

# **The Life and Adventures of William Buckley**

**John Morgan**



## THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY

In 1803, William Buckley was transported to Australia, and soon after landing, escaped with a number of fellow convicts into the unexplored area of what is now Melbourne. Buckley survived and spent the ensuing thirty-two years living with the aborigines of the area, and when discovered in 1835 had become entirely assimilated into aborigine culture. This book gives an account of his experiences, as well as a nearly unique description of aborigine culture before European contact. Also included is James Morrill's *Sketch of a Residence Among the Aborigines of Northern Queensland for Seventeen Years*; like Buckley, Morrill spent many years living as an aborigine, and described his experiences in a pamphlet which is reprinted in this volume. These accounts should be of interest not only to students of ethnography, but also to the general reader.

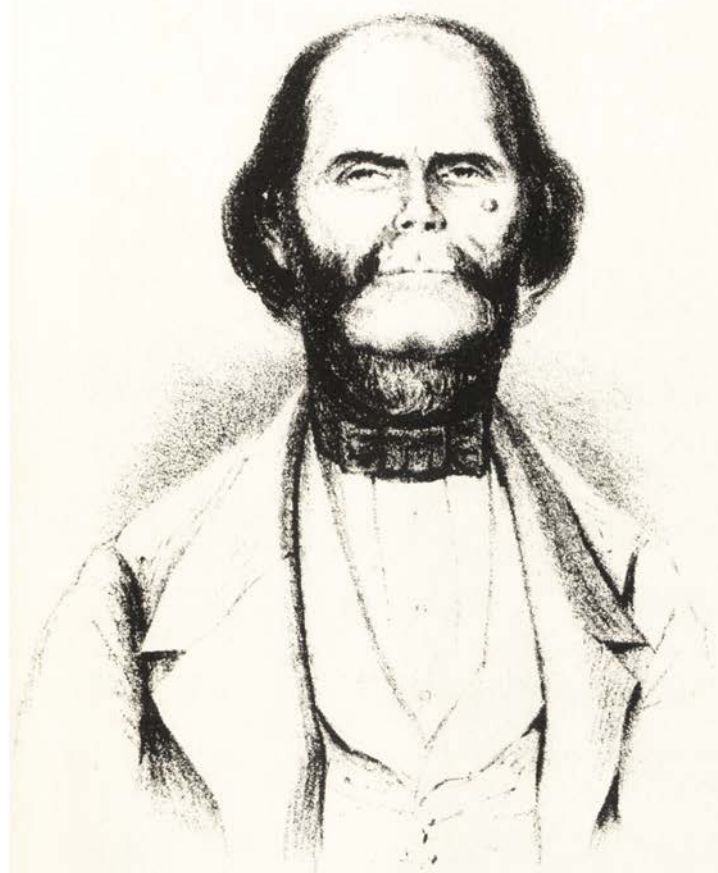
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# The Life and Adventures of William Buckley





**THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF  
WILLIAM BUCKLEY:**

**Thirty-Two Years a Wanderer Amongst the  
Aborigines of the Unexplored Country  
Round Port Phillip**

*John Morgan*

**Australian National University Press, Canberra**

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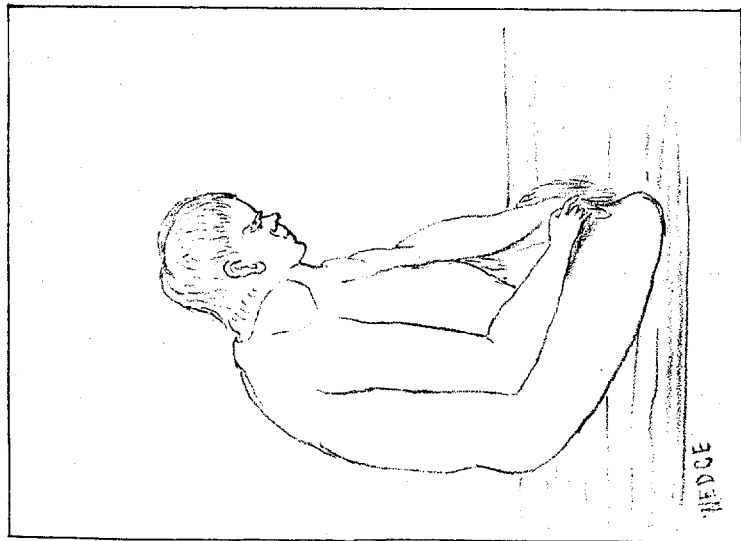
This edition is a newly-set version based on the 1852  
original published at Hobart, Tasmania



*Near Geelong.*



*Buckley Falls.*



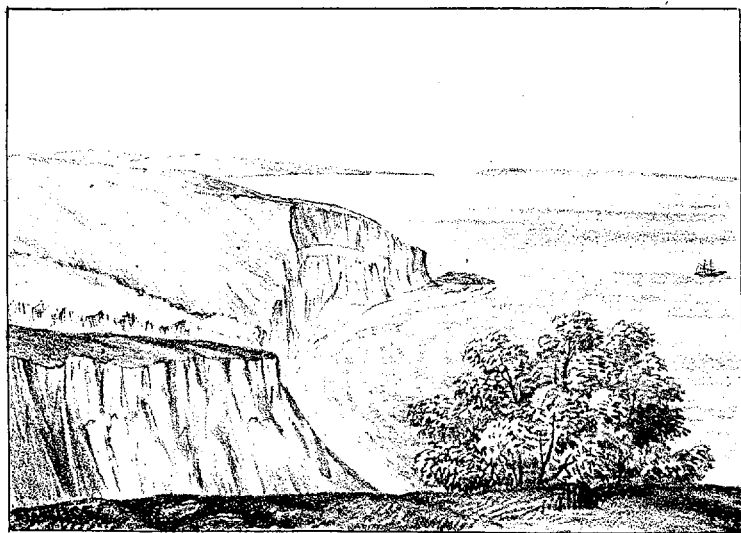
*Buckley in August, 1835.*



*Buckley on Indented Heads.*



*Worrigong R. and Plains N. 30. W.*



*Entrance to Port Phillip.*

## PREFACE

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**E**DITORS of newspapers seldom succeed as authors of works on reality, or of fiction; and the latter are also generally unsuccessful as conductors of public journals . . .

I allude to these matters, because it may be said by some of the readers of this narrative, that many of the sentences are crude, and unnecessarily short: that they might have been made more interesting by adopting a different style of relation. I beg those who may think this, to understand, that the hero of these adventures can *neither read nor write*, and, that consequently, I have had the laborious task of connecting circumstances together (so as to make them intelligible) from rough notes and memoranda, made at various times, and by conversations, noting the points down in the shape of questions and answers, as I went on.

I trust this fact will be fairly considered by the critic, who may feel disposed — at his pleasure — to find fault with *the style* of this history, written and published, as it has been, under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. As to *the matter* of which it is composed, I have only to say, that I believe it to be faithful: not only because he who is the subject of it, has assured



me of its truthfulness, but from my own personal acquaintance for several years with the habits of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Australian continent, and previously with those of other countries, in every quarter of the world.

This circumstance, I believe, first induced him to solicit me to edit a history of his life, but it is several years since that application: both of us having during the interval been otherwise occupied. At length, he having been discharged from government employ, and pensioned off on the *large* salary of twelve pounds per annum; and myself having retired from the very *lucrative* occupation of a colonial newspaper editor, I undertook the task, for our mutual benefit.

Fortunately, we found a generously disposed friend in William Robertson, esquire, to whom this work is respectfully inscribed in token of our gratitude: that gentleman having kindly undertaken to act as trustee for both parties, which, as Buckley can neither read nor write, as I have already said, was a safe and desirable arrangement.

It may be proper to explain my reasons for considering such an arrangement desirable. Reader, do not do me an injustice; remember the comparatively humble may follow in the pathway of the exalted, and yet not presume to greatness.

De Foe, the author of the fictitious history of Robinson Crusoe, after the publication of that very popular narrative, and during the remainder of his life, was assailed by the literary assassins of the time in a most unworthy and cowardly manner. They charged him

with having surreptitiously obtained the journal of Alexander Selkirk, the shipwrecked mariner of Juan Fernandez. They said that having done so, and given his celebrated work to the world, he derived great annual profits from it, whilst he left poor Selkirk to pine in abject penury. Now although we certainly do not expect any such liberal share of fame and fortune by the publication of this truthful history, *I* am most anxious to avoid even the possibility of such a reproach, and hence arises the trusteeship which Mr. William Robertson has so kindly undertaken.

For a long time a difficulty existed as to the risk of printing a narrative of the kind at so late a period, but at length, Mr. Macdougall (late of Adelaide), engaged on convenient terms, to bring the work out; which he has done in a manner creditable to himself, and to the colony . . .

I regret to say, the admirable likeness of William Buckley is the only illustration I can give, the great anxiety for gathering the golden harvest in Victoria, having driven not only the artizan, but the artist, from off the course of his usual industry.

I have nothing more to add by way of preface, or introduction: as for apologies for unavoidable imperfections, I make none — why should I?

In giving the history of a life in the first person, and under such peculiar circumstances, I have endeavoured to express the thoughts of a humble, unlearned man, in that language of simplicity and truth which, in my mind, is best suited to the subject, and to the circumstances as they passed in review before me.

I have anxiously sought to induce a reliance upon Providence in all cases of danger and difficulty, having myself escaped so often from imminent and immediate peril. That man is the best able to judge of the value of God's Providence who has seen His power evinced in the various ways made manifest in the battle-field, in the boundless forest, on the ocean wave; of which those

"Who live at home at ease,"

knowing nothing, except by reading, and by the labours of others — the sailors, the soldiers, the explorers — the pioneers of the world.

To them, to all, I now respectfully submit this book . . .

JOHN MORGAN

*Hobart, March 22, 1852*

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I've run my story through, "e'en from my boyish days,  
"To the very moment that he bade me tell it,  
"Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,  
"Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
"And of the cannibals, who did each other eat."

OTHELLO

# **LIFE OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY**

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## **CHAPTER I**

**BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION — APPRENTICED TO A BRICKLAYER — RUNS AWAY AND ENLISTS FOR A SOLDIER — JOINS THE CHESHIRE MILITIA, AND THEN A REGIMENT OF THE LINE — EMBARKS FOR HOLLAND — BATTLE BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND ALLIED FORCES — RETURNS TO ENGLAND — GETS INTO BAD COMPANY: TRIED, AND SENTENCED — GOES IN THE CALCUTTA, WITH A PARTY OF CONVICTS TO PORT PHILLIP — SHIP ARRIVES — PRISONERS AND GUARD OF MARINES LAND — ABSCONDS WITH THREE OTHERS — SEPARATES FROM HIS COMPANIONS — SUFFERINGS IN THE BUSH.**

**“Poor is the friendless Master of a World.”**

**I** WAS born in the year 1780, at Macclesfield, in the County of Cheshire, England. My parents were humble people, who honestly provided for the support of themselves, and a family of two girls and two boys, by cultivating a small farm in that neighbourhood. What has become of my brother and sisters, is not known to me; but a short time since I heard the former was still living at Middlewich, also a town in Cheshire, and celebrated for its salt works.



The wandering, extraordinary life I have led, has naturally obliterated from my memory, many of the earlier scenes of my childhood; but few presenting themselves before me occasionally at this period, and those only as a dream. The following are however still vivid to my mind.

I remember, that from some circumstance or other, I was adopted by my mother's father, and that I was sent by him to an evening school, where I was taught to read; and that when about fifteen years of age, I was apprenticed by the same good old man to a Mr. Robert Wyatt, a bricklayer, residing in that neighbourhood, to be taught the art and mystery of building houses for other people to live in — it being my fate, as will presently be seen, during thirty-two years, to inhabit dwellings of a very different description, having for their roofs only the wide spread of heaven. Having been removed in the first instance from the immediate charge of my parents, I was, I suppose, not so strictly treated by the old people as I should have been, as a boy, and hence the restraints imposed upon me by my master, and his very proper endeavours to make me useful and industrious, were considered hardships and punishments, unnecessarily and improperly inflicted. This feeling, in time, completely unsettled me, and my uncontrolled discontent mastering my boyish reason, when I was about nineteen, I determined to enlist as a soldier, and to win glorious laurels in the battle-field, taking my chances of becoming either a corporal, or a colonel — I cared not which; neither did I very well understand the difference between the two positions,

or the career of dangers, trials, and sufferings, upon which I was entering.

Acting upon these impulses, I enlisted in the Cheshire Militia, receiving ten guineas as a bounty, which sum I thought would prove inexhaustible; but, at the end of about a year, I took another bounty, having volunteered into the Fourth, or King's Own Regiment of Foot, then laying at Horsham barracks. The regiment was commanded by a Lieutenant-Colonel Dixon, a very excellent officer, and in about six weeks after joining, we were ordered to embark for Holland, where his royal highness the Duke of York, at the head of the British army, was endeavouring to sustain himself against the French republican forces. My regiment was in the division commanded by the late Lieutenant-General the Earl of Chatham.

It is not the purpose of this narrative, to refer particularly to that period of my life, neither shall I attempt to give the details of the campaigns in Holland: suffice it to say, that in a battle fought in that country, our regiment suffered heavily, and that I was wounded, rather severely, in the right hand. Almost immediately after this action, the Fourth, with other corps, embarked for England, and were landed at Chatham, where we lay some time. Here I received another bounty for extended service, having now been about four years a soldier, and by attention to my duty, and general steadiness of conduct, having acquired the good opinion of my officers. Perhaps my unusual height, six feet five, may also have predisposed them in my favour. It would have been well had I continued

in the same line of rectitude, but my imperfect education, and early feelings of discontent returning upon me, I unfortunately became associated with several men of bad character in the regiment, who gradually acquired an influence over my conduct, which very soon led me into scenes of irregularity, and riotous dissipation. At length, after a six weeks' furlough, during which I visited my friends in Cheshire, I was apprehended, as being implicated with those men in an offence which rendered me liable to punishment. The consequence was, that I was tried at Chatham, and found guilty, but as the laws were strangely administered in those days, where soldiers and sailors were concerned, I do not know to this hour the precise character, or extent of my sentence.

This may appear strange, but the reader will remember, that transportation, as a punishment on any regular or fixed system, had then scarcely been thought of, and, that soldiers and sailors were dealt with more at the pleasure of the chief military, and naval authorities, than by judges or justices, many of whom, considered the army and navy outside the pale of their protection. With this sentence, whatever it was, ceased my connection with my family, and I have never since heard of either, or any of them, excepting as I have already said, that my brother was supposed, a short time since, to be still living at Middlewich.

My fortune had now changed. I was a prisoner, working at the new fortifications being thrown up for the defence of Woolwich. In about six months, however, a new light broke out over my unhappy existence,

and an opportunity was afforded me of ultimately retrieving my character, and acquiring freedom: this was by the determination of the British government to found a penal settlement at Port Phillip (Melbourne), on the south-eastern coast of New Holland (Australia); that part known as New South Wales being the only portion of the continent then occupied. Being a mechanic, I, with others, was selected and placed on board his majesty's ship *Calcutta*, Captain Woodriff. Lieutenant-Colonel Collins, of the Royal Marines, was appointed governor, and he accompanied the expedition, having with him in the same ship, several officers and a detachment of his corps, as a guard over the prisoners during the voyage, and after their landing. The treatment I received on the passage was very good, and, as I endeavoured to make myself useful on board, I was permitted to be the greater part of my time on deck, assisting the crew in working the ship. In justice to the officers placed over us, I must say, the treatment all the prisoners received at their hands, was as far from suffering, as could be expected, at a time when prison discipline was generally carried out by coercion, and the lash and the rope were, in too many instances, considered too good for *all* who had been convicted. To amend and reclaim, to bring back to society, and to administer hope and consolation, were, in those days, considered the encouragement of mutiny, and hence, to be permitted to live without additional sentences, and summary punishments, was looked upon — as mercy.

At length our voyage was at an end, and the *Calcutta*

came to an anchor within the Heads, at about two miles from what is now known as Point Lonsdale.

The natives call that place Koonan, which means eels, that fish being in great abundance in almost all the streams running into Port Phillip. The particular locality had been chosen as the site of a penal station, it being six hundred miles from the nearest settlement, Sydney, and the chances of escape offered to the prisoner being, therefore, very few. In a short time the marines and convicts landed, and encamped. A distinction was made between the mechanics and the rest of the prisoner people, the former being permitted to hut themselves outside the line of sentinels, whilst the labourers were placed under a more careful control. This was necessary, as the lime-burners, brickmakers, and sawyers, were compelled to work in all directions, and at a distance from the encampment. A magazine and a store-house were the first public buildings commenced, and at the former I had been employed about three months, when I determined on endeavouring to make my escape, and to get, if possible, to Sydney. The attempt was little short of madness, for there was before me the chances of being retaken, and probable death, or other dreadful punishment; or again, starvation in an unknown country inhabited by savages, with whose language and habits, I was totally unacquainted, besides the dangers innumerable which the reader may in part imagine, but which no man can describe — no, not even myself; although, by the merciful providence of God, I surmounted them all.

These perils and difficulties are now passed; they

were then staring me in the face; but possessed of great personal strength, a good constitution, and having known what might be done by courageous men when combating for life and liberty, I determined on braving everything, and, if possible, making my escape. Perhaps my unsettled nature in a great measure induced this, and, that my impatience of every kind of restraint, also led to the resolution. However this may be, four of us agreed to take to the bush, as absconding is called, and being allowed the use of a gun for killing kangaroo, and opossums, we made up our minds to start the first dark night, taking it with us, and as much provisions as we could muster.

The opportunity soon offered and we left, as we hoped, unobserved; we however were not so fortunate, for one of the sentinels challenged, and receiving no answer, immediately fired, shooting the last man of the four of us, as I thought, dead; at least, I never after saw, nor heard of him. After running the greater part of the first three or four hours, to make our escape the more certain, we halted for rest and refreshment. We were now fairly launched on our perilous voyage, and it became necessary to reflect on our position, and to examine our resources. The latter consisted of sundry tin pots, an iron kettle, the fowling-piece already mentioned, and a few days' rations. We now pushed on again until we came to a river, and near the bay; this stream the natives call Darkee Barwin: here we rested until daylight, and then prepared to renew our march. Early in the morning, a large party, or tribe of the natives, was seen, armed with spears; and, thinking

to alarm them by so unusual a sound, I fired the piece, on hearing which, they retired hurriedly into the bush. I should here observe, that we had now very little apprehension of being retaken, believing the opinion of Governor Collins to be, that any prisoner attempting to escape, would gladly deliver himself up, rather than perish of hunger; besides, we had, by the rapid rate at which we had travelled during the night, placed a considerable distance between us and the encampment. Light marching order being very desirable, when starting on our first day's march, we resolved on parting company with the iron kettle, as a useless article, and therefore threw it into the scrub, where it was found, thirty-two years after, by a party of men clearing ground for agricultural purposes.

Our next business was to cross the river, but as all of us could not swim, I passed first to try its depth, and after considerable difficulty succeeded in getting my companions over, and then I swam over again for their clothes, being the best swimmer of the party. That night we reached to about twenty miles distant from what is now the city of Melbourne, and halted there until the morning, when we crossed the Yarra River; and, after passing over extensive plains, reached the Yawang Hills, where we finished the last particle of bread and meat that we had, not having divided our rations properly, and taken the precautions necessary to avoid starvation. Here we remained the night; the next morning, I told my companions that we must make for the beach to look for food, or death was certain. They agreed with this suggestion, and after a

long and weary march we again made the shore of the bay, and finding a few shell fish, with them appeased our hunger. At a place the natives call Kooraioo, in an extensive bay, we were so fortunate as to find a well of fresh water, and here we remained the night:— the following day continuing our course along the beach gathering shell fish, until we reached a place called Woodela, signifying rock. Here we again rested, if rest it might be called, suffering as we were from the want of the absolute necessities of life: the fish although preserving it, affecting us all very severely. The next day our route was the same, and as we saw several native huts in our journey, we were hourly expecting to fall in with one of the tribes, hunting or fishing on that part of the coast. Another day's travel brought us to a little island, called Barwal, which we could reach at low water, and here we halted several days to recover our strength, which was by this time greatly exhausted. We found about this place a sort of gum, which, when placed over a fire became soft, and palatable; on this, and fish, we subsisted. From Barwal, we could see the *Calcutta* at anchor on the opposite side of the bay. The perils we had already encountered damped the ardour of my companions, and it was anxiously wished by them that they could rejoin her, so we set about making signals, by lighting fires at night, and hoisting our shirts on trees and poles by day. At length a boat was seen to leave the ship and come in our direction, and although the dread of punishment was naturally great, yet the fear of starvation exceeded it, and they anxiously waited her arrival



to deliver themselves up, indulging anticipations of being, after all the sufferings they had undergone, forgiven by the governor. These expectations of relief were however delusive; when about half way across the bay, the boat returned, and all hope vanished. We remained in the same place, and living in the same way, six more days, signaling all the time, but without success, so that my companions seeing no probable relief, gave themselves up to despair, and lamented bitterly their helpless situation.

At the end of the next day they determined on retracing their steps round the head of the bay, and if possible, rejoining their companions at the encampment. To all their advice, and entreaties to accompany them, I turned a deaf ear, being determined to endure every kind of suffering rather than again surrender my liberty. After some time we separated, going in different directions. When I had parted from my companions, although I had preferred doing so, I was overwhelmed with the various feelings which oppressed me: it would be vain to attempt describing my sensations. I thought of the friends of my youth, the scenes of my boyhood, and early manhood, of the slavery of my punishment, of the liberty I had panted for, and which although now realized, after a fashion, made the heart sick, even at its enjoyment. I remember, I was here subjected to the most severe mental sufferings for several hours, and then, pursued my solitary journey.

How I could have deceived myself into a belief of ever reaching Sydney, and particularly by travelling

in that direction, is to me astonishing; and even if I had found it possible to do so, of course I should, on my arrival there, have been confined as a runaway, and punished accordingly. The whole affair was, in fact, a species of madness.

During my first day's lonely march, I saw, at a distance, about a hundred natives, in and about some huts built of bark, and boughs of trees, and others of the tribe making toward me. Being greatly alarmed, I took to the river, and swam across it with my clothes on, and in so doing extinguished my fire-stick, so that I was deprived of the means to cook my food. This was a sad loss, not only as respected the way of making what I could obtain to eat, palatable, but of preserving my health, under the great privations to which I was subjected. I was glad however to observe the natives retiring from the bank of the river to their huts, instead of following me as I expected, and, with this consolation, when I had made my way to the beach, I laid myself down to sleep in the thick scrub, covering myself over with leaves, rushes, and broken boughs. It was a miserable night, my clothes being wet, and the weather cold, it being the early part of the spring of the year. At daylight, I endeavoured to ascertain if the natives were moving, as their huts and fires were within sight, and finding them not astir, I left my uncomfortable lodging, and took again to the beach.

