.

“I cannot conclude this despatch without expressing my sense of the importance of the subject of it, and my hope that your experience may enable you to suggest some general plan by which we may acquit ourselves of the obligations which we owe towards this helpless race of beings. I should not, without the most extreme reluctance, admit that nothing can be done; that with respect to them alone the doctrines of Christianity

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must be inoperative, and the advantages of civilization incommunicable. I cannot acquiesce in the theory that they are incapable of improvement, and that their extinction before the advance of the white settler is a necessity which it is impossible to control. I recommend them to your protection and favourable consideration with the greatest earnestness, but at the same time with perfect confidence: and I assure you that I shall be willing and anxious to co-operate with you in any arrangement for their civilization which may hold out a fair prospect of success.

"I have, etc. "(signed) "Stanley."

\* \* \* \* \*

*Explanation of the plates of native ornaments, weapons, implements, and works of industry.*

### PLATE I.—ORNAMENTS.

1. Ku-ru-un-ko—tuft of emu feathers used in the play spoken of, page 228. 2. Three tufts of feathers tied in a bunch, with two kangaroo teeth, worn tied to the hair. 3. Tufts of feathers, used as a flag or signal, elevated on a spear; similar ones are worn by the males, of eagle or emu feathers over the pubes. 4. Let-ter-rer—kangaroo teeth worn tied to the hair of young males and females after the ceremonies of initiation. 5 and 6. Coverings for the pubes, worn by females, one is of fur string in threads, the other of skins cut in strips. 7. Tufts of white feathers worn round the neck. 8. Tufts of feathers stained red, worn round the neck. 9. Tufts of feathers stained red, with two kangaroo teeth to each tuft, also worn round the neck. 10. A piece of bone worn through the septum nasi. 11. Tufts of feathers worn round the neck, one is black, the other stained red. 12. Tufts of feathers stained red, with four kangaroo teeth in a bunch, worn round the neck. 13. Necklace of reeds cut in short lengths. 14. Band for forehead, feathers and swan's-down. 15. Man-ga—band for forehead, a coil of string made of opossum fur. 16. Mona—net cap to confine the hair of young men of opossum fur. 17. Korno—widow's mourning cap made of carbonate of lime, moulded to the head, weight 8 1/2lbs. 18. Dog's-tail, worn as an appendage to the beard, which is gathered together and tied in a pigtail.

### PLATE II.—WEAPONS.

1. Spear barbed on both sides, of hard wood, 10 1/2 feet long, used in war or hunting. 2. Similar to the last but only barbed on one side, used for same purposes. 3. Kar-ku-ru—smooth spear of hard wood, 10 1/2 feet, used for punishments, as described page



222, also for general purposes. 4. Short, smooth, hard wood spear, 7 1/2 feet long, used to spear fish in diving. 5. Reed spear with barbed hard wood point, used for war with the throwing stick—the way of holding it, and position of the hand are shewn. 6. Hard wood spear with grass-tree end, 8 feet long, used with the



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throwing stick for general purposes. 7. Hard wood spear with single barb spliced on, 8 feet long, used from Port Lincoln to King George's Sound for chase or war, it is launched with the throwing stick. 8. Ki-ko—reed spear, hard wood point, 6 to 7 feet long, used with the throwing-stick to kill birds or other game. 9. Hard wood spear, grass-tree end, barbed with flint, used with the throwing-stick for war. 10. The head of No. 9 on a larger scale. 11. The head of No. 1 on a larger scale. 12. The head of a Lachlan spear, taken from a man who was wounded there, the spear entered behind the shoulder in the back, and the point reached to the front of the throat, it had to be extracted by cutting an opening in the throat and forcing the spear-head through from behind—the man recovered. 13. The head of No. 7 on a larger scale.

### PLATE III.—WEAPONS.

1. Nga-waonk, or throwing-stick, about 2 feet long, and narrow. 2. Ditto but hollowed and conical. 3. Ditto straight and flat. 4. Ditto narrow and carved. 5. Ditto broad in the centre. 6. Sorcerer's stick, with feathers and fur string round the point. 7. Ditto plain. 8. The Darling Wangn, (boomerang) carved, 1 foot 10 inches. 9. The Darling war Wangn, 2 feet 1 inch. 10. Battle-axe. 11. Ditto 12. Ditto 13. Ditto 14. The lower end of the throwing-stick, shewing a flint gummed on as a chisel. 15. The Tar-ram, or shield made out of solid wood, 2 feet 7 inches long, 1 foot broad, carved and painted. 16. A side view of ditto 17. War-club of heavy wood, rounded and tapering. 18. Port Lincoln Wirris, or stick used for throwing at game, 2 feet. 19. Murray River Bwirri, or ditto ditto 20. War club, with a heavy knob, and pointed. 21. Port Lincoln Midla, or lever, with quartz knife attached to the end. 22. Murray river war club.

### PLATE IV.—IMPLEMENTS.

1. Tat-tat-ko, or rod for noosing wild fowl, 16 feet long, vide p. 310. 2. Moo-ar-roo, or paddle and fish spear, 10 to 16 feet, vide p. 263. 3. Chisel pointed hard wood stick, from 3 to 4 feet long, used by the women for digging. 4. Ngakko, or chisel pointed stick, 3 feet long, used by the men. 5. Mun—canoe of bark, vide p. 314. 6. 7, 8. Varieties of Mooyumkarr, or sacred oval pieces of wood, used at night, by being spun round with a long string so as to produce a loud roaring noise for the object of counteracting any evil influences, and for other purposes. 9. 10, 11, 12. Needles, *etc.* from the fibulas of kangaroos, wallabies, emus, *etc.* 13. Kangaroo bone, used as a knife. 14. Stone with hollow in centre for pounding roots. 15. Stone hatchet. 16. Distaff with string of hair upon it. 17. Lenko, or net hung round the neck in diving to put muscles, *etc.* in. 18. Kenderanko, net used in diving, vide p. 260. 19. Drinking cup made of a shell. 20. Drinking cup, being the scull of a native with the sutures closed with wax or gum.

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### PLATE V.—WORKS OF INDUSTRY.

1. Lukomb, or skin for carrying water, made from the skins of opossums, wallabie, or young kangaroo; the fur is turned inside, and the legs, tail, and neck, are tied up; they hold from 1 quart to 3 gallons. 2. Pooneed-ke—circular mat, 1 foot 9 inches in diameter, made of a kind of grass, worn on the back by the women, with a band passed round the lower part and tied in front, the child is then slipped in between the mat and the back, and so carried. 3. Kal-la-ter—a truncated basket of about a foot wide at the bottom, made also of a broad kind of grass, used for carrying anything in, and especially for taking about the fragile eggs of the Leipoa. 4. A wallet, or man's travelling bag, made of a kangaroo skin, with the fur outside. 5. A small kal-la-ter. 6. Pool-la-da-noo-ko, or oval basket made of broad-leaved grass, used for carrying anything; from its flat make, it fits easily to the back. 7. An Adelaide oblong and somewhat flattish basket, made of a kind of rush. 8. The Rok-ko, or net bag, made of a string manufactured from the rush, it is carried by the women, and contains generally all the worldly property of the family, such as shells and pieces of flint for knives—bones for needles—sinews of animals for thread—fat and red ochre for adorning the person—spare ornaments or belts—white pigment for painting for the dance—a skin for carrying water—a stone for pounding roots—the sacred implements of the husband carefully folded up and concealed—a stone hatchet—and many other similar articles. The size of the rok-ko varies according to the wealth of the family; it is sometimes very large and weighty when filled.