As it was low tide, I found a considerable supply of the shell fish before mentioned, which the natives call Kooderoo; it is the same as the English describe as mutton fish. Its shape is something like that of the

oyster, but it is tougher, and larger, and consequently not so digestable. The shell is inlaid with what appears to be mother of pearl. These fish I was now obliged to eat raw, and having no fresh water I suffered exceedingly from thirst until the evening, when I reached the river Kaaraf, a stream of considerable width and depth, I there laid myself down for the night. It was one, far worse than the last, for I had taken off my clothes and hung them up in the trees to dry, covering myself with the long grass as my only shelter from the weather. The next day, I forded the Kaaraf, and having left it and taken to the bush, I suffered dreadfully during the day from thirst, having nothing to allay it but the dew from the boughs which I collected with my hands in passing. Even this supply was very uncertain, on account of the strong breezes which prevailed during the nights.

Continuing my course along the beach, I reached the Doorangwar River, where I took up my quarters in my usual manner, having the sky for my canopy, and the earthy scrub for my resting-place. I did so this night with increased anxiety, having seen several deserted native huts in my day's march, by which I concluded they were somewhere in the neighbourhood; on this account I had avoided going into the bush as much as possible, although compelled occasionally to leave the beach, in order to ford the rivers I had met with on my journey.

The following day I came to a stream the natives call Kuarka Dorla, without having seen any living creature excepting birds, and a few wild dogs; the

latter fled at my approach, but their dismal howlings, and especially during the night, added to the solitary wretchedness of my situation. Although so very short a time had elapsed since I commenced my gloomy pilgrimage, I began to find the weather, as I thought, warmer — as if I had travelled into another climate. This increased my thirst, and the consequent distress, which I could in no way alleviate, the streams I crossed being, even at low water, all brackish from the flow of the tide water. Added to this, my only food being shell fish, I suffered much, so exceedingly indeed, that almost regardless of life, I lay myself down for the night in a state of total exhaustion. With the morning's light, however, I pursued my journey, but this day I was more unfortunate than the one preceding, for I could not find a single fish, or particle of any other kind of food or water, and in great pain and misery that day ended. The following was one which I anticipated would be my last, for I could scarcely move my limbs along, and the stages I made, were in consequence, very short. At length I came to two rocks nearly close to each other on the beach; weary and tired, foot sore and nearly heart broken, I laid myself down between them. I had not been there long, when the tide came in so rapidly, that I found it necessary to climb some way up one of them, and remain there until it had receded. The descent was a work of difficulty, having now been three days without a particle of food or drop of fresh water: however, I resolved on making another effort to hobble along the beach, and at length came to the Mangowak, another salt water

stream which I forded. I found the natives had been burning the bush about this place, so I carefully examined it hoping to find some remains of fire; and, at length to my great joy, discovered a tree still smoking, and by this means again provided myself with a fire-stick. For a time, however, this was useless, as I had no kind of eatables to cook, and was still without fresh water. At length I discovered a high shrub bearing a kind of berry, many of which I knocked down; but not knowing what effect they might have upon me, I ate of them very sparingly. These berries I found very refreshing, and soon after I was so fortunate as to discover a native well near the bank of the stream, and close to the beach, in which there was excellent water — of which I drank abundantly. The Almighty indeed, appeared that day to favour me — especially, as I thought, in pity to my sufferings, for I found also a great supply of shell fish: so that I had now food, and fire, and water.

I should have mentioned, that when I parted company with my companions, one of them took with him the gun I spoke of, as having been brought with us from the encampment; indeed, I must here state, that if I omit to place any very precise details, in their particular order, I hope to be excused; because, so many years' wanderings must have impaired my recollection — except as to the more prominent and material incidents of my life.

At this spot I remained more than a week, perhaps it may have been two or three, for I seem henceforward to have lost all record of time, except by the return of

the seasons, and the rising and setting sun. With such luxurious living, for one in my situation, I soon recovered my strength, and be assured, I did not fail to offer up fervent prayers of thankfulness to the God who had hitherto sustained me, and for his support under the other trials and sufferings, to which I might be subjected. At this place it rained very heavily during a whole day and night; being the first that had fallen since my wanderings commenced, but I found a cavern near the beach, and in it I sheltered myself very comfortably. At length, being sufficiently recovered, I resolved on resuming my journey, and by keeping along the beach, found abundance of fish, but very little fresh water — the streams being all salt, or brackish.

In two days I came to a large rock, about a mile long, which the natives call Nooraki. It is sheltered by very high overhanging land, so that the sun seldom shines upon it, the tide apparently never receding from it, as the depth of water seemed to be always the same. I may consider this as being my first permanent resting-place; for the sort of food I had had since I left the ship, and particularly latterly, and the irregularity of my supplies, sometimes starving, and at others, eating to repletion, had occasioned sores, and painful eruptions to break out all over my body, so as to make walking very difficult and painful. I resolved therefore on remaining at this place until I was recovered, and particularly as there was a fine stream of fresh water rushing out of a high rock, near which, I had determined to erect a shelter of branches of trees, and

sea-weed. It was a work of great labour for a sick man, but I persevered and finally completed my sea-beach home in about three or four days; there I remained several months. In addition to my supply of shell fish, I found also in great abundance a creeping plant, the flavour of which is very much like that of the common water melon — rather insipid, but very refreshing. I also discovered a kind of currant, black and white, so that I fared sumptuously every day, and rapidly recovered my strength, mentally and bodily. I remember a fancy coming over me, that I could have remained at that spot all the rest of my life; but this solitary desire was but temporary, for, as it was never intended that man should live alone, so are implanted in his nature, social feelings, and thoughts instinctively leading to the comforts of home, be it ever so homely, and yearnings for society, be it ever so humble.

## CHAPTER II

DISCOVERED BY NATIVES — VISIT THE TRIBE —  
ALARMED BY SEA ELEPHANTS — NATIVE  
GRAVE — FOUND NEARLY DEAD BY NATIVE  
WOMEN, WHOSE HUSBANDS MAKE ME  
PRISONER — FIGHT — CORROBBERREE — UN-  
EXPECTEDLY FIND SOME VERY EXTRA-  
ORDINARY RELATIONS — THE FIRST PALETOT —  
ANOTHER BATTLE, IN WHICH MEN AND WOMEN  
ARE KILLED — BODIES BURNT — CHALLENGE TO  
FIGHT GIVEN AND ACCEPTED — ELOPEMENTS,  
AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES.

“He stood alone — beneath the deep dark shade  
Of the *Australian* forest, where the trees,  
A century old the youngest of them, made  
Hollow and mournful music in the breeze.”

ONE day when I was indulging in these meditations,  
and gazing round from my Robinson Crusoe hut  
upon the surface of the waters, I thought I heard the  
sound of human voices; and, on looking up, was some-  
what startled at seeing three natives standing on the  
high land immediately above me. They were armed  
with spears, and had opossum skins thrown over their  
shoulders, partially covering their bodies. Standing as  
they did, on an elevated position, armed too, and being  
myself totally defenceless, I confess I felt alarmed; so



that hoping I had not been seen, I crept into a crevice in a rock near at hand, where I endeavoured to conceal myself. They were however soon upon my track, and shouting what I considered to be a call for me to come out, I resolved to do so; indeed I could not have remained there long on account of the water. With but faint hopes of meeting with good treatment at their hands, I crawled out from my shelter, and surrendered at discretion. They gazed on me with wonder: my size probably attracting their attention. After seizing both my hands, they struck their breasts, and mine also, making at the same time a noise between singing and crying: a sort of whine, which to me sounded very like premeditated mischief. Pointing to my hut, they evinced a desire to examine it — so we entered. My new friends, if friends they were to be, made themselves very much at home, although uninvited. One made up a large fire, another threw off his rug and went into the sea for crayfish, which, on his return, he threw alive into the flame — at the same time looking at me with an expression as much as to intimate that they intended to grill me next, by way of a change of diet. I can afford to smile, and even laugh now at the recollection; but, at the time, I assure the reader, I was by no means satisfied with the prospect before me, or with my visitors. At length my suspense ended, by their taking the fish, fairly dividing them, and handing to me the first and best portion. Having finished our meal, they gave me to understand they wished me to follow them. To this I hesitated, not being satisfied as to their intentions, but after a time

consented. On leaving the hut, two of them went before, and having thus only one to contend against, I thought of making my escape, but my armed guard was too vigilant; so that, defenceless as I was, no safe opportunity was afforded. We proceeded in this way until we came to their huts, two small turf cabins — in each of which there was just room enough for two persons to lay at length under their shelter. It was nearly dark, and finding that I was to have my sentry friend beside me, and that the other two were to occupy the second cabin, my hopes revived — that during the night an opportunity for my escape would offer. He however did not sleep a wink, but kept muttering to himself all the night, so that by the morning I was fairly worn out by anxiety and watching. At daylight they gave me to understand they were going farther, and that I must accompany them. I, on the contrary, thought it safer to come to an understanding at once, and with this view, mustering all my resolution, I intimated a refusal, that I would not do so. After a warm discussion by signs, and, to both parties, by sufficiently significant sounds, they apparently consented that I should remain; but, as they wished me not to leave until their return, my old and nearly worn-out stockings were required by them as an assurance offering. This I steadily declined complying with, so that after sundry striking of the breasts, and stamping with the feet, they were content to leave me unmolested. I watched them until I thought the coast was clear, and then began to consider in what direction I should steer, for I had not now the beach as a guide for my

movements. Whilst thinking over the matter, one of them returned, bringing with him a rude kind of basket made of rushes. In it was some of the berries I have already mentioned, which he wished to barter for one of my much courted stockings. I however objected, being resolved on letting him know I was positive in that matter, hoping by so doing to give him a favourable opinion of my determination, on questions which might arise between us of greater consequence. Finding his negotiation useless, he left the fruit and followed his companions. When I thought them sufficiently far off, I took to my heels, in the direction, as I thought, for the sea coast, and fortunately I made it without much difficulty. Going musing along, I came to a high rock against which the waves were beating violently, the sea at the time being very tempestuous: it was a very grand but a dreary and melancholy scene. Whilst viewing it with a very aching and downcast heart and spirit, I observed a small rocky island a short distance from the beach, covered with the strangest looking animals I had ever seen. They appeared to be about four, or from four to six feet long, having a head similar to that of a pig, without feet, with tails like those of a fish, a large fin on each side, and a body covered with short glossy hair: I suppose them to be the fur seal, or sea elephant.

Finding night coming on, having no fire to warm me, and with so dreary a prospect of the future — without food of any kind — I began to repent having left the natives, and resolved on returning to their huts from whence I had made my escape. I accordingly

traced my way back, but on my arrival found they had not returned. After remaining some hours, I decided on going in the direction I supposed them to have taken, but after a weary march, I found I had completely lost myself, and very much distressed, I laid myself down for the night, within the shelter of a large hollow tree, such as are to be found in the Australian forests. Having secured a fire-stick during the day, I made a good fire, it being very cold, and raining heavily.

I remember I had no sleep that night, for my fire attracted the notice of the wild dogs and opossums, whose horrid howls and noises were such as to render sleep impossible. The cries of the latter were like the shrieks of children, appearing to be at times over me, and at others close to my ear. Under these circumstances, I hailed the daylight very thankfully, and then proceeded on my solitary way, endeavouring to get upon the trail of the natives, who, as I supposed, had gone in that direction. In this I was not successful, and having entangled myself in the labyrinths of the forest, in a country entirely unknown to me, I became at length lost, and remained so for three days, without a morsel of food, or a drop of water, excepting small quantities which I occasionally met with in the clay holes. When I laid myself down to rest hoping to sleep, the same unearthly noises appeared to have followed me, and my mind for want of relaxation was failing, as the minds of the strongest men will fail, under such circumstances. I continued to wander about in this way, subsisting upon succulent shrubs and berries,

until I came to a large lake, upon which I could see an abundance of ducks, and geese, and swans, and other wild fowl. From that lake I found a very considerable river flowing, as I concluded, toward the sea. I at once resolved to follow its course; and on reaching its entrance, saw the little rocky island already mentioned as having the seal, or sea elephants upon it; and it was a great comfort to me, to find myself once more not far from my old quarters where the three natives had left me. I soon after arrived at the turf cabins, having now acquired some acquaintance with the locality, and although suffering much from hunger, lay myself down and slept soundly. At daylight, I had the satisfaction to find some of the same kind of fruit the native had brought me in the rush basket. On these I made a great feast, and after remaining there that day, returned to my own hut on the beach. Here I must have remained many months — how long I cannot tell — subsisting as before; but at length it appeared likely that my supplies would fail, and I began again to reflect on my deplorable condition. My clothes were all in tatters, my shoes were worn out, my health was much impaired by want and exposure, and my spirits broken — so much so, that I determined on retracing my steps in order to regain the ship in the event of her remaining in the bay, and with the hopes of rejoining my companions, should they be still in existence. The winter was fast approaching, the weather had set in dreadfully cold and tempestuous, so that it was not without great difficulty I could go down amongst the rocks for shell fish, which, as I have

already said, were now, from some cause or other, getting very scarce in that locality. I therefore bade goodbye to my lonely habitation and started on my return.

One night, whilst travelling along the beach, I was completely bewildered, having been stopped in my progress by a high perpendicular rock stretching out from the cliffs some distance into the sea. The tide running in fast, my only chance of escape was by climbing the rock. This I did with great difficulty, and just above high water mark I found a large cavern, into which I crept for shelter. Having had no fire for some time I was again living upon such raw shell fish as I could find in each day's journey, and with these was making my wretched meal, when I found I had intruded upon the lodgings of some of the tenants of the deep, who could only reach their rocky quarters when the tide was at the highest. I was completely horrified and knew not what to do, as it was nearly dark, and they were waddling in at the entrance. To rush out, appeared to be nothing less than certain death; but happening to make a noise, it struck terror into them, and tumbling one over the other into the sea, they left me once more master of the cavern. I remained during the rest of the night undisturbed, and the following morning again pursued my weary way.

Being now very weak from the privations I had undergone, I could only make short distances during each day; and, as the nights were very cold, my sufferings were great, so much occasionally as to overpower my remaining strength and resolution. After several days I reached a stream which the natives call

Dooangawn, where I made myself a sort of shelter in the scrub, and in the morning saw a mound of earth, with part of a native's spear stuck upright on the top of it, to indicate its being a grave. I took the spear out and used it as a walking-stick to help me on my journey.

The next day I reached the Kaarof at high water. In attempting to swim across I had nearly lost my life, the stream being too rapid for my enfeebled state, so that I was carried some way down by the force of the current. I however succeeded in reaching the opposite bank, and then crawled on my hands and feet into the bush, where I laid myself down nearly exhausted, and perishing with cold and hunger, not expecting to see the light of another morning. In this state I lamented deeply the imprudence which had placed me in such a pitiable position, and prayed long and earnestly to God, for his merciful assistance and protection. All night the wild dogs howled horribly, as if expressing their impatience for my remains: even before death, I fancied they would attack me.

At daybreak I went again onward, looking for any kind of food by which to appease my hunger, and at length came to a place the natives call Maamart, where there is a lake, or large lagoon, surrounded by thickly growing scrub and timber. Whilst searching for the gum already mentioned, I was seen by two native women, who watched me unperceived. At length I threw myself down at the foot of a large tree to rest. On observing me thus prostrate, and helpless, these women went in search of their husbands with the intelligence that they had seen a very tall white man.

Presently they all came upon me unawares, and seizing me by the arms and hands, began beating their breasts, and mine, in the manner the others had done. After a short time, they lifted me up, and they made the same sign, giving me to understand by it, that I was in want of food. The women assisted me to walk, the men shouting hideous noises, and tearing their hair. When we arrived at their huts, they brought a kind of bucket, made of dry bark, into which they put gum and water, converting it by that means into a sort of pulp. This they offered me to eat, and I did so very greedily. They called me Murrangurk, which I afterwards learnt, was the name of a man formerly belonging to their tribe, who had been buried at the spot where I had found the piece of spear I still carried with me. They have a belief, that when they die, they go to some place or other, and are there made white men, and that they then return to this world again for another existence. They think all the white people previous to death were belonging to their own tribes, thus returned to life in a different colour. In cases where they have killed white men, it has generally been because they imagined them to have been originally enemies, or belonging to tribes with whom they were hostile. In accordance with this belief, they fancied me to be one of their tribe who had been recently killed in a fight, in which his daughters had been speared also. As I have before said, he was buried at the mound I saw, and my having the remains of his spear with me, confirmed them in this opinion. To this providential superstition, I was indebted for all the kindnesses afterwards shown me. In a short



time they went away, making signs for me to remain; and on returning, they brought with them several large fat grubs, which are found buried in decayed trees, and more particularly about the roots. These grubs they gave me to eat, and by this time, so changed was my palate, that I did so, thinking them delicious.

I remained with them all that night, but in great anxiety, not knowing their intentions. I thought several times of endeavouring to make my escape, but in my weak state it was impossible. The women were all the time making frightful lamentations and wailings — lacerating their faces in a dreadful manner. All this increased my anxiety and horror, which was added to in the morning, when I saw the frightful looking demons they had made themselves. They were covered with blood from the wounds they had inflicted, having cut their faces and legs into ridges, and burnt the edges with fire-sticks. I understood by their signs, and manner, that they wished me to accompany them to the tribe they had left to procure gum, which was in great abundance at the spot where they discovered me. I consented, and after journeying for some miles through the scrub, and over plains, we came to the Barwin, which we crossed, and then could plainly see the black heads of a number of natives amongst the reeds: appearing to me like a large flock of crows. About a hundred men came to meet us, but the women remained digging for roots, which they use as food: their huts being situated near an extensive lagoon. My friendly natives, or rather new acquaintance whom I had accompanied, took me to their

homes, which were merely branches of trees thrown across each other, with slips of tea-tree and pieces of bark placed over as an additional shelter. They motioned me to be seated, but I preferred at first keeping a standing position, in order to be the better able to watch their movements: in the mean time, the women behind the huts were all fighting with clubs and sticks. Presently the men, excepting the two with me, rushed toward them, in order to separate the combatants, after which they brought roots which they roasted and offered me. What the fight was about I could not understand, but think it must have originated in the unfair division of the food.

My presence now seemed to attract general attention; all the tribe, men and women, closed up around me, some beating their breasts and heads with their clubs, the women tearing off their own hair by handfuls. I was much alarmed, but they made me to understand these were the customs they followed, and that no harm to me was intended. This was the manner by which they evinced their sorrow when any of them died, or had been a long time absent; and, as they believed me to have been dead, they were lamenting the sufferings I must have undergone when I was killed, and, perhaps, until my reappearance again on this earth.

They eventually dispersed, leaving me in the charge of the two who had found me in my perilous situation. All was then quiet for about three hours, for they had gone, it seemed, to their respective huts to eat their roots; then there was a great noise amongst them, and

a trampling backwards and forward from hut to hut, as if something of importance was going on. I was naturally anxious at this, not knowing how it would all end; at last it came on night, and the boys and girls set to work making a very large fire, probably to roast me — who could tell? At any rate I supposed it not at all improbable, surrounded as I was by such a host of wild uncultivated savages: however that might be, it was impossible to escape, as I was too weak and terrified at the appearance of all around. At last all the women came out naked — having taken off their skin rugs, which they carried in their hands. I was then brought out from the hut by the two men, the women surrounding me. I expected to be thrown immediately into the flames; but the women having seated themselves by the fire, the men joined the assemblage armed with clubs more than two feet long; having painted themselves with pipe-clay, which abounds on the banks of the lake. They had run streaks of it round the eyes, one down each cheek, others along the forehead down to the tip of the nose, other streaks meeting at the chin, others from the middle of the body down each leg; so that altogether, they made a most horrifying appearance, standing round and about the blazing night fire. The women kept their rugs rolled tight up, after which, they stretched them between the knees, each forming a sort of drum. These they beat with their hands, as if keeping time with one of the men who was seated in front of them, singing. Presently the men came up in a kind of close column, they also beating time with their sticks, by knocking them one

against the other, making altogether a frightful noise. The man seated in front appeared to be the leader of the orchestra, or master of the band — indeed I may say, master of the ceremonies generally. He marched the whole mob, men and women, boys and girls, backwards and forwards at his pleasure, directing the singing and dancing, with the greatest decision and air of authority. This scene must have lasted at least three hours, when, as a wind-up, they gave three tremendous shouts, at the same time pointing to the sky with their sticks; they each shook me heartily by the hand, again beating their breasts, as a token of friendship. By this time I was greatly relieved in my mind, finding no injury to me was contemplated, and particularly when they all dispersed to their huts, and I was left again with my guardians.

The reader, in these colonies, will be aware that what I had witnessed was nothing more than a great corrobberree, or rejoicing, at my having come to life again, as they supposed. After eating some roots I lay down by the side of my new friends, and although so recently highly excited, yet I enjoyed a sleep undisturbed by dreams, either of the past, the present, or the future. In reality, nature had been exhausted by hunger, thirst, and continued apprehension. In the morning I rose greatly refreshed, and found the tribe upon the move, gathering roots and spearing eels, a few only remaining with me in the encampment. I observed, that one man was dispatched on some errand, and as he was leaving, they pointed out to me the way he was going for some particular kind of food,

or on a message to another tribe, in which message I was in some way or other interested.

Finding myself now tolerably at home, I evinced a desire to make myself useful, by fetching water, carrying wood, and so forth. I went to the river one day for the purpose of having a bathe, but was not long absent before I was missed and an alarm raised; for they thought I had deserted. Search was made in all directions, and just as I returned the messenger came back who had been sent away, as I supposed, to another tribe, bringing with him a young man; who came, as it appeared, to invite the others to their encampment. The following day therefore, our tribe left the borders of the lagoon, taking me with them, and after a tramp through the bush of a few miles, we arrived and took up our quarters, not with the strangers, but at some distance from them, where we erected our temporary huts, or shelters for the night. I was soon afterwards transferred to the charge of a man and woman of the tribe we had come to visit; the man being brother to the one who had been killed, from whose grave I had taken the spear; the woman was my new guardian's wife, and the young man who had visited us, was their son; and, consequently, according to their order of thinking, my very respectable and interesting nephew. It may be taken as certain, that I looked on him, as a very unaccountable relative, one I little thought of meeting in such a place, or in that manner; at any rate there was one consolation; if he was not very wise after the fashion of more civilized men, he could not display great foolishness in

his expenditure; and, that there was, therefore, no great chance of his uncle's having to pay his tailor's, or other bills: a consolation many uncles would be very glad to possess with equal security.

That night there was another great corrobberree, with shakes of the hand, and congratulation at my return. When these ceremonies were over, I went with my new relations to their hut, where they hospitably regaled me with roots, and gum, and with opossum roasted after their fashion. This was the first animal food I had taken since parting with my companions from the *Calcutta*, and it was to me a most delicious feast. They presented me also with an opossum-skin rug, for which I gave my new sister-in-law my old jacket in exchange, although it was by this time very much the worse for wear. I need scarcely say, this paletôt added much to the elegance of her appearance, or, that these interchanges of attractive civility had great effect in cementing our family acquaintance.

At break of day, I heard a great noise and talking; at length I saw that a quarrel had ensued, for they began to flourish their spears as a token of hostilities. I should here observe, that these spears are very formidable weapons, about twelve feet long, sharp at one end; others are about half that length, being made of a kind of reed with pointed sticks joined to them; these are sharpened with hard cutting stones, or shells. The boomerang is another weapon of war, something like a half-moon. The throwing-stick is one made, or shaped, for flinging the spears.

The colonial reader is aware of all this, but I beg

him, or her, to remember, that I cherish the hope of my adventures being read elsewhere, as well as in the Australian colonies; and that this circumstance will be received as a sufficient apology for the insertion of particulars, which, otherwise, might very properly be considered useless.

After a little time, and a great deal of challenging bluster, the two tribes commenced fighting in reality. When my relations, for so for convenience, I suppose, I must sometimes call them, saw what was going on, they led me a short distance off, where they remained with me, looking at the conflict. It was anything but play work — it was evidently earnest. One man was speared through the thigh, and removed into the bush, where the spear was drawn. A woman of the tribe to which I had become attached, was also speared under the arm, and she died immediately. At last peace was restored, and the parties separated, except about twenty of the tribe to which the woman belonged who had been killed; these made a large fire, threw her body upon it, and then heaped on more wood, so that she was burnt to ashes; this done, they raked the embers of the fire together, and stuck the stick she used to dig roots with upright at the head. After this ceremony they all left, except my supposed relations, in whose care I was, and one other family, with whom we went into another part of the bush, where we remained for a considerable time without anything particular occurring, subsisting almost entirely upon roots which the women sought daily, whilst the men procured opossums occasionally, which they dragged

from the hollow and decayed branches of trees. They sometimes speared kangaroo, which they skin with sharp stones and muscle-shells. That was the first time I tasted the flesh of the boomer, and found it very excellent. Relying upon my friendship, they now furnished me with a spear, and a wooden tomahawk. In a few weeks — but as I have already said, I have now no recollection of time — we left this place, and joined a friendly tribe, about fifty in number, and on the evening of our meeting had a corrobberree. The next day we all started together to meet another tribe; but on joining, from some cause or other, they quarrelled, commenced fighting, and two boys were killed. I could not then understand what all these quarrels were about, but afterwards understood that they were occasioned by the women having been taken away from one tribe by another; which was of frequent occurrence. At other times they were caused by the women willingly leaving their husbands, and joining other men, which the natives consider very bad.

When these fights occurred, I was always kept in the rear. After the skirmish just mentioned was over, the tribe to whom the boys belonged retired farther into the bush, when we made our huts, as I have described, with boughs and bark. Suddenly in the night, the others came upon our party and drove us away. The bodies of the two boys who were killed were laying in one of the huts, so they cut off their legs and thighs, carrying them away; the remains of their bodies our people burned in the usual manner; we then left for the seaside. Soon after a messenger



was sent to another tribe, with whom they had a quarrel about the women; the message was to say they would meet them at a certain place to fight it out. In about four days he returned, with information that the challenge was accepted; so we went there, I, of course, not then being conscious of what we were going for. On our arrival at the battle ground, about twenty miles distant, we found five different tribes all collected together, and ready for action. The fight commenced immediately, and it lasted about three hours, during which three women were killed — for strange to say, the females in these quarrels generally suffered the most. These continual contests alarmed me, for the contending parties were always pointing toward me, as if I had been their origin; and I again began to think I should be sacrificed as a peace offering. Quiet was at length restored, and the tribe we had joined separated from the others, and came toward where I was standing. Having formed themselves into a sort of guard, they marched me back to the other tribe, who placed themselves in square, on the spot where the fight had been. On our arrival solemn silence was observed — not even a whisper was uttered, but all eyes were directed toward me, and I again felt that some serious event might be expected, in which my safety was involved. I had a few minutes before seen women and boys murdered in their fury, and it was natural for me to feel alarm under such circumstances. After a while, they all began talking together rapidly, shaking their spears, and jumping wildly about, as if they were going mad; this ended, they gave three loud shouts, and

returned to their respective huts — so I was relieved from my fears once more. In the morning, I found the other tribe had gone away, and soon after we left for the place my friends chiefly inhabited, and there we lived for a very long time unmolested, and without anything particular occurring. We remained in peace and quietness, until a messenger came from another tribe, saying we were to meet them some miles off. Their method of describing time is by signs on the fingers — one man of each party marking the days by chalkings on the arm, and then rubbing one off as each day passes. After travelling two or three days, we arrived at the appointed place, and found there a great number assembled, not one of whom I had seen before; and that evening we had the usual corrobberree. In the morning we all went on a hunting excursion in perfect good humour, so that I had nothing to apprehend. It was a kangaroo hunt, and, as this was the first I had been at, I looked on with great interest, for I began to consider myself, by compulsion, a native, and to take a part in all their exercises. Considerable dexterity is used by them in catching and killing kangaroo; for they place themselves at particular spots and distances, so as to drive them into corners like flocks of sheep, and then they spear them without difficulty. We killed several very large ones, on which, with roasted roots, we made a great feast. After that, they all pipe-clayed themselves, and had another corrobberree, and then, as usual, began to throw their spears about. This I thought would end in mischief, and the women appeared to think so too, for they ran into their huts. My guardians, as a precaution, took me with them.

Nothing serious, however, occurred that night. In the morning it appeared that the Pootmaroo tribe had taken two women from the Yaawangis in the course of the night; or that they had gone away willingly with their seducers. The consequence was another fight, but it ended without bloodshed. The affair, however, was not forgotten. After that, the tribes separated, each going to its respective locality.

## CHAPTER III

HUNTING THE KANGAROO, EMU, AND OPOSSUM —  
WILD DOGS — HAVING THE BEST OF A BAR-  
GAIN — SPEARING FISH — EEL CATCHING —  
MANNER OF COOKING — GENERAL FIGHT:  
SEVERAL NATIVES KILLED — DISPOSAL OF THE  
DEAD — SUPERSTITIOUS CEREMONIES — RE-  
FLECTIONS ON SAVAGE LIFE — SWAN HUNT-  
ING — GATHERING EGGS — THE BUNYIP —  
MORE CORROBBERREES, FIGHTS, AND MURDERS.

“Outcast and hopeless, here I dwell,  
A dreary desert where I roam.”

I NOW began to understand something of their language: of their customs I had seen quite enough; but what could I do? — how could I escape?

We next joined the Bengali tribe, and went with them to their hunting ground, a place surrounded by the sea and the Barwin River — each tribe having its particular locality, which they considered a sort of inheritance. Here we erected our huts, and killed a great number of kangaroo. By eating this food continually, I soon recovered my usual health and strength; for my friends, in their kindness, always served me with the the choicest portion of everything they had; so that I had great occasion to be thankful. That I was sufficiently grateful to the Almighty, who

had so wonderfully preserved me through such extraordinary sufferings and dangers, I cannot say; for my early notions of religion had been nearly destroyed by the unsettled life I had led, and the want of proper moral instruction. The excellent precepts instilled into my mind by my good old grandfather and grandmother had been long since neutralized, or smothered in the camp, in riotous company, and in the bad society into which I had been thrown by my imprudence. Nevertheless, in the wilderness, as I have already said, I often prayed earnestly and fervently to the great Creator of the Universe for health, and strength, and forgiveness.

At this time we killed an emu, a sort of ostrich, a bird of very large size, and excellent for its flavour. It cannot rise upon the wing, but runs with amazing swiftness.

After staying on this hunting ground for some months, I know not how long, we started again for a new locality, our supplies of game beginning to fall short in consequence of our continued hunting. Having arrived at a place good for this purpose, as they thought, we pitched, or rather erected our bark tents, having killed two immense large wild dogs on our way. The limbs of these animals they broke, and flinging them on the fire, they kept them there until the hair was singed, they then took out the entrails, and roasted the bodies between heated stones, covering them over with sheets of bark and earth. After this process, which lasted two hours, they were ready for eating, and were considered a dish fit for an exquisite. They handed me a leg of one, as the best part, but I could not fancy

it; and on my smelling it, and turning up my nose, they were much amused, laughing away at a great rate. No doubt, they thought my having died and been made white had strangely altered my taste in such matters. As for themselves, they set to work with great zest, making all the time motions to me to fall too also. At length, I exchanged my portion with a neighbour, who gave me for my dog's leg a fine piece of kangaroo, my friend laughing very much at the idea of having the best of the bargain.

The natives consider the wild dogs, and kangaroo rats, great luxuries. They take the former whilst young, and tame them for hunting. The man who kills the game seldom claims the first portion of it, but of the second animal speared, if it be a kangaroo, he has the head, and tail, and best part of the back and loins. As for myself, they always gave me a share, whether I hunted with them or not.

My not being able to talk with them they did not seem to think at all surprising — my having been made white after death, in their opinion, having made me foolish; however, they took considerable pains to teach me their language, and expressed great delight when I got hold of a sentence, or even a word, so as to pronounce it somewhat correctly; they then would chuckle, and laugh, and give me great praise.

I now became a tolerable efficient sportsman, being able to throw the spear, and handle the tomahawk very adroitly. They also instructed me in every art they knew. They taught me to skin the kangaroo and opossums with muscle-shells, in the same way sheep are

dressed with the knife; to stretch and dry them in the sun; to prepare the sinews for sewing them together for rugs; and to trim them with pieces of flint. I became, also, expert at catching eels, by spearing them in the lakes and rivers; but in the latter they generally catch them with lines — the bait being a large earth worm. Having these worms ready, they get a piece of elastic bark, and some long grass, on which they string them; this is tied to a rod, and as the eel, after biting, holds on tenaciously, he is thrown or rather jerked upon the bank, in the same way as boys catch the cray-fish in England. Some of these eels are very fine, and large. They are generally — and more easily — caught by the natives during the night, and are eaten roasted. They used to take me out on calm evenings to teach me how to spear salmon, bream, etc. Their manner is to get some very dry sticks, cut them into lengths of ten or twelve feet, tie several of these together into a kind of faggot, and then light the thickest end; with this torch blazing in one hand, and a spear in the other, they go into the water, and the fish seeing it, crowd round and are easily killed and taken. This — as the reader is perhaps aware — is the general practice throughout all the world: and I mention the custom merely as one amongst others. They cook their fish by roasting, but they do so somewhat more carefully than their other food; for they put thick layers of green grass on the hot ashes, and lay their fish upon them, covering them with another layer, and then some hot ashes upon the top. In this way they bake as well — but not so cleanly — as in an oven.

Before we left this place, we were unexpectedly intruded upon by a very numerous tribe, about three hundred. Their appearance, coming across the plain, occasioned great alarm, as they were seen to be the Waarengbadawá, with whom my tribe was at enmity. On their approach, our men retreated into the lake, and smeared their bodies all over with clay, preparatory to a fight. The women ran with their children into the bush, and hid themselves, and being a living dead man, as they supposed, I was told to accompany them. On the hostile tribe coming near, I saw they were all men, no women being amongst them. They were smeared all over with red and white clay, and were by far the most hideous looking savages I had seen. In a very short time the fight began, by a shower of spears from the contending parties. One of our men advanced singly, as a sort of champion; he then began to dance and sing, and beat himself about with his war implements; presently they all sat down, and he seated himself also. For a few minutes all was silent; then our champion stood up, and commenced dancing and singing again. Seven or eight of the savages — for so I must call them — our opponents, then got up also, and threw their spears at him; but, with great dexterity, he warded them off, or broke them every one, so that he did not receive a single wound. They then threw their boomerangs at him, but he warded them off also, with ease. After this, one man advanced, as a sort of champion from their party, to within three yards of him, and threw his boomerang, but the other avoided the blow by falling on his hands and knees, and



instantly jumping up again he shook himself like a dog coming out of the water. At seeing this, the enemy shouted out in their language "enough," and the two men went and embraced each other. After this, the same two beat their own heads until the blood ran down in streams over their shoulders.

A general fight now commenced, of which all this had been the prelude, spears and boomerangs flying in all directions. The sight was very terrific, and their yells and shouts of defiance very horrible. At length one of our tribe had a spear sent right through his body, and he fell. On this, our fellows raised a war cry; on hearing which, the women threw off their rugs, and each armed with a short club, flew to the assistance of their husbands and brothers; I being peremptorily ordered to stay where I was: my supposed brother's wife remaining with me. Even with this augmentation, our tribe fought to great disadvantage, the enemy being all men, and much more numerous.

As I have said in the early part of this narrative, I had seen skirmishing and fighting in Holland; and knew something therefore, of what is done when men are knocking one another about with powder and shot, in real earnest, but the scene now before me was much more frightful — both parties looking like so many devils turned loose from Tartarus. Men and women were fighting furiously, and indiscriminately, covered with blood; two of the latter were killed in this affair, which lasted without intermission for two hours; the Waarengbadawás then retreated a short distance, apparently to recover themselves. After this, several

messages were sent from one tribe to the other, and long conversations were held — I suppose on the matters in dispute.

Night approaching, we retired to our huts, the women making the most pitiable lamentations over the mangled remains of their deceased friends. Soon after dark the hostile tribe left the neighbourhood; and, on discovering this retreat from the battle ground, ours determined on following them immediately, leaving the women and myself where we were. On approaching the enemy's quarters, they laid themselves down in ambush until all was quiet, and finding most of them asleep, laying about in groups, our party rushed upon them, killing three on the spot, and wounding several others. The enemy fled precipitately, leaving their war implements in the hands of their assailants and their wounded to be beaten to death by boomerangs, three loud shouts closing the victors triumph.

The bodies of the dead they mutilated in a shocking manner, cutting the arms and legs off, with flints, and shells, and tomahawks.

When the women saw them returning, they also raised great shouts, dancing about in savage exstacy. The bodies were thrown upon the ground, and beaten about with sticks — in fact, they all seemed to be perfectly mad with excitement; the men cut the flesh off the bones, and stones were heated for baking it; after which, they greased their children with it, all over. The bones were broken to pieces with tomahawks, and given to the dogs, or put on the boughs of trees for the birds of prey hovering over the horrid scene.

Having apparently gratified their feelings of revenge, they fetched the bodies of their own two women who had been killed; these they buried with the customary ceremonies.

They dug two round graves with their sticks, about four feet deep, then coiled up the bodies, tying them in their skin rugs, and laying them in the holes, with some boughs, and filling them up with earth: a ring being made round each place by clearing away, and lighting fires. After raking up the ashes over each, the sticks which they had used for digging roots were put over them, as I have already described the spears of the men are, who are killed.

They have an idea that they will want them when they come to life again, and the fire left they think will do for them to cook their roots with. Of this provision they generally leave a few days' supply, and whenever they pass near these graves they re-light the fires. The bodies are laid on their sides when they bury them, in the same manner as they mostly lie when living.

We remained by the graves the remainder of that day and the next night, and then proceeded to the borders of another large lake, which they call Yawangcontes, in the centre of an extensive plain. There we made our huts with reeds and stones, there being no wood; so bare was it indeed, that we had to go nearly three miles for fuel to cook our food with. We remained there for many months; perhaps for a year or two, for I had lost all recollection of time. I knew nothing about it in fact, except by the return of the seasons. I had almost given up all hope of ceasing

my savage life, and as man accustoms himself to the most extraordinary changes of climate and circumstances, so I had become a wild inhabitant of the wilderness, almost in reality. It is very wonderful, but not less strange than true. Almost entirely naked, enduring nearly every kind of privation, sleeping on the ground month after month, year after year, and deprived of all the decencies, and comforts of life, still I lived on, only occasionally suffering from temporary indisposition. I look back now mentally to those times, and think it perfectly miraculous how it could have been.

After this very long stay, we received a message to visit another very large lake, many miles round, which they call Kongiadgillock. On one side it is very rocky, and on the other are extensive plains, lightly timbered. About four miles from the shore is a small island about two miles square; this island may be reached on one side the lake, the water being only knee deep, a high bank running out from the shore towards it, and forming a sort of isthmus. On this island we found an immense number of swans and other wild birds. We made our huts a short distance from the tribe who had invited us to visit them, and here we had as many swan's eggs as we could consume; and there were many more: they were the first I had eaten, and I thought them, by way of change, a great treat. The first day we passed at our new locality; the other tribe said they would take us home with them and have a corrobberree, after visiting the island. On arriving there we found it literally covered with eggs, so that we very

soon filled all our rush baskets; they were laying about in heaps, there being nothing like nests. Our friends whom we visited, allowed us to fill our baskets first, and then they loaded theirs. This continued for several days, and each night we had a corroborree. At length the tribe left us, apparently in great haste, but for what cause I could not make out, but I anticipated mischief from their manner, and thought some dispute had occurred amongst them on one of the days when I did not go with them to the island. Our tribe did not interfere in any way. At length we started further up the lake, and arrived at a part that is very narrow. Here we killed a great many swans, which were served out to each family according to its wants; their method of dressing these birds is by roasting, as before described. The next day the women separated from the men, and painted themselves all over with white clay; and the men did so with red, at the same time ornamenting themselves with emu feathers, which they tied round their waists: they were in every other way quite naked. Some of them acted as musicians, beating their skin rugs with sticks, which they stretched across their knees, whilst they were squatted on the ground. They then set up a dance, the men remaining as spectators, encouraging them with cheers, and all sorts of noises. This diversion finished, as usual, with a regular fight, beating each other about with their clubs most unmercifully. I afterwards understod this quarrel to be occasioned by a woman having been forcibly carried away by another tribe: one of those with us. She was living with the man who had taken

her, and, as the man and woman were then both present, they wanted to chastise her for not returning to the tribe to which she belonged. In the skirmish this woman was felled by a heavy blow; seeing this, the men began to prepare for a fight also; one man threw a boomerang amongst the women, when they all ran away. The native who had stolen the girl, then came forward by himself and told them to take their revenge on him, and began to sing and jump and dance, upon which her father went up to him. They both remained quiet for some time, when the men called out to the father, telling him to let him have her, as the man she had been promised to was not worthy of her. Eventually the girl returned to her father. She appeared to be about fifteen years of age, and certainly was no beauty to fight about.

We next went about forty miles, I should think, to a place they call Kironamaat; there is near to it a lake about ten miles in circumference. It took us several days to accomplish this march, as we hunted all the way; we halted near a well of fresh water, the lake being brackish, and there was a great plain near us. We here made nets with strips of bark, and caught with them great quantities of shrimps. We lived very sumptuously and in peace for many months at this place, and then went to the borders of another lake, called Moodewarri: the water of which was perfectly fresh, abounding in large eels, which we caught in great abundance. In this lake, as well as in most of the others inland, and in the deep water rivers, is a very extraordinary amphibious animal, which the natives

call Bunyip, of which I could never see any part, except the back, which appeared to be covered with feathers of a dusky grey colour. It seemed to be about the size of a full grown calf, and sometimes larger; the creatures only appear when the weather is very calm, and the water smooth. I could never learn from any of the natives that they had seen either the head or tail, so that I could not form a correct idea of their size; or what they were like.

Before we left this place a Bihar, or messenger, came to us; he had his arms striped with red clay, to denote the number of days it would take us to reach the tribe he came from; and the proposed visit was, for us to exchange with them, eels for roots. The time stated for this march would be fourteen days, and the place was called Bermongo, on the Barwin River. We carried our fish in kangaroo skins, and reaching the appointed place of rendezvous, we found about eighty men, women, and children gathered together. The exchange was made in this way; two men of each party delivered the eels and roots, on long sheets of bark, carrying them on their heads, from one side to the other, and so on, until the bargain was concluded. In the evening there was another great corrobberree, and the next morning a fight; because one of the women had run away with a man, leaving her husband. It resulted by her being speared very badly. After a short time the tribes separated, making an appointment to meet again for an exchange of food.

From this place we went to Beangala, which is now called Indented Heads, where we remained some

months, until the time had arrived when we agreed to return for the exchange of fish for roots. On this occasion, however, we took kangaroo instead, to a place called Liblib, by the side of a large lake of shallow water, surrounded by reeds, and which they call Bangeballa. Whilst I was at this place, there was one of the most severe hail storms I think man ever saw. The stones were so very large as to strip the bark off the trees as they descended.

Their language had now become familiar to me, and I began to learn by degrees, and by frequent intercourse with the various tribes, something about my shipmates, and former companions. It seemed, that one of them, having, after a few days, separated from the others, was found by the natives and kindly relieved by them; but after some time, they — as it was said — had reason to be jealous of him — he having made too free with their women — so they killed him. The others I never heard anything more about until my arrival in Van Diemen's Land.



## CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES — DESTRUCTION OF CHILDREN — THE CONSEQUENCES OF JEALOUSY — ANOTHER BATTLE — ANOTHER MODE OF DISPOSING OF THE DEAD — DESCRIPTION OF NATIVES — SUPERSTITIONS — ORIGIN OF FIRE — WAR IMPLEMENTS — MURDEROUS ASSAULT — CANNIBALISM.

“My far off friends, whose memories fill  
My throbbing bosom — do they speak  
Of him whose heart is with them still,  
Though joy has ceased to light his cheek?”

**T**HE only ceremonies they use preparatory to marriage are, in the first place, to get the parents' consent, the suitor's best claim is being a good fighter, and an expert hunter — so as to be able to protect and provide for a family. They are not at all particular as to the number of wives such men have; consequently some have five or six wives, and others none at all. If a man wishes to have a man's grown up sister for a wife, he must give his own — if he has one — in exchange; but they are very averse to marrying one of their own relations — even of a distant degree. If a woman is supposed to have a child who is not her husband's, they consider it a great disgrace; and to the

infant, death is almost certain. If again, a family increases too rapidly, for instance, if a woman has a child within twelve months of a previous one, they hold a consultation amongst the tribe she belongs to, as to whether it shall live or not; but if the father insists upon the life of the child being spared, they do not persist in its destruction, and especially if it is a female. At their confinements they receive no assistance whatever, but so soon as the child comes into the world, they wrap it up in a piece of skin rug; and, if on a journey, move on; it has no nourishment but the breast. They name them according to any circumstance that may happen; perhaps after the lake, or river they are near; or any accident or event which may have occurred — the whole family changing their names also, until another child is born — when they change again.

It will be seen by the foregoing, that jealousy is the prevalent cause of all their quarrels, for the women and the men are equally under the influences of the green-eyed monster. In the fights, however, which ensue, the poor women get much the worst of it, for after having had their furious combats amongst themselves, the husbands think it necessary to turn too also, and thrash them into quietude.

The meetings of different tribes, I found were not solely for the purpose of exchanging food, but for the very laudable purpose of *bringing out* their very elegant, amiable, marriageable daughters, to be seen and known, and of course, courted. By this very natural process, much ill-will and wild desperate passions are

unfortunately excited — so that wounds, not only of the heart, but of the head, and frightful murders ensue; some of them never to be forgiven, until a fearful revenge has followed.

Previous to breaking up from our present ground there was another battle, so that when the other tribe left, one of ours stole after them in the night and speared a man dead, who was sleeping in his hut beside his wife; he sent his spear right through him into the ground, for no other cause than that the murdered man had promised him his daughter years before, and had then given her to another. Having had his revenge he returned, and boasted of what he had done, upon which his relations and particular friends left the place, apparently apprehending an attack. The next morning, those who remained went to the tribe to which the murdered man belonged, and found him rolled up in his rug, ready to be tied up in a tree — a mode of disposing of the dead, who were not enemies, unknown to me before. They selected a strong, if not a lofty tree, and in the branches, about twelve feet up, they placed some logs and branches across, and sheets of bark; on these they laid the body with the face upwards, inclining toward the setting sun, and over it was placed some more bark and boughs, and then logs as heavy as the branches would bear; all this being done to protect the body from the birds of prey. Whilst this was going on, the women sat round the tree joining with the widow in the most bitter lamentations, pitiable to hear. A fire was, as usual, made all round this extraordinary tomb, and at that side in particular

which was nearest to the sun at its setting, so that he might have, in the morning, not only the sun's rays, but the fire to cheer and warm him. All things being completed, one word was uttered, "animadiate," which means, he is gone to be made a white man, but not for ever. The murdered man appeared to have been an especial favourite, and the mourning was long and very general. The hair of all was cut short with sharp shells — both men and women daubing themselves with clay, and the latter crying very lamentably throughout the night. I was much distressed at all this, for their grief was genuine, and the poor creatures had no Christian comfort or hope to fall back upon.

I suffered much mentally, so that I determined on once more attempting my escape, being sick at heart, and of these scenes altogether, for scarcely a month had passed without their being repeated. My guardians, or I may again say, my relations, according to their superstitious fashion, however assured me nothing should happen to me, under the circumstances by which I had *returned* amongst them.

After a long conversation, the following morning we parted with the other tribe, apparently on friendly terms, and at length joined the rest of our people who had left us, and having crossed the Barwin, had gone as far as a spot called Biarhoo, where we halted. Very angry discussions arose about the murdered man, and at one time it appeared that the savage who had slain him would be served in a similar manner; but after awhile we all moved on to a place they call Godocut, near the seaside, where we pitched our bark huts on

a high projecting piece of land, from whence we could command an extensive view, so that no strangers could approach us unobserved. They evidently expected a hostile visit from some of the friends of the man who had been killed, and kept a good look-out for mischief. At this spot, however, nothing was to be had to eat but shell fish; so we soon left for another about eight miles distant, going through a very thick scrub to reach it, which occasioned me great pain — my trousers being almost useless, and the skin rug being my only upper covering. Here we settled down for a few days, near two fresh water wells, hunting opossums and digging roots.

Our next journey was to Palac Palac, a halting place in some very extensive plains, with here and there a tree upon them, where we remained many months, there being plenty of animal food and a good deal of fish in the water-holes.

Great anxiety was still felt about our safety, and watch was kept night and day, to prevent surprise. One day a numerous tribe was seen crossing the plains coming in our direction, and all our party took to their heels for the nearest shelter, where we remained all the night with nothing to eat, for the natives seldom provide for their wants beforehand. The next morning several of our people were sent out to reconnoitre, and not returning all that day and the next night, considerable apprehension was felt at their absence. The following day, however, they brought the satisfactory intelligence, that the party we had seen were not enemies, but part of a tribe with which we were on

friendly terms, who had halted about thirteen miles on. Our messengers brought with them some fire-sticks, so that we were again able to make fires to cook our food — having, in our hasty flight, left ours behind us, at the place to which we now returned.

After some time, a messenger came to say the friendly tribe had found a great abundance of eels, in the lagoon near which they had encamped, and that they wished us to come and share in their good fortune. This is customary amongst those tribes who are friendly with each other; so we accepted the invitation and joined them that day. Being now in considerable strength, we did not fear attack, and it afterwards proved there was no occasion for apprehension, as the friends of the murdered native never sought revenge for the deed. Being in such excellent quarters, and in perfect safety — excepting occasional domestic quarrels — there was nothing to disturb the general tranquillity; and, consequently, I became daily more acquainted with their language and habits. By way of relieving the monotony of this narrative, I may as well, therefore, here relate a few particulars.

The natives inhabiting that part of the coast of New Holland, round Port Phillip, now known as the colony of Victoria, are generally of a middle stature, with a dark complexion; but not so dark as those of warmer latitudes. Their forms and features are not strikingly handsome certainly, but many of them would be good-looking, did they not make such horrid frights of themselves by plastering their hair and daubing their faces and bodies all over with pipe-clay and ochre.

Their hair is not curly like the African, but straight, looking terribly unsentimental. In fact, every hair of the head appears to be deranged, or out of temper with its owner; and well it may be, for it gets frightfully cut and hacked about, sometimes by shells, and flints, and such like; besides being made the abode of certain living tormentors, which it would be unparliamentary to mention, or describe more particularly. They are not at all nice about their food; all kinds of beasts, and fish, and fowl, reptile, and creeping thing — although when alive poisonous — being acceptable. It is quantity, not quality with them.

They have no notion of a Supreme Being, although they have of an after life, as in my case; and they do not offer up any kind of prayer, even to the sun or moon, as is customary with most other uncivilized people. They have a notion, that the world is supported by props, which are in the charge of a man who lives at the farthest end of the earth. They were dreadfully alarmed on one occasion when I was with them, by news passed from tribe to tribe, that unless they could send him a supply of tomahawks for cutting some more props with, and some more rope to tie them with, the earth would go by the run, and all hands would be smothered. Fearful of this, they began to think, and enquire, and calculate, where the highest mountains were, and how to get at them, and on them, so as to have some chance of escape from the threatened danger. Notwithstanding this forethought, they set to work to provide the needful, and succeeded in this way. Passing on the word to the tribes along the

coast, some settlers at a very great distance were robbed of axes, and saws, and rope, and tiers of dray wheels; all of which were forwarded on from tribe to tribe, to the old gentleman on the other side; and, as was supposed, in time to prevent the capsizing, for it never happened. A tribute of this description is paid whenever possible; but who the knowing old juggling receiving thief is, I could never make out. However, it is only one of the same sort of robberies which are practised in the other countries of what is called Christendom; and as I have no particular wish to dwell upon them in this narrative, let us pass on.

Their notion of the origin of fire is this, that as a native woman was digging at an ant hill one day, for the purpose of getting their eggs for eating, a crow flying over her dropped something like dry grass, which immediately blazed, and set a tree on fire. For this reason, they very much respect the Waakee, as they called the bird, and do not kill and eat him, unless pressed by necessity.

I will now describe their war and hunting implements, and then continue my everyday narrative of events.

The spear which they use, is from ten to fifteen feet long, and is made of a solid piece of wood, very sharp at the point — some having rows of teeth; these are called jagged spears, because they cannot be easily extracted from either man or beast. The natives call them Karnwell. There is also a smaller kind, the Daar spear, used in hunting; it is made of two pieces of wood, fastened together with the sinews of the kangaroo.



They are very sharp at the point, and have a white flint stone on each side, fastened in, and on, with gum. These they throw an amazing distance and with great force, seldom missing their aim at a kangaroo when bounding past at full speed, and at fifty paces distance. There is also another kind of spear but it is chiefly used in warfare; it is a very dry piece of wood inserted into a piece of strong reed; it, altogether, being nearly seven feet long, and bound together by the sinews of the kangaroo. They have another instrument called the marriwan, having at the smaller end a sort of hook. The boomerang, or wangaam, as they are called, is made from a solid piece of wood formed in the shape of a half-moon; this they hurl at their antagonists with great force, holding it at one end before letting it go spinning against the enemy. They have a kind of shield also made of wood, a broad solid piece of about three feet long, tapering at each end, with a handle cut in the side, so as to admit the hand. These shields, which they call malka, are used very dexterously in warding off spears and blows from the waddie, or koor, a piece of wood very much resembling a cricket bat. And then there is the jeangwell, another piece of wood cut into a half-square at one end, with a handle to it and a knob at the end. These two war weapons are excellent at close quarters.

Now readers, let us go back to the plain where I said we were living in peace and with great abundance of food for many months; of course, travelling about that particular locality occasionally as it suited our purposes, either for hunting, or for mere pleasure.

Getting tired at length of the sameness of food, we all left and travelled about twenty miles, as I suppose, into the bush, to a place called Boordek, where opossums were plentiful. My brother-in-law, as he considered himself to be, had shown me how to ascertain when these animals were up the trees, and how the natives took them; this was, in the first place, by breathing hard on the bark, so as to discover if there was any opossum hairs left attached to it when the animal ascended. This found, he next cut a notch in the bark with his tomahawk, in which to insert his toe, and then another notch, holding the tomahawk in his mouth after making the incision, and so on upwards; by this means climbing the highest trees, and dragging the animals out of their holes, and off the branches by their legs and tails, and then throwing them down to me at the foot; my business being to kill, and carry them. At the former I was tolerably expert, so that he often cried out from aloft, Merrijig; which means well done. We lived in clover at this place, getting plenty of opossums, and a very excellent root, which, when roasted, I found as sweet as a chestnut, and as white as flour.

Our next halting place was Morriock, where we found a great abundance of squirrels. After being there some time, the greater part of the men left on a distant hunting excursion, leaving about half-a-dozen other men and myself in charge of the women and children. On going away, they marked their arms in the usual manner with stripes, to denote how many days they would be absent; and one man of ours, who

remained, did the same; rubbing off one mark each day, to denote the lapse of time. Soon after our people had left, another tribe came and made their huts very near to ours. The very next day they began to show hostile intentions, taking advantage of our weakness, and at length threw their spears, killing a boy and girl. Upon this a conflict ensued, which lasted about an hour. Finding we could defend ourselves, they very soon left, and we immediately sent away a messenger to our tribe to tell them what had happened in their absence. They returned as quickly as possible, and a war council was held as to the propriety of following the others, which ended in preparations being made for a pursuit. The smearing with pipe-clay began again, and the spears and other implements were made ready for action.

It appeared the cause of their attack upon us was some very old grievance about the women. I am sorry to say it, but these dear creatures were at the bottom of every mischief. From Adam, that old root digger, downwards, it has always been the same, in every clime, and nation — then why fancy my very pretty looking, slightly clad venuses, to be worse than others? — on their part, I repudiate the imputation.

The next morning our party started, fully armed for the combat, and with passions highly excited at the thought of the advantage taken of them by their cowardly assailants. After they were gone, we, who were left, buried the bodies of the children in the usual manner. After two days' absence, our fighting men returned, several of them severely wounded; but their

revenge was satisfied, for they had killed two of their opponents.

The next place we went to was called Ballackillock, where we found a tribe already settled, if a few days' residence under sheets of bark and branches of trees, may be so called. Both parties were very friendly for a short time, and then there was a great fight, in which a young woman, about twenty years of age, was speared through the thigh. As she belonged to our tribe, she was brought into our huts, from whence it seemed, she had absconded with a man of the other party, without her parents' knowledge. The quarrel being over, and all quiet, the men went to the lake fishing, leaving the women to their usual occupation, and the poor girl by herself in one of the huts. The man she had eloped with knowing all this, went to her, and carried her off; so that when the tribe returned they discovered the flight of the fugitives, on whom they vowed vengeance. All went on as usual for a few days more, and then we shifted again, and for some time kept moving about, killing squirrels and opossums — the skins of both being very much estimated. There is another kind of animal the natives kill and eat — it is called the karbor, about the size of a dog — thick and short in the body, with a tremendous large head, and very short legs, armed with claws covered over with thick frizzly hair of a light brown colour; they inhabit the branches of high trees in the day, but at night they descend to eat the grass, and roots, these being their principal food. When wounded they make the most pitiable cries, like those of young children in

pain; they make the same noise in the night; and many a time have they kept me awake whilst on my lonely wanderings. They are very harmless, making no resistance when taken, might be easily domesticated, are excellent eating, and very much resembling pork in flavour. They carry their young in a pouch under the belly the same as the kangaroo; and, notwithstanding their singular and somewhat unwieldy appearance, are very active, springing from branch to branch, like squirrels.

We now started to meet, by invitation, another tribe who were halted near a small stream running into the Barwin. The second day, we reached the appointed place, which the natives call Monwak, but they were not there; so we sent off a messenger to inform them of our approach; at length we found them, in great strength, smearing themselves all over with clay, and apparently preparing for some important occasion. On learning this, our tribe did the same, jumping about as if mad. In the afternoon the others arrived, with the man who had run away with the girl of our tribe at their head; the whole body following him in something like close column, so that I saw clearly there would be another battle.

In the first place, they seated themselves on their rugs, in groups of half-dozens, or thereabouts, keeping their spears, and shields, and waddies all ready at hand; our party being prepared also. At length the young man already mentioned, advanced towards us. He had bunches of emu's feathers tied to different parts of his body by a kind of yarn they make by twisting the hair

of the opossum; he was cutting the most extraordinary capers, and challenged our men to fight—an offer which was accepted practically—by a boomerang being thrown at him, and which grazed his leg. A spear was then thrown, but he warded it off cleverly with his shield. He made no return to this, but kept capering and jumping about, until one of our men advanced very near to him, with only a shield and a waddie, and then the two went to work in good earnest, blow following blow, until the first had his shield split, so that he had nothing to defend himself with but his waddie. His opponent took advantage of this, and struck him a tremendous blow on one side of the head, and knocked him down; but he was instantly on his legs again, the blood however flowing very freely over his back and shoulders. His friends then cried out enough, and threatened general hostilities if another blow was struck; and this having the desired effect, they all, soon after, separated quietly, thus ending an affair which at one time promised to conclude very differently.

The next day we moved on to another fresh water lake of considerable extent, where we encamped, not very much at our ease, as we saw another tribe on the opposite shore. In the middle of the night we heard a dreadful uproar in that direction, and in the morning learned that those we had seen before dark had been fallen upon by some others whilst they were sleeping; so on hearing this we went to their assistance. On our arrival a horrid scene presented itself, many women and children laying about in all directions, wounded and sadly mutilated. Several of the poor creatures had

rushed into the lake and were drowned. The few who had escaped were hiding themselves in the reeds; but on our proffering assistance and protection, they joined us, and went to our huts. The dead were left, it not being safe to lose time in burying them, as our number was not sufficient to make us safe from a similar attack. The day following we therefore left the spot, and kept wandering about for some time after, until we came again to our old quarters at Moodewari, where we remained some months.

Having come to another halt, the better way perhaps will be, for me here to state, that the tribes are divided into families: or rather, I should say, composed of them — each tribe comprising from twenty to sixty of them. They acknowledge no particular chief as being superior to the rest; but, he who is most skilful and useful to the general community, is looked upon with the greatest esteem, and is considered to be entitled to more wives than any of the others. They contrive to keep a tolerable account, by recollection, of their pedigree, and will not, as I observed before, knowingly marry a relation — except where two brothers happened to be married, and one dies; in that case the survivor claims the widow; in fact, as many wives or widows as he, has left behind him. Should the women object, there is little chance of their lives being spared, as this law of custom is absolute. They are in general, very kind to their children, excepting the child is from any cause, believed to be illegitimate; and again, when a woman has been promised to one man, and is afterwards given to another; in such case, her first born is

almost invariably killed at its birth. The tribes would be much more numerous were it not for these barbarous and inhuman sacrifices.

As soon as the children are able to toddle about, they begin, as if by instinct, to search for food, and at four or five years of age, are able to dig roots and live without the aid of their parents; to whom, as may be supposed, their drapery, and washing and combing, etc., is no sort of trouble. They are all stark naked, and tumble about in the lagoons and rivers, like so many jolly young porpoises playing in the sun.

They have a brutal aversion to children who happen to be deformed at their birth. I saw the brains of one dashed out at a blow, and a boy belonging to the same woman made to eat the mangled remains. The act of cannibalism was accounted for in this way. The woman at particular seasons of the moon, was out of her senses; the moon — as they thought — having affected the child also; and, certainly, it had a very singular appearance. This caused her husband to deny his being the father, and the reason given for making the boy eat the child was, that some evil would befall him if he had not done so.



## CHAPTER V

DREADFUL ASSASSINATION — NATIVE MUSIC —  
ODD HABITS AND SUPERSTITIONS — THE KAL-  
KEETH ANT — DESCRIPTION OF TOMAHAWK —  
MORE FIGHTS AND MISCHIEF — FATAL ACCI-  
DENT — VENEMOUS SNAKES — LOSS OF MY  
FRIENDS AND SUPPOSED RELATIONS.

“Ev’n the low hut — poor shelter — while he slept,  
Shook in the earthquake, or the storm, or rain:  
Thus, sick at heart, the exile stood and wept,  
O’er thought and care, and hope and toil, in vain.”

**H**AVING told this horrible tale, let us now return to our halting place at Moodiwiri, when, after a long time another tribe joined us, and a dispute arose about surrendering a woman who had been carried away. The man who had her with him refused to give her up, so she was forcibly taken from him and brought to the hut I was in, very much to my dissatisfaction. I was greatly annoyed at it, because I thought the matter would not end there, and so it turned out; for when the native from whom she had been taken, found she was gone, he resolved on vengeance, and with this view, when we were all asleep, he came to our hut and speared the man of whom he was jealous. He pierced him to the ground, right through his body. Hearing the

noise occasioned by this assault, I gave the alarm, but he was gone, taking with him the woman. The poor fellow's brother who was wounded, and myself, endeavoured to draw the spear, but could not, even by twisting it round, it being jagged; at length a woman succeeded, but although everything was done to save him, he died in a very few hours. The next day he was buried, or rather suspended on the branches of a tree as before described, his mother making horrible lamentations, and burning her body all over with fire-sticks. The next day the men set off to find the murderer, but not succeeding, they returned a little before dark.

A short time after this affair we shifted our quarters, and, when on a hunting excursion, accidentally fell in with the tribe to which he belonged, and a very desperate fight ensued. As is the case with them in such matters, when the parents cannot be punished for any wrong done, they inflict it upon the offspring. So now, the savages, having got hold of a child of about four years of age, which this man had had by the young woman before referred to, they immediately knocked it on the head, and having destroyed it, they killed the murderer's brother, also spearing his mother through the thigh, and wounding at the same time several others; so that vengeance was heaped upon him and his tribe in a most dreadful manner. However, the man himself having escaped, he, with others, went in the night to the hut of the savage who had killed his brother, and speared him dead; having done which, they cut the most of the flesh off his body, carrying it away on their spears to mark their triumph. The next

day and night there was a continued uproar of dancing and singing, to notify their joy at these horrible events; during which, the mangled remains of the man were roasted between heated stones — and they eat part of them, and no mistake; for I saw them join in the horrible repast, and was requested to do so likewise, which of course I refused to do, evincing the greatest disgust at their proceedings.

Having been rescued from death by starvation, it is only natural that I should, from a feeling of gratitude, desire to save the natives from so great a reproach; but the truth must prevail, and that many of the natives inhabiting this part of the continent of New Holland are cannibals, under particular circumstances, cannot be doubted.

During their savage and brutal repast, I was told it was their intention to serve every one of the murderer's tribe in the same manner.

After this affair, we continued wandering about in a similar way, from place to place, joining one tribe, then leaving it for another, and so on, nothing particular occurring. At length we pitched our huts upon the borders of a lake or lagoon, with a long name, it being called Koodgingmurrah, the name they give to a root growing thereabouts. At that place another tribe joined us, and in a very few days another skirmish took place, and, as usual, it was all about the women. In this fight I was very nearly killed by a boomerang, which split my shield in two. It appeared not to have been intended for me, but for my supposed brother-in-

law. The man, in spite of my intercession, was punished very severely for having thrown it; for which, however, he professed great sorrow. Having been slightly wounded in the hand, and the blood flowing, the women came crying, and bound it up with a piece of rug, tying it round with opossum sinews. The next morning we went to the other side of the lake, where we remained many months.

Another halt — let me then make the best of it, by relating something more about the habits of my aboriginal friends: the wild uncivilized inhabitants of the forest, the uncultivated children of nature; thousands of whom live unknown, and die unpitied.

All those I met with, excepting in times of war, or lamentation, I found to be particularly fond of what they consider music, although they have no kind of instrument except the skin rug, which, stretched from knee to knee, they beat upon, others keeping time with sticks. So passionately attached are they even to this noise, that they often commence in the night, one family setting them on, until at last they one and all become a very jolly set, keeping it up in one continual strain until daylight. I have often wished them and their enchanting enlivening strains on the other side of the continent, with the queer old conjuror who manages the props already mentioned, to whom I must however avoid alluding more particularly.

They have a great aversion to the use of water, unless for the purposes of drinking, and bathing in the summer season, so that their washing processes are not

very laborious or extensive. Nature, as it is, reigns in all her glory with them, without artificial assistance. My gentlemen, and lady friends, as may be supposed, knew nothing about tailors, and dressmakers, hair-dressers, or boot and shoe makers; they were as ignorant in all such matters as Eve or Adam. They, however, take great pains in greasing and painting themselves in the most fantastic manner. Their style of shaving is not the most agreeable, for when the beard is nearly full grown they singe it with a fire-stick, or pluck it off with a muscle-shell. They have a great aversion to grey hairs, whether in the head or beard. The women pluck them out whenever they appear on their husbands or their own heads, until old father Time gets the better of them at that work. They are very fond of ornaments — the women especially — and in their manufacture, are very ingenious. Their head-bands are netted like silk purses, and they do this kind of work without any needle or other instrument — using their fingers only. They make these bands as even as it could be done by the most experienced person with silk or thread, leaving a piece at each end to tie round the forehead, colouring them with ochre. Their neck ornaments are made like silk velvet guards. Upon these are strung a great number of pieces of shells, and of the teeth of the kangaroo, adding too, the feathers of the swan and emu; the strongest of which they split in the middle, in order to make them more pliable. Many of the women have rings made out of the bones of birds suspended from the inside of their nostrils, and the men have a small straight bone

with a sort of knob at one end. Those who have the most ornaments are considered the most fashionable and attractive.

The baskets I mentioned before are made of rushes and grass, dried and split; and so nicely are they turned out of hand, as to have the appearance of those manufactured in India; but they are much more durable. No person could suppose they were the handy-work of an uncivilized people. To return.

We remained at the opposite side of the lake, until the approach of spring. Here they made their food principally of the large ants called the kalkeeth, which are found in hives within hollow trees. In order to ascertain where they are, the trees are struck with the tomahawk, and, at the noise, they show themselves at the holes. An entrance for the hand is then made, and so they are taken out and put into baskets, being, at the proper season, as fat as marrow. These creatures are prepared for eating, by placing them on slips of bark about three feet long and one foot wide, and so, burnt, or roasted. It is only for about one month in each year they can be had, for after that time they are transformed to large flies, and then fly away to die, or again change their shape and nature.

Having finished this ant hunting and eating expedition, we shifted our quarters; but before I go any further I must say something about their tomahawks; which, perhaps, as a very important instrument, ought to have been mentioned in an earlier part of this narrative. The heads of these instruments are made from a hard black stone, split into a convenient thickness,

without much regard to shape. This they rub with a very rough granite stone, until it is brought to a fine thin edge, and so hard and sharp as to enable them to fell a very large tree with it. There is only one place that I ever heard of in that country, where this hard and splitting stone is to be had. The natives call it karkeen; and say, that it is at a distance of three hundred miles from the coast, inland. The journey to fetch them is, therefore, one of great danger and difficulty; the tribes who inhabit the immediate localities being very savage, and hostile to all others. I was told, that it required an armed party of resolute fighting men, to obtain supplies of this very necessary article; so that the tomahawk is considered valuable for all purposes. They vary in weight from four to fourteen pounds; the handles being thick pieces of wood split, and then doubled up, the stone being in the bend, and fixed with gum, very carefully prepared for the purpose, so as to make it perfectly secure when bound round with sinews.

A messenger now came from another tribe, to tell us they would be glad to see our party near a river they called Booneawillock — so named from a sort of eels they call Boonea — with which that stream abounds. It was very much swollen, in consequence of heavy floods, so that we could not cross it, to join our friends; we therefore pitched our huts on the other side. Many parts of that river are rocky, leaving but an inconsiderable depth of water, into which the eels get in great numbers; indeed so numerous were they, that we caught them in dozens. These eels appeared to be

very sagacious, but not so much so as to avoid our fishing parties; for although they would shoot away into deep water at the falling of a star, or any extraordinary noise, yet they would come to our fishing torches and allow themselves to be taken very placidly.

When the flood in the river — which had been occasioned by very heavy and continuous rains — had subsided, we passed over, and hutted ourselves on the other side. Another tribe soon after joined us, amounting to about one hundred men, women, and children. I should here say, that the eels mentioned, seemed inexhaustible at this place, those of the smallest kind being the most numerous. They are light blue on the back, with white bellies; these the natives call the Mordong; and the larger kind, the Babbanien; the latter being brown on the back, with white bellies.

The tribe which arrived the last, only remained a few days, when another fight occurred, again about the women — one of whom was killed, and several severely wounded: they then left. We also shifted our quarters a short time after, and kept up the old fancy of wandering about; not exactly from “post to pillar,” but from one hunting ground to another, seeking variety of food, from fish to flesh, from roots to anything available; for the natives are, in truth, a rambling lot, never content — unless sleeping, and then dreaming of corrobberrees, and fights, and mischief. In one of these excursions, one of our men was bitten by a snake whilst stepping over a fallen tree, of which bite the poor fellow died immediately. As he was one of the principal men of the tribe, his death caused great



sorrow, and he was buried; or, rather stowed away in the branches of a very high tree, with all the honours suited to his value, as one of this very estimable community, of which I had, involuntarily, become a member.

Time passed on, and a variety of circumstances occurred to separate us, so that I was at last left with my supposed relations, and only two or three other families — each living in our separate huts.

One day we saw a large party of natives coming towards us, but they passed on to the back, at a distance; and, when there, began to polish themselves up with clay, and ochre, as if for a fight; it occasioned us great alarm; but we hoped our defenceless position would induce them to treat us mercifully. There were about sixty of them, and they soon undeceived us as to their intentions; for they came first to the other bank of the river, shaking their spears; and then crossing over, attacked us so furiously, as to give the women and children only time to attempt escape. My old friend, and supposed brother-in-law, had a spear sent right through his body, and then they hunted out his wife and killed her dead upon the spot. The savages then came back to where I was supporting my wounded friend; who, seeing them approaching, sprung up, even in the last agonies of death, and speared the nearest assailant in the arm. My friend was, of course, dispatched immediately, with spears and boomerangs; as was a son of his, who was with us at the time. Strange to say, not one raised his hand against me; had

I done so against them, I must have been sacrificed instantly; for what could I do, being only one against so many?

The cause of this sudden unprovoked cruelty was not, as usual, about the women, but because the man who had been killed by the bite of the snake belonged to the hostile tribe, and they believed my supposed brother-in-law carried about with him something that had occasioned his death. They have all sorts of fancies of this kind, and it is frequently the case, that they take a man's kidneys out after death, tie them up in something, and carry them round the neck, as a sort of protection and valuable charm, for either good or evil. They took the son's life because he had a daughter, who he had promised to the man who killed him, and had afterwards given her to another.

I should have been most brutally unfeeling, had I not suffered the deepest mental anguish from the loss of these poor people, who had all along been so kind and good to me. I am not ashamed to say, that for several hours my tears flowed in torrents, and, that for a long time I wept unceasingly. To them, as I have said before, I was as a living dead brother, whose presence and safety was their sole anxiety. Nothing could exceed the kindness these poor natives had shown me, and now they were dead, murdered by the band of savages I saw around me, apparently thirsting for more blood. Of all my sufferings in the wilderness, there was nothing equal to the agony I now endured. My feelings made me desperate, so that when a tall

powerful fellow came to the hut some time after, to demand my friend's spears, I refused, in fierce language, to surrender them, so that he desisted; ordering me however away, with a quantity of fish, and his rug, to where his wife and family were, telling me to wait there until his arrival; at the same time, assuring me of his good-will and future friendship. These I did not choose to rely upon, and so, after having arrived at a convenient distance from the scene of these savage murders, I resolved on making my escape. With this view, I tied my spears together, and put myself in light marching order, rolled up my rug as tightly as possible, crossed the river, and made for the bush; going in another direction to that which I thought it likely the savages would follow in pursuit.

After what I have stated as to their cold-blooded murders, I may surely call them savages, although, as we have seen, there are many kind-hearted creatures amongst them.

When I got about four miles, I unexpectedly fell in with a tribe I knew, to whom, my hurry and fright was a source of great anxiety. I told them all that had happened, on hearing which, they immediately prepared for vengeance on the murderers, for the young man was amongst them to whom my old friend's son had given the girl, instead of the man who had so barbarously murdered their father. Before they set off, they directed me where I should find them after the expedition they were going upon was over; so I started for the place appointed, near the Barwin River. The

next day I swam across that river; taking with me my spears, and rugs, and fire-stick, and before night, set up my hut in a place from whence I could view the country all round. Before I lighted the fire, I made a turf and bark fence all about where it was to be, so that the flame should not be seen, for I was naturally in great dread of being overtaken. In this way I lived a few days, waiting for my friends. At length, one evening, I saw a light coming across the plain in my direction. This occasioned me great alarm, as I did not suppose the friendly tribe would travel in the night; so I put my fire out, hid my spears and fish, and concealed myself amongst the high reeds growing in the neighbourhood. After a time I heard female voices, and then one of them say, "where can he be gone?", some surmising one cause, and some another, for my absence. This satisfied me that all was right, so I approached, agreeably surprising them by my appearance. They were five young women belonging to the last party we had met with, who had made their escape, in consequence of another great fight which had ensued between my old friends, and the tribe who had killed my protectors. They told me, three men of the hostile party had been killed, and that they had burned the bodies of my said-to-be brother-in-law, his wife, and his son, to prevent their enemies from mangling them; and, that if the women had not left, they would have been taken away by force by the opposite party. They, poor creatures, were dreadfully hungry and fatigued; so I gave them all the food I had and kept them in my hut until the morning, when two of them left, the other

three remaining for several days longer, waiting for their friends. Finding they did not come, according to their appointment, they then went away also.

Having reason to think something had occurred to prevent their arrival, I returned to the scene of the brutal massacre; and finding the ashes and bones of my late friends, I scraped them up together, and covered them over with turf, burying them in the best manner I could, that being the only return I could make for their many kindnesses. I did so in great grief at the recollection of what they had done for me through so many years, and in all my dangers and troubles.

My next move was back again to the hut I had left on the plains where the women had found me, and the following day the others came according to their promise. They endeavoured to persuade me to join them permanently, saying they would protect me; that, as I was alone I should certainly be killed; but I refused, having no faith in their professions, and being sick at heart, so shortly after witnessing all these atrocities. After staying a short time at this spot, they left me, crossing over the river, and when they were out of sight, I packed up my traps, and started in an opposite direction, going towards the sea. When at a place called Mangawhawz, where there was a well of fresh water and plenty of all kinds of fish, I put up a hut, and remained there several months alone. I had now passed so many years in this sort of way — more I should think than five-and-twenty — and had got so

much accustomed to the kind of life, as to have forgotten the use of my own language, and began to be careless about every thing civilized, fancying I could never return to a better kind of existence, or to the intercourse of any other society than that of the tribes, if I was again forced into communication with them. I had ascertained from the natives long before, that the *Calcutta* had left the bay, and that the first settlement had been abandoned. I often looked towards the sea, thinking I might observe some vessel passing; but no, not one; for at that time there was little voyaging round the coast — South Australia, and the other settlements, not having been formed, and ships from Sydney keeping well off the land, few of them passing through the straits at any time. Although so desolately placed, I, for a long time, fancied myself comparatively happy, and that I could gladly have ended my days there. If I had had books they would have been totally useless, having forgotten all the little knowledge I had learned in my early days; therefore I could only seek my food — eat, drink, and sleep; but how I could have passed so long a time in such a way, is to me now a matter of bewildering astonishment. It is related in the fabulous history of Robinson Crusoe, that he was fortunate enough to save a bible from the wreck of his ship, and by that means consoled and benefitted himself; but I, the real Crusoe, for so many years amongst savages, in the then unknown forests and wilds of the vast Australian continent, had no such help to my mind, and I beg the humane reader to reflect on this circumstance with feelings of kindly sympathy — for

mine was, in truth, a sad existence. I was indeed a lone man, without any other resource than an entire reliance upon the great God, who had so wonderfully preserved me; and to whom, I say again, I did not forget to pray earnestly and fervently, for health, sustenance, and protection.

## CHAPTER VI

FISHING HUT ON THE KARAAF RIVER — GREAT SUCCESS — THE WOMBAT — DOMESTIC CEREMONIES OF THE NATIVES — GREY HAIR — ANOTHER MURDER — CANNIBALISM — MY MARRIAGE — MY WIFE ELOPES, AND LEAVES ME VERY DISCONSOLATE! — HER FATE — MONSTER SNAKE — BLIND BOY — RETURN TO MY HOME ON THE KARAAF RIVER.

“The breeze came gently o’er me from the West,  
Where the last sunbeams linger e’er they part;  
Along the beach I lay, to sleep, and rest  
My wearied limbs, and still more wearied heart.”

AT length I was compelled to leave my quarters and move to the Karaaf River again, where I built a more substantial hut, the locality being full of roots. Unfortunately I had no dog to hunt the kangaroo, so my dependence was chiefly upon the fish, which sometimes however, were very scarce. Before I made this change of quarters the winter had set in very tempestuously, and I suffered very much from the cold weather and continued rains. One day, whilst watching the fish, I saw a great shoal of bream come into the mouth of the river, making their way up a long distance, to a bend where it branches off, and where it is of considerable depth. When the tide turned, they



came down with it again, and it occurred to me that if I could by any means stop them in their retreat by a sort of weir, I should have a great supply of food, thus placed at my command, as it would seem, by Providence; so I turned my thoughts to this all that day, and all night long. After examining the river, I found a spot suited to the purpose, where the tide did not rise above two feet, and here I resolved on making the attempt. With this view, I set to work making faggots with rushes and boughs of trees — carrying them down to the bank of the river; and, at the same time, preparing long stakes, sharpened at one end, to make them fast in the sand. At length I had a sufficient number together to commence operations; and taking advantage of the tide when it receded, I set about my undertaking, and completed a weir, working incessantly; so that when the fish came down with the stream in thousands, they found themselves intercepted, and being apparently confounded at this, they turned tail up again, and then down, and so on; but by that time the top of my weir was above the surface, and they were obliged to surrender at discretion. I caught in this way, considerable numbers, and consequently was in great delight; for with them, and the roots growing thereabouts, I had food in abundance. I gathered — or rather caught, I should say — heaps of them, and employed myself in drying and preserving them — many of these fish weighing three pounds each and more — being also of very delicious flavour. With feelings of comparative content, I set about improving my habitation, making it more substantial and

comfortable, by getting some logs, and making the roof better able to resist the cold and rains. The branches of trees and their supporters I covered with turf, making the sides of that material, forming a chimney of the same; so that after a few days' labour, I found myself more at home in my solitary abode, having from the door-way a long view over the plain, and out to sea.

It was necessary, I found, to consult the moon, so as to judge of the ebbing and flowing of the tides; for the fish, I ascertained came and went accordingly; and therefore, in order to prevent a scarcity, it was proper I should dry them in the sun, by spreading them about on the trees, and on the roof of my hut, taking them inside on every appearance of rain, or other unfavourable weather. There was another sort of food very useful to me; this was a particular kind of root the natives call Murning — in shape, and size, and flavour, very much resembling the radish.

Whilst employed with my fish one day, I heard voices near me. One said "Amadeat," meaning, white man. The first thing to be done was to conceal myself; but presently I saw two men, and two women, with several children. One of them called out, in their language, "It is me," meaning by that, they were friends, and that I need not be alarmed. I soon found they belonged to the tribe of my old friend: my tribe, I may say. On seeing me, the women began to cry with joy at finding me safe. It was more than a year, perhaps nearly two, since I had met them, or any human being; and they supposed me to have been killed long since.

One of the men took a leg of kangaroo out of his basket, and some of the roots and gum they had, and gave them to me; and in return, I took them to my hut and offered them fish, of which food I showed them my great abundance, and told them my adventures since we parted; at which they expressed much delight, singing and capering about in a most wild and extravagant manner.

When I explained my plan of entrapping the fish, they could not contain themselves for joy, patting me on the back, and saying I deserved three or four wives for my invention. For some cause or other they then told their women to go away; they, however, would not, but began stamping and beating the ground, expressive of their dissatisfaction. After a time the men went off to spear fish, and on their return they set up their huts near mine, and so made themselves comfortable for many days. After a time they persuaded me to accompany them to a salt lake, called Nellemengo-beet, about five miles off, which lake is only separated from the sea by a narrow belt, or sand-bank. Near it was a well of very good water, and there we encamped, our object being to gather gum and roots.

When the moon was again at the full we returned to the Karaaf — my old fishing quarters; where our success was so great, that one of the party went away to fetch the remainder of the tribe, to share with us in kindness our abundant supplies. They soon joined us, bringing with them a quantity of kangaroo; and seeing we were so comfortable, they pitched their huts beside our party.

Having heard of the massacre of my friends, they vowed vengeance against the murderers; but the resources of food I had provided by means of the weirs, being so ample, they remained content for a long time, heaping upon me all the civilities possible, for having put them in the way of procuring fish for themselves and families so easily.

After some time, we all went away together in search of the kangaroo, of which we killed a great many, as also of the norngnor — an animal about the size of a small pig. It is the creature the English call the wombat. They live in holes in the earth, of about twenty feet long and from ten to twenty deep, in an oblique direction, burrowing in them like the mole. When well cooked, they are good eating. The mouth of this creature is furnished with large teeth, their ears scarcely discernable, their legs being very short and armed with long claws; the skin is very tough, with short hair upon it, but they are without tails. The wombats feed on grass chiefly, only venturing out after dark, or on moonlight nights, returning to their burrows at day-break. The natives take these creatures by sending a boy or girl into their burrows, which they enter feet first, creeping in backwards until they touch the animal. Having discovered the lair, they call out as loud as they can, beating the ground over head, whilst those above are carefully listening — their ears being pressed close to the earth. By this plan of operations, they are enabled to tell with great precision the spot where they are. A perpendicular hole is then made, so as to strike the extremity of the burrow: and having

done this, they dig away with sharp sticks, lifting the mould out in basket. The poor things are easily killed, for they offer no resistance to these intrusions on their haunts. There is, however, a good deal of difficulty in making these holes, and in getting down so deep to them — so that it is a sort of hunting for food, of which the natives are not very fond. Except when the wombat has young, it is seldom that more than one is found in a hole. The animal is generally roasted whole, after having had the entrails taken out, which is all the preparation — the fire doing all the rest. And whilst alluding to this method of cookery, I may as well state, that in summer fire is very easily obtained by rubbing together two sticks of the wood they call Dealwark. They sometimes carry these unlighted fire-sticks about with them, wrapped up in a sort of covering made of opossum hair. In the winter months they are often very much distressed for fire, and suffer greatly from hunger and cold; their only covering being skin rugs, sown together with sinews — using as needles fine bones of the kangaroo. These rugs serve them also to lay upon. Considering how they are exposed to the weather; it is wonderful how little they suffer from illness; for, excepting a sort of erysipelas, or scurvy, with which they are sometimes afflicted, they are in general very healthy. I never observed any European contagious disease prevalent, in the least degree; and this I thought strange. There was at one time however, I now recollect, a complaint which spread through the country, occasioning the loss of many lives, attacking generally the healthiest and strongest, whom it

appeared to fix upon in preference to the more weakly. It was a dreadful swelling of the feet, so that they were unable to move about, being also afflicted with ulcers of a very painful kind.

I may as well here also mention a curious custom they have relative to their domestic affairs — if such a term can be applied to such a people. In many instances, a girl, almost as soon as she is born, is given to a man. After this promise, the mother of the child never again voluntarily speaks to the intended husband before he takes her to himself, nor to any of his brothers, if he has any; on the contrary she shuns them in the most careful manner. If the future son-in-law, or either of his brothers, should visit the tribe, she is always previously informed of his coming, so that she may have time to get out of the way; and if by chance she meets them, she covers her head over with her skin cloak. If any present is sent to her, such as opossum or kangaroo, and such like food, the receivers rub their faces and hands over with charcoal before it is taken and tasted. When again, a present of a skin cloak is made by the intended son-in-law, the mother gives it to her husband to wear for some time before it is favoured with her acceptance. This practice is adhered to on both sides, for the son-in-law may see his proposed father, but will not on any account see the mother; their notions on these matters being, that when their children are married the parents become much older, and if the girl's mother happens to see the proposed husband it will cause her hair to turn grey immediately.

To return to my narrative. We remained for a very

long time at this place, and were ultimately joined by two tribes, one being called the Putnaroo, the other the Warwaroo, who usually inhabited the opposite side of the bay, a long way off, and on this occasion had left their women and children behind them. Having erected their bark huts near ours, they remained peaceable enough for several days, hunting and enjoying themselves; at length, the Putnaroo suddenly surrounded our people, and without any previous altercation speared a young man about twenty years of age. The cause stated to be was, that the murdered man had been promised a girl who his assailant wanted for himself. Poor fellow, when he was speared, he ran only a very few paces, and then dropped down dead. Our tribe expostulated with the others against this assault, but were answered by the threat, that if they said much about it they would serve us in a similar manner; so we, being by far the weaker party, were obliged to appear to be satisfied.

This affair broke up our encampment, and I was sent to inform the friends of the deceased of what had happened, and also to watch the movements of the Putnaroo. Having found all this out, namely, where the enemy were, and the young man's parents, I made the latter acquainted with the circumstances connected with his death; telling them at the same time, that his remains had been deposited in the branch of a tree; which news gladdened them much, for in the first place they imagined the savages had taken his body away. When they had consoled themselves a little, the father summoned all the tribe and other friends he could

muster; they came in considerable force, and having pipe-clayed and ochred themselves all over, they set off, prepared for battle. This however was evaded, as the Putnaroo invaders had taken to their heels, on seeing the great numbers to which they were opposed.

We now took up our quarters at a place they called Nullemungobeed, situated in the centre of a very extensive plain, with wells of good water handy. When we had settled ourselves down there, some of the men went to the spot where we had left the young man's remains hanging in the tree, and brought away the lower part of the body, leaving the upper quarters and head where they found it suspended. The usual uproar commenced amongst the women on the arrival of the part of the corpse, lamentation succeeding lamentation, burning with fire-sticks, and all the rest of it, until at length the mangled remains were roasted between heated stones, shared out, and greedily devoured by these savages. Again I was pressed to join in this horrid repast; but I hope I need not say, that I refused, with indignation and disgust.

Strange as all these cannibal ceremonies may appear, it is proper to explain, that many are performed out of what they consider respect for the deceased; the cap bones of whose knees, in this instance, after being carefully cleaned, were tied up in a sort of net of hair and twisted bark. Under such circumstances, these relics are carried by the mothers, tied round their necks by day, and placed under their heads by night, as affectionate remembrancers of the dead.



Being again thoroughly disgusted with these inhuman scenes, I went away alone, back to my old hut at the Karaaf River, where I fished as before by means of my weir, and lived for many months, daily expecting a visit from some of the tribes; but, by their absence, they all appeared to have deserted me. One day, however, a friendly party visited my solitary abode, and settled themselves down. In this way we all lived on for several months more, having plenty of fish and roots.

And now, reader, I come to a very important period of my life, which was a decision arrived at by my friends that I should take unto myself a wife. I was not in any way consulted, being considered a sort of instrument in their hands to do with as they might think proper. My wife was a young widow, about twenty years of age, tolerably good-looking, after a fashion, and apparently very mild tempered. The marriage feast, the ring, the fees for the ceremony, the bride's dress, my own, and all the rest of it, did not cost much. I was not obliged to run in debt, or fork out every shilling, or pay fifty per cent for discounting a bill to pay the piper — nothing of the kind; so I took her to myself, to my turf and bark hunting and fishing hut, on the banks of the Karaaf River. I should here mention, that although previously married, my wife did not present me, on the day of our union, with any tender little remembrances of her first husband, my predecessor in her affections. Affections! — we shall see more about that presently; but, perhaps I may as well say at once, that my dearly beloved played me most

abominably false, for at the end of our honeymoon (perhaps it might have been a few months after *that* moon had gone down), one evening when we were alone in our hut, enjoying our domestic felicity, several men came in, and took her away from me by force; she, however, going very willingly. The next day — as I had no supreme court to go to for damages — I went over to the tribe the intruders belonged to, and told them how I had been treated. I confess I did not make a very great fuss about my loss — if it was one — but endeavoured to whistle it down the wind gaily. Several of the friendly natives were anxious I should take the usual revenge upon her and the man she had left me to live with, but I refused, and in the end, she was speared by another man, with whom she had been coqueting, and to whom she had also played falsely. Mixed up by relationship, as all these parties were, after a great number of altercations about her having run away from me, and the circumstances of her death, there was another fight, in which many heads were broken. I, however, took no part in these, excepting assuming the defensive, and threatening them with punishment if they interfered with me, being now, and having been for a long time past, quite as expert as any of them with the spear, and boomerang. After a great deal of talk and noise, all became reconciled, and there was another corrobberree on a large scale. A little before this affair, I had taken charge of a little blind boy, and a girl, children of my supposed brother-in-law, who were very much attached to me, and went with me on hunting and fishing excursions.

I should here observe, that the natives sometimes, and when the wind is favourable, hunt round a kind of circle, into which they force every kind of animal and reptile to be found; they then fire the boundary, and so kill them for food; it matters not what they are, whether kangaroo, wombats, opossum, or black snakes; they are to them, with the exception of the last named, all alike; as are also lizards, toads, rats, mice and wild dogs; they cook and eat them all. On one of these burning excursions, I remember a monster snake was killed, having two distinct heads, separating about two inches from the body, black on the back, with a brownish yellow belly, and red spots all over. It had been about nine feet long, but the fire had burnt the body in two, and being such an unnatural looking monster, the natives were terribly frightened at its appearance. Of the poisonous snakes generally, they are not the least afraid, for they eat them, after cutting off the heads, and roasting them in the usual manner.

With my adopted children, and two families only, I now went to a place they called Bearrock, where there was a chain of water holes, full of excellent eels, and roots, on which we subsisted for a long time. One night one of the women — just as we were laying down to sleep — heard a rustling in the bushes, as if people were approaching. Her, and her husband, came immediately, saying we must all run for our lives, and thus dreadfully alarming the little girl, and her blind brother for they had all been present at the murder of their father. After a minute's thought, we all resolved to be off, in order to conceal ourselves. Being quite at

a loss what to do, we remained silent, if possible to ascertain from whence the noise proceeded, and who the strangers were. After a time, our two men, who had gone out to reconnoitre, came back, saying they had seen a fire, with several men standing round about it, which very much increased the alarm, and particularly of my poor little boy and girl. For their protection and support, I put some fire into one of our native buckets, covering it over with turf, and then moved off to a more concealed place, the natives called Banor, on the top of a small hill in the shape of a sugar-loaf, and close to the seaside, from whence, at daylight, I knew I should be able to see all around me to a great distance.

In the morning, on looking anxiously around, I observed, about a mile off, some people coming in my direction, and in consequence of their approach, I concealed myself, with my charge. However, I soon saw they were our friends, who we had left the night before. We then held a consultation as to the direction we should take for their safety, and differing in opinion, we separated, they going one way inland, and I, with my charge, another; mine being toward a place they called Kirkedullim, near the seaside. So we kept wandering along for several days, until we made a lengthy halt at Mangowak where we lived on shell fish, and a sort of wild grape which grows in great abundance thereabouts. It being the height of summer, we did not suffer much privation; for, as far as I was concerned, I had now been many years accustomed to all the habits of my extraordinary life.

Moving on again, we at length arrived at the Karaaf River, my favourite spot, where I found the hut just as I had left it months before. I know not the cause, but the natives had not visited it, or if they had, they had not in any way interfered with the arrangements I had made for my comfort. Here I again made fast my weir; and although for several days and nights we were very unsuccessful, in consequence of the tide and weather being unfavourable, ultimately a great lot of fish was taken, and we lived in abundance on bream, and roots. I had now become very anxious for the safety of my charge, particularly on account of the poor blind boy, who could in no way assist himself by getting out of danger, should any savage tribe attack us in the night, as I have already described is often their custom. I was at length relieved in part from this responsibility by the arrival of a man, with his wife and family, who I knew to be friendly to us, and who settled himself down close to our locality.

## CHAPTER VII

MURDER OF THE BLIND BOY — ABANDON THE  
NATIVES — A NATIVE WOMAN MY ONLY COM-  
PANION FOR MANY MONTHS — THE NATIVE  
LANGUAGE — CANNIBAL TRIBE — VESSEL  
SEEN — CONSEQUENCES — THE WHITE MAN'S  
GRAVE — DREADFUL MASSACRE — WRECK OF  
A SHIP — THE BUNYIP AGAIN.

— "I awoke

To hear the Oceans never varied sound,  
And the wild sea-mew, wheeling round and round,  
Where hope, the sun light of the soul, ne'er beams:  
A broken-hearted exile, e'en in dreams."

OUR small community remained in perfect harmony for many months, until, unfortunately, a young man about twenty years of age, belonging to another tribe, arrived. This youth was taken seriously ill a few days after joining us, and although we did all we could for him he died. This event created great distress, and by way of changing the scene, our small party broke up, and left the Karaaf, on a short hunting excursion. After a time we fell in with the deceased young man's family, who, on being informed of his death, expressed great astonishment and rage, fancying it had been brought about by some unfair means on our part. This

excitement arose to such a height, as to approach — what it would be mercy to describe — insanity. After a time, they forced the poor blind boy away from me, and killed him on the spot, because he had happened to be in the same hut in which the young man died, believing he had been in some way the means of his death. After this, they roasted the body in the usual manner; but whilst this was going on I left, with the little girl, moving on, and on, until meeting the tribe to which the man belonged to whom in her infancy she had been promised; I explained all the particulars of the sacrifice of her poor blind brother. They immediately vowed vengeance, and two or three of them set out for the purpose of murder, returning in a few days with the intelligence that they had killed two of the children of their enemies.

By one accession and the other our numbers had now increased to more than two hundred men, women, and children; and it may be easily supposed, that such a mob of savages could not move on long without fights and bloodshed. Seeing these things certain, I left, with the proposed husband of the little girl, and one or two families, to go back again to the Karaaf River. Having remained there some time, I resolved on surrendering my charge to her intended husband, and the wife he had had with him for many months; and positively insisted on doing so, although they were anxious that she should remain with me for some time longer.

Having transferred her to the care of these people, I set off alone, determined to live by myself, in order to avoid a repetition of the scenes I had witnessed, and

all farther intercourse with the natives. The direction I took was along the sea coast, but although subsisting upon shell fish principally, I now knew perfectly well how to provide myself with a change of food, and with fire to cook it, so as to make whatever it was more palatable. Although I had parted with the girl from prudential motives, I lamented very bitterly the savage death of her brother, my poor blind boy, for whom I had acquired a great affection; and who, on his part, had so many hundred times clung to me for shelter and protection.

I was now again very lonely and miserable, and whilst indulging in melancholy thoughts one day — such as cannot be described — I was most unexpectedly joined by a young native woman, who had ran away from her tribe at some distance, where it was fighting with another. She remained with me for a long time, during which I was successful in procuring abundance of food; amongst other kinds was a large sea animal, one of that sort which the natives call the Koorman, mentioned before as having visited my retreat near where I first met the natives. We found the flesh very good eating, and my female friend enjoyed the repast with great gusto: greasing herself all over with the fat, after we had made the most of the carcass, which might well be compared to bacon.

My amiable young lady friend continued with me for a long time, in fact she made all sorts of excuses for not going back to her tribe, who not coming in search of her, and we not knowing of their whereabouts, were induced at length to remove for a change



of hunting and fishing grounds; arriving ultimately at Danawa, where there is a considerable river, having its source in several high mountains, some way off in the interior. The scrub through which we should have had to pass, had we left the beach, being almost impassable, we were obliged to keep along the sea shore; and the weather by this time being cold and inclement, we occasionally took shelter, and slept in the caves and crevices of the rocks. This was a very suffering time, and as soon as we could, we returned again to my old fishing castle, on the Karaaf.

The reader may wonder, how it was possible for any one like myself, who had, in my earlier life, been associated with civilized beings, so to live; but I beg him to remember how many years I had led a different sort of existence, and how easy it is for the human being, as well as every other, to change his habits, taste, and I may add, feelings, when made the mere creature of circumstances. I look back now to that period of my life with inexpressible astonishment; considering it, as it were, altogether a dreaming delusion, and not reality. Perhaps there is no one living who can cast his mind back to so many years of his past life with such a multiplicity of extraordinary sensations, as have fallen to my lot to experience.

After many months we were visited by my companion's relatives, to whom she returned, and I was left once more alone, occasionally however visiting such of the friendly tribes as came to my locality. All the years I had been upon the coast, and near it, I had never seen or heard of any ship, or of shipwrecked

mariners, so that I had no hope afforded now of ever again regaining an association with civilized beings. I had seen a race of children grow up into women and men, and many of the old people die away, and by my harmless and peaceable manner amongst them, had acquired great influence in settling their disputes. Numbers of murderous fights I had prevented by my interference, which was received by them as well meant; so much so, that they would often allow me to go amongst them previous to a battle, and take away their spears, and waddies, and boomerangs. My visits were always welcomed, and they kindly and often supplied me with a portion of the provisions they had — assuring me, in their language, of the interest they took in my welfare.

Here I may as well say, that the native language varies according to the tribe individuals belong to, each tribe having a peculiar expression of their own. The one I was with so many years, I, of course, understood perfectly, but there were others I could scarcely make out. I saw a native from the Murray River whose language was perfectly unintelligible to all of us; indeed this is reasonable, when we reflect on the difference of the dialect, or pronunciation of words, of many of the counties of England, Ireland, and Scotland. How careful then ought those persons to be, who are now known as what are called protectors of aborigines, when they attempt to interpret on trials in courts of justice. Their translations and explanations should be received with great care, in order to prevent the infliction of unjust punishments — especially in cases of

life and death. Again, there is another point to be borne in mind, that is, the vindictive character of the natives, which leads them, in many instances, to give evidence founded upon revenge and falsehood. This is all very bad, but that it is true cannot be doubted.

I had almost forgotten to say, that in my wanderings about, I met with the Pallidurbarrans, a tribe notorious for their cannibal practices; not only eating human flesh greedily after a fight, but on all occasions when it was possible. They appeared to be the nearest approach to the brute creation of any I had ever seen or heard of; and, in consequence, they were very much dreaded. Their colour was light copper, their bodies having tremendously large and protruding bellies. Huts, or artificial places for shelter, were unknown to them, it being their custom to lay about in the scrub, anyhow and anywhere. The women appeared to be most unnaturally ferocious — children being their most valued sacrifice. Their brutality at length became so harrassing, and their assaults so frequent, that it was resolved to set fire to the bush where they had sheltered themselves, and so annihilate them, one and all, by suffocation. This, in part, succeeded, for I saw no more of them in my time. The belief is, that the last of the race was turned into a stone, or rock, at a place where a figure was found resembling a man, and exceedingly well executed; probably the figure-head of some unfortunate ship.

One day when I was at Bangibarra, some distance in the interior, I saw some natives coming along, one of them carrying a flag over his shoulders. On anxious

enquiry, I was told by them that they had seen a vessel laying at anchor in Port Phillip Bay, and near Indented Heads; watching her for several days, they observed her remove to another anchorage, soon after which, a boat was hoisted out and all hands left her, proceeding up the river. After watching several hours to see the coast clear, three of them swam alongside, and hoisted themselves on board, one, one way, and another, another. The first object that attracted their attention was the colours; these they soon hauled down: then they purloined rope, sails, and other things they thought would prove serviceable — such as glass bottles to bark and sharpen their spears with. There were many other articles they took, but fortunately they were afraid to go down into the cabin, and so considerable property was saved from plunder. Having completed their marauding excursion, they carried what they had to land, and far back into the bush. When the crew returned and saw the mischief done during their absence, they fired off their pieces, but they were at too great a distance to do any injury to the natives. Thinking it advisable, they soon got the anchor up again, moving farther out into the bay.

This was the story they related, and great anxiety was expressed that I should lend a hand to decoy the people on shore, so as to get them into our power, with the vessel, boats, and cargo also. I did all possible to divert their attention, telling them that if they went to where the ship was, they would again be fired upon, and all killed. A few days after I saw the vessel still laying at anchor, and became almost nervously wild

with desire to make myself known to those on board, so as at length to be released from captivity, and with that hope I went alone, taking with me merely my spears and other instruments for hunting and fishing. When I got to the beach abreast of the vessel, I made a large fire, thinking I should attract their attention, as several persons could be seen walking up and down the deck, occasionally looking attentively toward me, as I thought. All my efforts however were useless — the crew no doubt supposing, after the robbery on board by the natives, that the object was to entice them on shore for some murderous or mischievous purpose. I could not hail them, having lost all my English language. All that day and night I continued making signals — my heart ready to break with grief and anxiety, seeing all my efforts futile. About the middle of the next day, a boat put off from the side, coming in my direction; and, when distant only half a mile, my signals were repeated; but alas, when only three hundred yards off, the people in her, hoisted sail, steering away two or three miles farther up the beach, toward a small island, where they landed. Seeing this to be a chance opening up for me, I followed as fast as I could run, and crossed over to where I supposed they were cutting wood. However, the breeze being in their favour, before I could reach the spot, they had cut as much as they wanted, put it into the boat, and shoved off, only laughing at my violent gesticulations and unintelligible cries; little thinking who I was, or that I was any other than I appeared to be in my native dress. Forgetting all this, I reproached them to myself very

bitterly, thinking them worse than savages, thus to leave me in my misery. Instead of their having been guilty of inhumanity, I should have remembered the possibility and probability of their firing upon me — and particularly after the act of robbery before mentioned.

After consoling myself somewhat, I examined the spot where they had been, thinking to find — perhaps a hatchet, or some such like tool, which would prove useful. In looking about, I saw a mound of earth about the size of a grave; but I foolishly thought it might be a place of concealment for some kind of treasure; and, although money, or plate, or jewels, could not have been of the least use to me in my disconsolate condition, yet I determined to examine the mound; and began to do so, by taking off the turfs with which it was covered. Having worked some time, I was shocked at coming to the body of a white man, wrapped up in a blanket. It occurred to me to remove this covering, as the weather was very cold; and it seemed a pity to leave so good an article where it was, but I could not find it in my heart to rob the dead — even to supply my own pressing necessities; I therefore made the grave up again, covering it carefully over with boughs, and heavy stones, so to protect the body from the wild dogs.

Finding all my efforts to communicate with the ship useless, and after passing another night in great distress, I made my way back to the tribe. The vessel remained where she was for several days longer — a period to me of indescribable misery. What the ship

was, or where she was bound to, or where from, I was never able to make out, in consequence of my ignorance of dates. During the period we were watching her, the natives told me another vessel had anchored nearly in the same place, a long time previous; from which vessel, two white men were brought ashore by four or five others, who tied them to trees, and shot them — leaving their bodies bound.

A few months after these efforts of mine to communicate with the ship, I found a large boat stranded on the beach. It appeared to have belonged to a whaler, as there were eight large oars laying about her, partly buried in the sand; there were also three blankets rigged as a sail, with ropes, mast, and other articles, used by some unfortunate mariners who had been cast away. The blankets, after being washed, I spread over the boat to dry, and when that was done, a fire was visible at some distance, to which I went, and there found a party of natives cooking and eating fish, and other food. On seeing the blankets, they began capering about in their usual fantastic manner, expressing the most extravagant joy. Acting on prudential motives, and in order to preserve harmony, I cut the blankets up into several pieces, dividing them as I best could. This done, we returned to the wrecked boat, which they had evidently seen or known about before; indeed they soon told me, that a few days previous, two white men had wandered from the beach into the bush where these natives were, who received them kindly. The poor fellows were dreadfully bruised and cold — in fact, perishing from exposure, thirst, and

hunger. They pointed in the direction where I had found the boat, as if trying to make the tribe understand that some accident had happened, looking at the same time very sad and disconsolate. Being well fed on fish and kangaroo, after some days they recovered their strength; the natives then tried to make them understand there was a white man — meaning myself — amongst them, and that they would go in search of me; but the poor fellows could not be made to comprehend their meaning; and went away by themselves toward the Yawang Plains.

There is no doubt but they were part of the people cast ashore in the boat. Some months after I heard that the same two men, who had been so kindly treated, were savagely murdered, whilst crossing the Yarra River, by a tribe called the Wairwaioo. I grieved very much at this melancholy event, for had I arrived in time no doubt their lives would have been preserved; and on the circumstance I reflected very seriously, expressing my heartfelt thanks to the great Creator of my being, for having brought me unharmed through so many dangers.

Several months after, when journeying alone along the beach, I found a large cask, a barrel or hogshead, partly buried in the sand, which, no doubt, had been thrown on shore from a wrecked ship. It was much too heavy for me to lift, or move in any way; so I set to work digging round about it; until I could get at the iron hoops, which I knew were valuable to the natives. At length I knocked the head in, but could not fancy what the liquid contents were, having lived so long in



the bush without tasting any other drink than water. The flavour appeared to be horribly offensive, and the smell equally so. It must have been either beer or wine, not being strong enough for spirits. However, I determined on letting the whole contents go by the run, to prevent mischief — should the natives take a fancy to it — although so utterly nauseous to my palate. Having broken up the iron hoops into pieces, I some days after divided them amongst those who were most kind to me, and by these presents added greatly to the influence I had already acquired over them. Whether being so long with them was the occasion or not, but I began to fancy they were gradually becoming more docile and civilized.

The various families returned to their several camping places — except one old man, his wife, and children, who remained; and we proceeded together to a lake called Jerringot — one of a chain of that name — which supplies the Barwin River. Here the Bunyip — the extraordinary animal I have already mentioned — were often seen by the natives, who had a great dread of them, believing them to have some supernatural power over human beings, so as to occasion death, sickness, disease, and such like misfortunes. They have also a superstitious notion, that the great abundance of eels in some of the lagoons where these animals resort, are ordered for the Bunyip's provision; and they therefore seldom remain long in such neighbourhoods, after having seen the creature.

They told me a story of a woman having been killed by one of them, stating that it happened in this way.

A particular family one day was surprised at the great quantity of eels they caught; for as fast as the husband could carry them back to their hut, the woman pulled them out of the lagoon. This, they said, was a cunning manoeuvre of a Bunyip, to lull her into security — so that in her husband's absence he might seize her for food. However this was, after the husband had stayed away some time, he returned, but his wife was gone, and she was never seen after. So great is the dread the natives have of these creatures, that on discovering one, they throw themselves flat on their faces, muttering some gibberish, or flee away from the borders of the lake or river, as if pursued by a wild beast.

When alone, I several times attempted to spear a Bunyip; but, had the natives seen me do so, it would have caused great displeasure. And again, if I had succeeded in killing, or even wounding one, my own life would probably have paid the forfeit — they considering the animal, as I have already said, something supernatural.

## CHAPTER VIII

NEWS OF ANOTHER SHIP — LANDING OF  
SETTLERS — MY REFLECTIONS — LIBERTY OR  
CAPTIVITY? THAT'S THE QUESTION — VISIT THE  
NEWCOMERS — RECEIVED KINDLY BY THEM —  
MESSRS. WEDGE AND BATMAN — HOPES FOR  
THE FUTURE — EXPLORING EXPEDITION —  
BUCKLEY'S FALLS — RECEIVE A FREE PARDON.

“Sleep, to the homeless, thou art home,  
The friendless find in thee a friend;  
And well is he, where'er he roam,  
Who meets thee at his journey's end.”

ONE day when the old man just mentioned as having remained with us, was out with me gathering roots, we discovered two young natives coming through the marshes, and in our direction: each having a coloured cotton handkerchief fastened to the end of his spear. These they held up as high as they could, waving them about to and fro, for me to see — knowing me to be in that neighbourhood. It was evident they had met with civilized people; and, on coming up, it was explained that they had met with three white, and six black men, they had never seen before. I enquired if the strangers had any boat? and was told they had a Koorong, meaning a ship, but that she was gone, leaving the

men behind; — that they had erected two white houses, which I supposed to be tents; — that they had plenty of provisions, blankets, tomahawks, and such articles — that they had asked for some of the Kallallingurks (tomahawks), but were refused; although presents were made to the tribe near Indented Heads, of knives, and scissors, and other things.

The next piece of intelligence was very alarming — the men saying they were in search of another tribe, to enable those they had left behind to murder the white people the more easily, and by doing so to get possession of their property.

That night was one of great anxiety to me, for I knew not how, without danger, to apprise the strangers of their perilous situation — as the least appearance of such an intention would, to the natives, have seemed like treachery. My reflections were very painful, for I was, of course, aware of having long since forgotten the language of my youth. I was at a loss what to do for the best, but at length determined on hazarding my life by going to them at the earliest opportunity, for their protection. So when the two men who brought the intelligence had left us to go in search of the other tribe, I hastened off on my journey to where the strangers were — which, as the natives had described, was about fifteen miles distant; but it must have been much more, for I did not reach it until the next day; the weather being cold and very tempestuous. At length I arrived in sight of a long pole, or staff, with the British colours hoisted upon it; and there I also saw a sort of camp. I now was overwhelmed with

feelings connected with the past, the present, and the future. My being an absconder from the operations of the sentence imposed upon me by the authorities, and the consequences of having so done; the present, with reference to my then unmistakable liberty, and perfect freedom from all such consequences; and, as to the future, there was what before me? — captivity, and probable punishment; who could tell?

Whilst sitting in deep thought musing over all these matters, I saw one of the white men take a bucket and go with it to a well some way off, and when he had left it with his load, I went there also, in order to gradually recover my senses, and act upon my ultimate determination, whatever it might be.

From the well I had a good view of all about me, and observed that the natives had pitched their tents near those of the white men — the former being seated round their fires, evidently in great excitement. Presently some of the natives saw me, and turning round, pointed me out to one of the white people; and seeing they had done so, I walked away from the well, up to their place, and seated myself there, having my spears and other war and hunting implements between my legs. The white men could not make me out — my half-caste colour, and extraordinary height and figure — dressed, or rather undressed, as I was — completely confounding them as to my real character. At length one of them came up and asked me some questions which I could not understand; but when he offered me bread — calling it by its name — a cloud appeared to pass from over my brain, and I soon

repeated that, and other English words after him. Somehow or other I soon made myself understood to them as not being a native-born, and so the white men took me to their tents, and clothed me, giving me biscuit, tea, and meat; and they were, indeed, all very kind in every way. My sensations that night I cannot describe, and before I closed my eyes I offered up to God fervent prayers of thankfulness for my deliverance; for although I saw great danger to the newcomers, in consequence of their weakness in numbers, compared with the strength which could be brought against them, yet I thought it certain they had resources in reserve, which might be made available, even if the first party was doomed to be sacrificed.

As I have already said, I was very anxious, but at the same time grateful, believing the period had arrived for my deliverance. My sensations I cannot describe; and, as I could not explain them in my mother tongue, I showed the initials W B on one of my arms, by which they began readily to sympathize and look upon me as a long lost castaway seaman — treating me accordingly, by giving me well cooked food, shelter, and raiment. Word by word I began to comprehend what they said, and soon understood — as if by instinct — that they intended to remain in the country; — that they had seen several of the native chiefs, with whom — as they said — they had exchanged all sorts of things for land; but that I knew could not have been, because, unlike other savage communities, or people, they have no chiefs claiming or possessing any superior right over the soil: theirs only being as the heads of

families. I also knew that if any transactions had taken place, it must have been because the natives knew nothing of the value of the country, except as hunting grounds, supplying them with the means of present existence. I therefore looked upon the land dealing spoken of, as another hoax of the white man, to possess the inheritance of the uncivilized natives of the forest, whose tread on the vast Australian continent will very soon be no more heard, and whose crimes and sorrows are fast fading away amongst other recollections of the past.

In a day or two I was quite at home with the strangers, to whom I made myself useful in any way I could, by giving them useful information about the country. They said the vessel which had landed them would be back again from Launceston in a few days; bringing — they thought — a great many people, and a further supply of provisions and working tools. By their desire, I remained at the camp with them constantly, night and day; and I did so with considerable anxiety, knowing that the tribe the two men had gone to fetch, would soon arrive, and might be disposed to follow up their murderous intentions. At length these people came in great numbers, and seeing the very few English, and small party of Sydney natives, their determination to destroy them was communicated to me, with a positive desire that I should aid them, and with a threat that I should be sacrificed with the weaker party on my refusing to do so.

I knew not how to act for the best; if I acquainted the new settlers of their great danger, they might, in

the excitement, have had recourse to violence, which would have made matters in all probability worse, they being so few in number. The policy I adopted therefore, was, to seem to fall in with the views of the savages, but to induce them to delay carrying them out until the ship arrived, when I said, in support of my argument, the amount of plunder would be much increased.

This manoeuvre succeeded for a few days, but at the end of that time they became very impatient, so that I told the white men to be on their guard; and arming myself with a gun; I threatened, in strong language, the life of the first native who raised a hostile hand against the strangers; telling them afterwards, that on the arrival of the vessel they should have presents in abundance. This pacified them, and they turned their thoughts from mischief to fishing and hunting: our party, for so I must now speak, keeping a good look out every night, relieving each other at intervals, to prevent surprise. At length the vessel was made out by me whilst anxiously gazing across the bay, and I lost no time in giving the pleasing intelligence to both parties; — as for the natives, they made great rejoicings, jumping round and round me in the wildest manner, tapping me on the shoulders to show their delight at my not having deceived them; and, of course, at the arrival of the expected presents. No doubt, their guilty consciences touched them up a little; for, remembering and referring to their murderous designs, they asked me if I thought it would be safe for them to remain, or more advisable to run away into the



bush? I told them to stay where they were, as they had done no wrong, but had they done so, it would have been a very different matter; for in that case, they would, to a certainty, all have been shot or hanged.

The vessel — her name I do not recollect — kept standing up the bay until she touched upon a sand-bank, about three miles off, when Mr. Batman and Mr. Wedge, who were on board, left her in a boat; and, in order to prepare for their landing in safety, I went up to the native camp, and addressed the tribes as to the conduct they should pursue. The gentlemen I have named, on coming up to where we were — whites and blacks — appeared to be very much astonished at seeing me, and at my height, as I rose at their approach. There was a person named Gunn, who had been left in charge of the party during their absence, and he soon explained who I was, and other matters. Mr. Batman asked me many questions, and I told him I arrived in a ship, the name of which I had forgotten; and, as I thought, about twenty years before — but that I could only guess, having lost all recollection of time? He then asked me if I would remain altogether with his party, and what presents it would be most advisable to give the natives? The first article I recommended was bread; so the boat was immediately sent off for two bags of biscuits, and these were distributed at a great corrobberree we had that night; which entertainment — if it may be called — very much delighted the visitors.

My task now was to keep alive the good understanding which existed; in that I succeeded: and in the

meantime, the vessel had floated off the sand-bank, and we landed from her, provisions, blacksmiths', carpenters', and other tools.

As Mrs. Batman with her family had arrived in the vessel, they were landed also, as soon as the best accommodations that could be prepared had been made ready for their reception.

The brig sailed the following day, leaving Messrs. Batman, Wedge, and the whole party behind making permanent arrangements for a settlement.

To Mr. Wedge I had fully explained all the circumstances of my case, and my anxiety about my position, as a runaway from the *Calcutta*. That gentleman said he would represent them in the most favourable light to Lieutenant-Governor Arthur, so that I might feel safe in returning to Van Diemen's Land; for I was resolved on not doing so as a prisoner, after so many years' suffering. Mr. Wedge kindly promised to use all the interest he had to procure me a free pardon; and so I waited the next arrival of the vessel, employing myself in the meantime as an interpreter, and as the friend of both parties, seldom leaving the camp, in case any unfortunate dispute might arise during my absence.

At length Mr. Wedge expressed a wish that I should accompany him on an exploring excursion inland; so we started with two others, and three of the Sydney blacks, reaching Keingeang (as the natives called an extensive lake) the first night; and the next day Booneewang, a rising ground of considerable height, from whence may be seen a great extent of country.

Mr. Wedge here took some sketches, and I pointed out to him the falls, near a place called Woorongo, where I had caught a vast quantity of eels. Of these falls he also took a view, calling them Buckley's Falls, out of compliment to me. We passed, the next day and the following, over a great extent of fine country; now jotted with the homesteads of many an industrious and wealthy settler.

It would be useless for me to describe a country at this time so generally known; suffice it to say, Mr. Wedge was surprised and delighted with the magnificence of its pastoral and agricultural resources, making, I suppose, his reports accordingly.

I must state, however, that on this excursion we visited my old fishing hut, at the Karaaf River, and, on more than one occasion, we shot wild fowl on the rivers and lakes, in the presence of the natives; so as to occasion them to entertain great dread of the use of fire-arms. I was authorised to tell those I met with, that if they would go to the settlement, presents would be made to them of blankets, knives, etc., and many promised to visit us.

For some time I found it as much as I could do to keep down their inclination for thievery, and their continual grumbling at some plan not being acted upon for seizing all they saw before them — they thinking it altogether my fault that an attack had not been made; for, although they dreaded the fire-arms, they desired to surprise the party, and beat them by their numbers.

At length the vessel arrived from Hobart Town, anchoring about two miles off the land, and the boat

we had left with us being launched and manned, Mr. Batman went on board.

On leaving us he told me he would make a signal by firing off his gun, if there was any good news in which I was interested. He was not long on board before he did so, and that I was delighted may be easily imagined; and I had great reason to be more so, when, on landing, he handed me a letter to Mr. Wedge, who told me all was right. The next matter of importance was, to remind him of my promise to the natives, which, as the ship had arrived, ought to be performed promptly, in order to avoid dissatisfaction. The boat was accordingly sent off again to the vessel for two more bags of biscuit, but it did not return until late, so that I was obliged to defer sharing them out that night. The next morning I did so, and Mr. Wedge showed me at the same time a free pardon from Governor Arthur, and a very flattering testimonial of thanks for my services to the settlers. These documents were dated the twenty-fifth of August, One thousand eight hundred and thirty-five; which, strange to say, was exactly thirty-two years from the date of my landing from the ship *Calcutta*. I take this opportunity of publicly acknowledging the great kindness shown me by Mr. Wedge, in thus procuring me my freedom, so immediately after my becoming known to him in such an extraordinary manner; and also my gratitude to Sir George, then Colonel Arthur, for his having so readily responded to the appeal made on my behalf. It was more than I had reason to expect from any governor, without a previous reference to the home authorities;

and the confidence thus placed in my future exertions to benefit the first settlers, gratified me exceedingly.

Allow me, generous reader, to throw my mind back upon the hour when I thus received deliverance from the past and present, and my long hoped for freedom for the future. Thus, in effect, I expressed myself:—  
“I can now, once more, raise my thoughts — my unshackled mind and hands — to heaven, as a free man. I can now offer up my prayers of praise and thankfulness to God, for my extraordinary deliverance, and for His wonderful preservation of me during so long a period. My heart beats high with joy, almost to its bursting — and, I ask, whose heart, bounding from so many long years of solitude and captivity into freedom, could, or can, beat like mine?”

## CHAPTER IX

CHANGE OF SETTLEMENT — VISIT FROM THE PUT-  
NAROOS AND WAINWORRAS — MR. GELLI-  
BRAND — ENGAGE AS INTERPRETER —  
ANOTHER ARRIVAL — FIRST HOUSE BUILT —  
COLONISING EXCITEMENT — DISPUTES BE-  
TWEEN THE SETTLERS AND NATIVES — TWO  
SETTLERS KILLED.

“For ’tis a goodly sight to see  
What heaven has done for this delicious land;  
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree,  
What goodly prospects o’er the hills expand.”

**B**Y the same vessel which brought my pardon, there arrived also instructions from the directors of the company forming the settlement, for us to break up our present encampment, and take up our station on the right bank of the Yarra from its source, at a spot they had fixed upon as the site of a town; little thinking, however, it was, in so brief a space of time, to become the capital of a mighty colony, replete in itself with all that is required to found a nation of pre-eminent importance.

In consequence of these orders, everyone was busily employed for two days packing up and preparing for the remove to Melbourne; then only known as a town

by its marked trees, and other simple signs of such like early progress. Having put all our baggage on board, I explained to the natives where we were going to, and having so done I once more trod the deck of a ship, with feelings impossible to be explained. My sable friends were not at all pleased at our leaving, thinking we might be going away altogether; and their thoughts still being upon plunder, they did not by any means like the idea of its probable escape.

In the trip up we were unfortunate, for the wind was contrary; so we had to beat about the bay two days, but in the end reached our destination, and immediately commenced unloading the cargo — the mechanics commencing temporary workshops and dwelling-houses for the people.

Whilst thus occupied, we were visited by two of the tribes I have already mentioned, the Putnaroo and the Wainworras — the savages who murdered the two shipwrecked mariners when crossing the Yarra River. They mustered about two hundred strong, men, women, and children. I had great difficulty in keeping these people from exercising their thievish inclinations, thereby bringing on difficulties between the settlers and the blacks; and I had enough to do, so as to keep myself from the suspicion of intending wrong either to one or the other party. During all the time we were landing the cargo and storing it, sentries were mounted day and night, to prevent pilfering and disputes; but other tribes continuing to arrive, increasing their strength, it occasioned me great anxiety; because I knew, as the last arrivals had left their families behind,

they came with warlike intentions, and with hopes of plunder, in case an opportunity offered. This devilry was, however, neutralized by the gentlemen in charge of the settlement making them more presents of blankets, bread, knives, scissors, and such like useful articles; with which the tribes separated, apparently satisfied with the generosity shown them, and with the promises made of further supplies on the arrival of the next ship from Van Diemen's Land.

That vessel brought several gentlemen, amongst whom was Mr. Gellibrand, and they engaged me as their interpreter, at a salary of fifty pounds a year, with rations. Soon after this, we started on an exploring expedition, looking for land; and were out about six days, traversing in the meantime, all the country round, visiting Buckley's Falls, the Yawang Hills, and other localities already mentioned; during which journey we fell in with a man, his wife, and children, with whom I had been many months, who all lamented bitterly my having left them; but the present of a blanket happily soothed their affliction.

On our return to Melbourne we found another vessel had arrived, bringing a cargo of potatoes and other food, and articles suited to the general wants and requirements of the settlement. A great portion of the former I daily distributed to the natives by order of the persons in charge; the bricks and building materials being appropriated to the erection of a residence for Mr. Batman, on what is now called Batman's Hill, which was the first habitation regularly formed at Port Phillip. Having been bred a bricklayer, I superintended



the putting up of the chimneys, although it was so many years since I had learned the trade under my good old master, Mr. Wyatt.

Other families continued to arrive, a great excitement having been created in the adjacent colonies, by the reports made of the discovery of excellent sheep and cattle pasturage; and, particularly amongst the settlers in Van Diemen's Land, who were already induced to embark large amounts in the speculation; many others also coming amongst us for the purpose of ascertaining the value of the country thus opened up, and the propriety of changing their abodes.

All things went on very quietly, until several of the Sydney blacks, and others, began to be too familiar with the native women; and at length, one of the latter came to me, saying, she had been seized by one of the shepherds, who had tied her up, but, that when he was asleep she had broken loose, and had run away to me for protection. I considered it my duty to mention the circumstance to Mr. Gellibrand, pointing out the consequences that would ensue if this conduct was persisted in; knowing well the vindictive vengeance of the natives, who, as I have already shown, are exceedingly jealous in all such matters. That gentleman immediately sent for the man accused, but he denied all knowledge of the woman, or of the circumstances to which she had referred. Mr. Gellibrand had, however, good proof of his guilt; and therefore, after severely reprimanding him for his brutality, he dismissed him from the company's service, and ordered his immediate return to Van Diemen's Land.

Soon after this, there arrived a missionary, who wished to travel up the country, and being applied to, I named six natives I could trust to accompany him; and they returned with him in safety after an absence of six days. This missionary was the late Rev. Joseph Orton.

Emigrants from Sydney and Van Diemen's Land now continued to arrive almost daily, and from the former place came several gentlemen, holding official appointments, to report on the capabilities of the country generally: Mr. Gellibrand also came again from Hobart Town. During his absence an affray had taken place between the natives and some of the settlers, in which two of the latter were killed. I know nothing of the circumstances, as the affair occurred more than twenty miles away from the settlement; excepting that the deceased were buried at Melbourne.

## CHAPTER X

ARRIVAL OF CAPTAIN LONSDALE — STOCKMAN MURDERED — GENERAL BOURKE ARRIVES — EARTHQUAKE — LOSS OF MESSRS. GELLIBRAND AND HESSE — EXPLORING PARTIES GO IN SEARCH OF THEM — MY HORSE BRUTALLY MAIMED — VISIT LAUNCESTON — RETURN TO MELBOURNE — LEAVE THE SERVICE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

“Heaven, from all creatures, hides the book of fate,  
All but the page prescribed — their present state.”

I SHOULD here state, that a Mr. Faulkner, from Launceston, had been some time settled in the colony, but he had no connection with the company. From some cause or other, and although not knowing much of me, he represented me to be a dangerous character: as one having too great an influence over the natives. I was much hurt at his representations to my prejudice with the company; and so, not knowing what the ultimate consequences might be, I resigned my situation; continuing however with Mr. Batman, who treated me with the greatest kindness on all occasions. I do not attribute any intentional wrong to Mr. Faulkner, believing him to have been misinformed by

interested persons, and that I was sacrificed by their malignity.

With Mr. Batman I remained until the arrival of a King's ship from Sydney, having on board Captain Lonsdale, of the King's Own Regiment of Foot, my old corps, with which I had served in Holland. He came to assume the command, not only as a military officer, but as the resident magistrate of the new colony. A detachment of the Fourth accompanied him for the protection of the settlers; who were, by this time, numerous, many of them being also very wealthy, and influential. The new commandant enquired very particularly into my history and sufferings, and ultimately offered me employ, with the same pay and advantages I had had before I was discharged from the company's service; but considering all I had done, I said I thought myself entitled to at least an advance of pay, which was at length agreed upon; so that I was in future to receive sixty pounds per annum, and rations, instead of fifty, as heretofore. This being arranged, I began the duties of my office as interpreter and attendant on the new commandant, for the building of barracks, a store-house, and such like; Captain Lonsdale however retaining his quarters on board, until a suitable temporary building was erected for his accommodation.

After a little time, I succeeded in getting the natives to work in carrying loads of goods, building materials, and water, from place to place, where they were required; rewarding them each with boiled meat and biscuit; and this sort of employ they followed with great cheerfulness.

At the sight of the soldiers' red jackets, however, they were at first very much alarmed, associating the colour with something very dreadful.

My duty now was to visit about amongst the various settlers' families, to ascertain if the natives had been in any way troublesome, to promote a mutual confidence between the parties, and for some time I was pleased to find all things going on well; but one day, a white boy brought me word that two stock-keepers had been murdered, in consequence of their attempting to ill-use some native women when they were out gathering roots. Their screams brought some of the tribe to their assistance, and the next day, as the shepherds were proceeding to another station, having their guns and provisions fastened on a pack-horse, the natives way-laid and surprised them — seizing their guns the first thing, and then murdering them. This unfortunate affair happened about seventy miles from the settlement; and this was not the only one to be regretted, for several robberies having taken place near Geelong, a native was seized, and although merely suspected, he was tied to a tree and shot; the body being thrown into the Barwin River.

I was sent, in company with two other constables, to apprehend the white man — a servant of a Mr. Fisher; and having brought him with us to Melbourne, he was fully committed and sent to Sydney for trial, there being no competent tribunal at Port Phillip. He was acquitted, as no person could clearly prove the identity of the deceased, and other necessary particulars in cases of life and death.

Soon after this, Governor Bourke visited us, with several of the civil and military officers of the New South Wales government. As good a parade as possible was made to receive him, myself having the charge of about one hundred natives ranked up in line, soldier fashion, and saluting him by putting their hands to their foreheads as I directed.

His Excellency told me to say to them, if they were quiet and orderly they should have presents of bread, blankets, and tomahawks; all which promises were faithfully kept within a very few hours after he had landed.

The governor having expressed a desire to see something of the interior, I was ordered to attend him, with an escort; and crossing the Yawang Plains, we reached the Marrabul, now called the Esk River, the first night, there pitching our tents. The night following we halted near the Yallock, where we again bivouacked, remaining there several days; his excellency, the surveyor-general and others, taking me with them, and moving in various directions, expressing great delight at all they saw of the country in that quarter. The natives we met with in these excursions, were, through me, assured by the governor, that if they came to the settlement, and avoided committing any offences against the white people, they should receive presents of all kinds of useful articles. These invitations and promises many of them availed themselves of, behaving very peaceably. One night whilst away from Melbourne, the party was awoken by shocks of an earthquake; and so heavy were they, that the sentry gave an alarm,

thinking at first the natives were in upon our powder and provisions.

About this time we received intelligence that Mr. Gellibrand had again arrived from Hobart Town, in company with a Mr. Hesse, a solicitor of that city. It appeared that shortly after landing at Geelong, they had left that place on horseback for Melbourne; but, at the end of a fortnight, great alarm was excited by the news, that they had not arrived at the latter — nor found their way back to the former. Although greatly fatigued after a very long journey, I was immediately sent on horseback in search of them; and reaching the hut of a gentleman, nearly fifty miles distant, I remained there for Mr. Gellibrand's son, who was to meet me by appointment. No news of the lost gentlemen could be obtained by me on my journey; — and here, I should say, that they had taken with them as a guide a white man, who, according to his statement, they had discharged, in consequence of some misunderstanding about the direction of the route. On his return to his master, Captain Pollack, he stated "That they had refused to be guided by him, and that therefore he had left." I engaged some trustworthy natives and accompanied them, hoping to trace the steps of the horses.

When Mr. Gellibrand, junior, joined me at the place appointed, we all proceeded to Captain Pollack's station, from whence, after necessary refreshment, the latter gentleman accompanied us on our search, following the course the guide said the lost travellers had

taken, to the spot where they had left him. We traced the spoor of the horses, as the Cape men say, much farther on, into an extensive plain recently burnt, and here we lost it altogether. We now struck across the country, still hoping to gather some intelligence; and falling in with a native encampment, and having reason to think it was not a tribe likely to receive the white men in a friendly manner, I requested them to remain where they were, whilst I endeavoured to obtain some information. This being acceded, I approached, but being on horseback, and in an unknown dress they, at first, did not know me, but ran away in great alarm, having never seen a horse before. After a time, however, I made them understand who I was, and dismounting, they all came round me in a friendly manner. Just when I was explaining the object of my visit, our white party rode up, and one of them began asking questions in a jargon of language no one could understand; and by this interference prevented my doing any service, for I had scarcely had time to express even a hope that they would go in search and do their best to bring the lost gentlemen to the settlement. The abrupt appearance of our people on horseback, so much alarmed the natives, that I could do nothing, except accompany them alone to their camp as they wished, but this my companions would not allow me, as their guide, to do, not feeling safe in my absence.

Our efforts to trace the lost travellers were all in vain, and at length I returned to Melbourne to report our ineffectual efforts for their rescue. Whilst we were



absent on the expedition, Governor Bourke had returned to Sydney, and the news of the loss of Messrs. Gellibrand and Hesse having been forwarded to Hobart Town, three of their friends arrived with the determination, if possible, to trace their fate. I was applied to for information, and to accompany them; the former I gave them, but I refused the latter proposal, because I was certain I could do much better if I went by myself on such a mission. They appeared very much displeased at my objections, and I was summoned before the commandant to give my reasons; to whom I said, those who were with me before had most improperly interfered, endangering my life and their own, by not having placed confidence in me and allowed me to do with, and say to the natives, what I thought best on the matter. The commandant agreed with me, but the persons who had taken the affair in hand decided on having their own way; and they accordingly engaged several blacks to go with them, who, strange to say, they furnished with fire-arms.

Three days after they had left the place, I had permission from Captain Lonsdale to proceed alone on my search; but my horse having a sore back, I was obliged to remain a short time until it could bear the saddle. In the meantime he was tethered in the rear of my quarters, where the animal was very happy during his temporary rest; until one day a native came running to me in great sorrow, saying he was bleeding very much and nearly dead. Mr. Batman happening to be near, we went away together to where the horse was, and found he had been, what is called, ham-strung; all

the hind sinews of his legs having been cut through by some white, or other savage.

My poor horse died, and I took passage by a vessel to Geelong, in order there to provide myself with another, and thence pursue my search, although I had long since concluded upon its being useless, after the absurd efforts which had been made by those who, no doubt, most anxiously desired to recover the lost gentlemen, but knew nothing about how successfully to accomplish so difficult an undertaking in such a country and under such circumstances. Mr. Gellibrand, junior, did all he could; and as a son, was naturally excited and influenced by all proper feelings of regret, anxiety, and perseverance; but what could he do, overruled as he was by others, who had done more harm than good in the search, as I have already shown, by their improper interference with me, who might have led to the discovery of the lost travellers, either dead or alive.

Having obtained permission, I at length set off alone, and at Mr. Reibey's station received intelligence that a native and his daughter had been shot by the natives who had accompanied the three gentlemen that preceded me from Melbourne by land, and who, being much alarmed at the circumstance just recorded, had returned to that place. Knowing it would be useless for me to attempt any discovery after this event, I went on board again, and returned to Melbourne also. It was inexcusable murder, for there was not the least reason to believe that the poor people who had been so mercilessly sacrificed, had had anything to do with

the death of either Mr. Gellibrand or Mr. Hesse, neither was it known at that time whether they were dead or alive. This affair gave me great pain, because, from my long association with the natives, I thought such destruction of life anything but creditable to my countrymen; but on the contrary, that they were atrocious acts of oppression.

From that time all search after the unfortunate gentlemen ceased, but enquiries were still continued, unfortunately without effect. In Mr. Gellibrand, I lost a very good and kind friend; his humane considerations for me will never be forgotten; and amongst other evidences of this feeling, he had given me the horse which, as I have just said, was so brutally mutilated.

About this time, an absconder from Van Diemen's Land was apprehended, and ordered by the magistrates to be returned to Launceston; and I asked permission to take charge of him to that colony, which request was acceded to, as I was a constable. Having delivered the prisoner to the gaoler at Launceston, I went into the country for a few days to visit an old shipmate, whose name it is not necessary to mention, and then returned for a passage back again, according to the orders I had received.

At this time a steam vessel arrived at Launceston with some prisoners bound to Port Phillip, and in her was Captain Fyans, who had been appointed resident magistrate at Geelong. I returned to the new colony in that vessel, having received great kindness at Launceston from Mr. Samms, the under sheriff, and others,

who gave me flour, and other things, as presents for myself, and to be given to the natives.

On my arrival at Melbourne, I was directed to accompany Captain Fyans to Geelong, he having a number of other persons with him. On crossing the Yawang Plains it came on to rain very heavily, and having been much occupied and exhausted before I left Melbourne, by my explanations to the friendly tribes of natives, and by my long march, I was compelled to rest by the way — the party proceeded on without me.

I hesitated for some time whether I would follow the captain in the morning, but at length determined to do so, and proceeded to Mr. Fisher's station, who on all occasions treated me, as had Messrs. Simpson and Wedge, with the greatest kindness and consideration; so much so, that I shall, through life, always be pleased to acknowledge the obligations I am under to them and others.

Having gone on to Geelong and remained there several days, I obtained permission to return to Melbourne by water; and, soon after my arrival, was sent in search of sheep, said to have been driven away by natives. In this way I was employed for several weeks, but finding that some persons were always throwing difficulties in the way of my interests, and not knowing what might be the result, I determined on resigning office, and on leaving a colony where my services were so little known, and so badly appreciated by the principal authorities.

It was not without great regret, that I resolved on leaving the colony, because I had believed my knowledge of the language and habits of the natives, acquired during my sojourning amongst them, might have led to my being employed by the local authorities during the rest of my life; but, when I reflected on the suspicion with which I was viewed by the most influential white men, and on the probable doubt the natives would entertain in my sincerity after having left them, I thought it best to retire to Van Diemen's Land. Indeed, I could not calculate on one hour's personal safety from either one party or the other, under such circumstances, for if lives had been lost, or cattle stolen, in any locality where I happened to be stationed, prejudice or vindictive feelings might have been brought into play, and I should have been sacrificed.

In proof of this, and of the reckless way in which conclusions were sometimes arrived at in serious matters, I will here relate, in as few words as possible, what happened to one of the natives, who, poor fellow, had a very narrow escape from death, in consequence of false information; such as I might have been subjected to at any time, had I remained in a colony where no confidence was placed in me, merely because I possessed more influence with the natives than others.

## CHAPTER XI

CHARGE AGAINST A NATIVE — HOW SUSTAINED —  
THE CLIMATE — SAIL FOR HOBART TOWN —  
HOSPITABLE RECEPTION — NARROW ESCAPE  
FROM BECOMING A PUBLIC PERFORMER —  
GOVERNMENT HOUSE — AGAIN ENTER THE  
PUBLIC SERVICE — MY MARRIAGE — DIS-  
CHARGE AND PENSION — NARRATIVE DRAWS  
TO A CLOSE.

My march of life is nearly ended;  
Bugler — sound the "Halt!"

I HAVE already related some of the circumstances connected with the loss of Messrs. Gellibrand and Hesse. Soon after the search for them had been given up, a vessel arrived at Geelong from Van Diemen's Land with goods and passengers; amongst them was a carpenter, who had with him a tool-chest and other baggage to carry up from the beach. By that time the natives had acquired the industrious habit of working in this way, many of them being very useful and civil, after their fashion; in fact, all those who know anything of their habits, are aware how docile those of the poor creatures are, who are well inclined, and how anxious they are to please those who employ and treat them kindly. One of this description was engaged by

the carpenter to carry his traps up from the ship, and as a reward, and for the sake of decency, he was clothed in a much worn coat and trousers; in which, having done all that was required of him, he set off to astonish his tribe by his very smart and altered appearance. He left in great glee, little thinking of what was to follow.

Some days after, another vessel arrived from Van Dieman's Land, and he, with others, went to her, looking for a job. The master of this craft seeing a native in such a dress, began to examine him after the fashion peculiar to self-constituted and many other kinds of justices, who found their views and decisions only upon one order of thinking; namely, the infallibility of *their own* opinions — not in the least valuing those of others.

This wise sailor judge swore he knew the coat the man had on to have been the property of Mr. Hesse; that, in fact, it was the one he wore when he left Hobart Town; — that he could trace spots of blood upon it; and, on this evidence the native was seized, handcuffed, and forwarded to Melbourne on a charge of murder.

When the accused arrived there, he was brought before the commandant, and I was required to act as interpreter; this, however, I at first declined, having given up my connection with the government; but considering that the life of a fellow-creature was in jeopardy, I at length consented.

A boy, in the employ of Mr. Faulkner, who was supposed to know something of the language, was

interrogated as to what had passed between him and the prisoner? But I soon found the boy was altogether ignorant, and was shocked at the idea of his evidence being taken. I then questioned the accused as to how he became possessed of the clothes? He explained, by stating, that they were given him in the manner before-mentioned. I asked the poor fellow if he would know the carpenter again; or where he lived, so as to enable us to obtain his evidence? He said the man had left Geelong, and that he knew nothing about his present residence.

I explained all this to the justices, but the captain of the vessel persisted in the statement that the coat belonged to Mr. Hesse; so the prisoner was remanded to the guard-house. The coat was then given into my charge, with instructions that I should make every enquiry concerning its former ownership; and with that view, I gave it into the care of the chief constable, readily enlisting his sympathies for the native, who I believed to be innocent.

One day whilst walking along the banks of the river we were talking over the matter, particularly of the hard swearing of the captain, and of the probable consequences to the accused: when a man, who, with his wife, was within hearing, suddenly stopped, and said he should like to see the coat; for he remembered having given a coat of the kind with other things to a native, for carrying his chests up from the Geelong beach in the manner already mentioned. We listened with great interest to his statements, and he afterwards fully proved the identity of the coat; and that the stains



of supposed blood upon it were red paint marks, occasioned by himself when wearing it in his trade at Launceston. He afterwards clearly identified the prisoner as the native to whom he had given the coat and trousers; so that after an unavoidable short delay, he was discharged, greatly delighted at being liberated; although, on finding himself once more at liberty, he cried loudly and bitterly, like a child.

I make no remark upon the conduct of his accuser, who had so nearly sacrificed the life of another; but I must do the commandant, Captain Lonsdale, the justice to say, he did all he could in the matter to administer justice free from prejudice; and that, after the case was dismissed, he ordered me to take the native to his own house, where he was received and treated with great kindness. After eating as much as he pleased, at my recommendation he was given blankets, tomahawks, and other things as presents, added to which, he received a quantity of bread and meat, to help him on his way homewards to his tribe, about fifty miles distant, over a portion of which I accompanied him, leaving the poor fellow at last in high spirits and good humour. It was a very lucky escape for him, and the circumstances are additional proofs of the danger at that time arising out of false information in any matter where the natives were concerned.

As it may be expected, that I should say something more about the localities I visited, of the climate I experienced, during so many years, and of other things and circumstances which more properly belong to the

history of a country, than to that of an individual, I will add a few brief remarks.

The climate I found very genial, in temperature I suppose between that of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land; but during the winter months, the cold winds and rains, in the country near the coast, are very trying, even to the aborigines, who often shrink before the heavy gales into hollow trees, caves, and holes in the rocks, in a pitiable manner. In the summer months, it is not so hot as many imagine, but as the heat generates myriads of mosquitoes, and of a very large sort of horse fly, the traveller suffers much inconvenience and torment. These, however, are not peculiar to Port Phillip, for in all uncleared and uncultivated countries it is the same. To avoid these insects the natives carry their lighted fire-sticks, holding them to windward.

The thunder and lightning storms are occasionally very heavy, and I have already noticed the shock of an earthquake, but I never heard of any other. There was also one heavy flood, in consequence of continuous rains, but they are not often known to exceed the supply required by vegetation.

The trees and flowers — I have not the ability to give an account of these; neither is it necessary, scientific explorers having done so in various works, which the growing importance and natural resources of the province have rendered it desirable to bring before the public. The same with the birds and other creatures. It is more especially my business, in this narrative, to allude to the aborigines.

The natives live to about the same age, generally, as civilized people — some of them, to be very grey-headed. They have an odd idea of death, for they do not suppose that any one dies from natural causes, but from human agencies: such as those to which I have alluded in previous pages of this narrative. The women seldom have more than six children, and not often so many. So soon as they have as many as they can conveniently carry about and provide for, they kill the rest immediately after birth: not to eat them — as may be supposed — but with the idea that, for the sake of both parties, and under such circumstances, death is practical mercy.

To resume the thread of my narrative. I sailed from Melbourne in the Yarra Yarra, on the twenty-eighth of December, 1837, and landed at Hobart Town the tenth of January following. On arriving, the master of the vessel, Captain Lancey, went with me to the bank, to procure the value of a cheque I had, and he afterwards took me to the Duchess of Kent Inn, where he entertained me very hospitably. In fact, on all occasions he behaved towards me in the most generous manner.

At the inn, I was visited by a Mr. Cutts, then the landlord of the Black Swan, Hobart Town, a countryman of mine, who insisted on my making his house my home, free of all charge; which invitation, for a few weeks, I thankfully accepted.

In my rambles about the town, I was frequently accosted by persons anxious for information about Port Phillip, with the extraordinary accounts of which

all Van Dieman's Land had become, I may say, inflamed. To the new colony, vessels full of emigrants, with sheep, etc., were almost daily proceeding; so that any information from me was considered valuable. In one of my perambulations, I met with a gentleman who gave me a ticket to the theatre; asking me, at the same time, to accompany him, which I did, and was very much gratified at what I saw. At length one of the performers came to ask me if I would like to visit the place again, and come upon the stage? Thinking his offer kind, and that I should see the performance better there, I said yes; little supposing I was to be then exhibited as the huge Anglo-Australian giant. However, the next day I found what was intended, and soon gave a denial to any such display, very much to the mortification, as I afterwards understood, of the stage manager, who had publicly notified my appearance.

About this time I was visited at Mr. Cutts', by one of my old shipmates in the *Calcutta*, who had become a wealthy and respectable settler, near the Green Ponds, about thirty miles from Hobart Town. After a few days, and he had settled his business, I accepted an invitation to accompany him to his home, where I was hospitably entertained more than three weeks; when, being tired of an indolent life, I begged my friend to make interest with his excellency Sir John Franklin, so that I might have employ. My friend lost no time in acceding to my wishes; and, in a few days I was directed to call at Government House at an early hour, and had the honour to be introduced to Sir John

and Lady Franklin, and to several gentlemen who were breakfasting there. Numerous were the questions they put to me, and amongst the rest was, what I wished on my own account? I replied, a small allotment of land! His excellency said he could not grant land, but that he would see what could be done in the way of finding me employment.

According to this promise, I was soon afterwards appointed assistant to the storekeeper at the Immigrants' Home, Hobart Town; which situation I held about three months; when the immigrants having been all settled, the establishment was broken up, and I was transferred to the Female Nursery, as gate-keeper.

At the Immigrants' Home I had become acquainted with a family — consisting of a respectable mechanic, his wife, and daughter; the former of whom, thinking to better himself, went on to Sydney; but, whilst on a journey he afterwards undertook overland to Port Phillip, he was killed by natives near the Murray River; thus leaving his family unprovided for.

The fact of his death having been ascertained, I tendered myself to the mother; she accepted me as her future husband, and we were married by the Rev. Mr. Ewing, the episcopalian clergyman at New Town, in the month of March, 1840.

Soon after this, I was attacked by typhus fever, and lay many days suffering very much; it being the only severe illness I had undergone in all my life. The kind attentions I received from my wife and her daughter however, under the merciful providence of God, at length restored me to health, but not to such health as


I had previously enjoyed; my privations and exposure in the bush, with increased years, having, no doubt, materially damaged my naturally strong constitution.

In the year 1850, there was an alteration in the establishment at the nursery, and I was paid off by the Convict Department, my services being no longer required, with a pension of twelve pounds per annum. With this small sum, for which I feel grateful, under all the circumstances of my case, and the industry of my wife and daughter, we contrive to live humbly and honestly; but I do entertain a hope, that something will be done for me by the local authorities of Port Phillip — now the great and wealthy colony of Victoria — when, by the means of this narrative of my life, my sufferings, services, and wants, are better, and more generally known.

My narrative is now at its close; let its details of dangers and privations serve as a moral to the young and reckless; — to all who, passing unheeded the admonitions of parents, guardians, and friends, rush heedlessly on the future, with all its trials and consequences, occasioning many bitter pangs to those who would instil into their minds motives of action, founded on religion and propriety. The want of these, or rather the abandonment of them, by me in early life, led to the sufferings I endured in after years, some of which I have here endeavoured faithfully to portray.

*Finally — To the Almighty God of my existence, I thus publicly offer up in all humility, my heartfelt prayers of thankfulness, for the great and merciful*

*preservation and undeserved blessings he has vouchsafed unto me in all my wanderings: hoping, that when it may please Him to call me hence — I may surrender myself into His hands, with the true spirit and feelings of a Christian man.*



As this page closes "The Adventures of William Buckley," in justice to him something ought here to be said in furtherance of his claim upon the home and local governments. It is generally admitted, that had he not been at Port Phillip when the first settlers arrived, they would, most probably, have encountered dangers and difficulties, which were averted only by his presence and influence.

It is understood, that two hundred acres of land were ordered him by Sir Richard Bourke, which grant he never received. He however yet lives, and the opportunity therefore remains to do him justice. It is not to be supposed that those who have the control of these affairs in Victoria, will rest content with his receiving the pittance of twelve pounds annually from the British Government, for services performed in Van Diemen's Land; — to think this, would be a reproach to all concerned. Let us then hope that some additional provision will be made for him, so that he may never have cause to regret (on account of poverty) his return to civilization, or the services rendered to those of his countrymen who found him in his solitude, and restored him to what he hoped would prove happiness

for the few remaining years of his extraordinary existence.

In all the surrounding prosperity, arising out of the increase of flocks, and herds, and gold, surely Buckley may be permitted, in a very small degree, to participate? His career in this island has been most respectable and praiseworthy. Under all circumstances, then, Victorians, give him a reward suited to your means, your liberal feelings, and your sense of justice.

**(William Buckley died at Hobart on January 30, 1856)**



**The following material presents additional contemporary descriptions of Buckley's life and experiences; other than minor discrepancies, these accounts agree with Morgan's narrative, particularly on Buckley's life with the aborigines.**

**William Todd was a member of John Batman's party, which established a camp in the Melbourne area in the summer of 1835. The following gives an account of the discovery of Buckley.**

### **THE DIARY OF WILLIAM TODD**

(originally published in *The Melbourne Argus*,  
March 4 and 11, 1905)

About 2 o'clock on Sunday, July 6, 1835, William Buckley, a convict, who escaped from Lieutenant-Governor Collins's party in the Calcutta and Ocean transports, when they entered Port Phillip in 1803, and had lived for 32 years with the natives, marched into the camp. The account this diary gives of the incident differs somewhat from that of John Helder Wedge, a member of Batman's association, who arrived at Indented Head camp a month after Buckley was found. Wedge says:—"On Buckley's coming to the place he was observed by one of the men, and it was with no little surprise, if not with a mixture of fear, that he and the other men contemplated the approach of a man so gigantic in appearance . . . They, however, went to him, and soon recognised the features of a European, and on questioning him, with some difficulty learnt who he was. He could not then express

himself in English, and on being asked questions, he only repeated them as do all savages . . . It was about ten days before he could so collect himself as to express himself with any degree of fluency in his own language."

Buckley told at first an utterly untrue story of how he arrived in the country, but later on gave the version which subsequent investigation confirmed. The diary proceeds:—

"Sunday, July 6 — About 2 o'clock a white man came walking up to the native huts, a most surprising height. Clad the same as the natives, he seemed highly pleased to see us. We brought him a piece of bread, which he ate very heartily, and told us immediately what it was. He also informed us that he has been above 20 years in the country, during which time he has been with the natives. Jim Gum measured his height, which was 6ft. 7in. He then told us that his name was William Buckley . . .

Being a long time with the natives he has nearly forgotten the English language, but the native language he can speak fluently. We then brought him to our tent, clothed him with the best we had, and made him share the same as we. After he had got his dinner he informed us that he was a soldier in the King's Own, and a native of Macclesfield in Cheshire, and was wrecked off Port Phillip Heads. The vessel's name he has forgotten, but she had come from England with transports, and was bound for Van Diemen's Land, being the first vessel that brought prisoners out for there. She struck on a rock, and all hands perished

with the exception of him and three others, who swam ashore, one of which was the captain of the vessel, who could not swim, and Buckley carried him on his shoulders, and swam ashore with him. He was an entire day swimming before he could reach the shore.

“When they got to the shore they were much exhausted, with the exception of the captain, whose life Buckley saved. Shortly after, the captain left them and proceeded, where he cannot tell, not having seen or heard of him ever since. The other two died after a few days, and Buckley was left to himself to the mercy of those savages, expecting every hour to meet with them and be put to death. He travelled about the beach, living upon mussels and roots for 40 days, and to his surprise at last fell in with them. They immediately gave him some kangaroo, etc. to eat. He then joined their mob, and he has remained with them ever since, never having seen a white man, and has only seen two vessels since he has been here. He is quite rejoiced to see his own native people once more, never having expected to meet with any. The way he found out that we were here was through those two men that left us on the 4th of June. As soon as he heard he made the best of his way here. He is determined to remain with us until the vessel comes down.

“At about 8 o'clock all the natives came running to our fire; told us that there was a mob of blacks coming down to kill both us and them; prayed for our protection, and made signals for us to shoot them if they came. We told them that we should not let one of them be hurt, and Buckley cried out, ‘We shoot

them — we shoot them.' He has explained everything to them. It was most astonishing to see how amazed and pleased they were. The report they made, we learn, was no more than to frighten us, but they found it was all in vain, and retired to their huts for the night well contented.

"July 7 — Three hands gone kangarooing with the natives. Buckley remained with us at home. Had a good deal of conversation with him, and are in great hopes after a little time he will be able to speak the English language more fluently. He has tried all the means he can to get the natives to leave us, but it is all of no use. They seem determined to remain until such time as the ship arrives. We are obliged always to be on the look-out, as we find they are a most pilfering set. We have denied them of any bread, and are determined not to give them any.

#### *The Natives Leave at Last*

"July 8 — This morning they again rose a report that there was a vessel in sight, for the purpose, we suppose, of getting us all down to the waterside, so as they might plunder the hut. But they found their plan of no avail. The men are gone as usual a-hunting, and returned with one. Buckley has again told them in their own language that we have no more provisions to give them, and that they must retire in the bush until such time as the ship arrives. They consented, and retired for the night well pleased.

"July 9 — The men have just started, and have left the women behind. Pidgeon, Joe, and Bunget have

gone with them for a couple of days. As they were proceeding on their journey they fell in with 16 more natives, which were coming this way. Thinking we would be frightened of them they returned with them. We now have got upwards of 90 natives around us, but as yet they seem to be all very quiet.

"July 10 — Most of the men gone kangarooing. Buckley has informed those new hands that we are very short of provisions, and cannot give them any. They seem to be very contented. We find Buckley to be a most valuable man to us. Since he joined us he seems to get more attached to us every day, always keeping a sharp look-out; he is a complete terror to the natives. Some of the women have left us for three days, so as to get roots for their husbands.

"July 11 — The men went out this morning a-hunting. Buckley has informed us that there is plenty of cedar in Port Phillip, which can be got easy by water or land.

"July 17 — At daylight this morning Buckley spoke to them about starting, and told them that what provisions we had would not last ourselves until the ship came, and we could not possibly spare them any more. Pidgeon, Joe Bull, and Bunget proposed that if they would leave they would bring the dogs, and go with them for a week or a fortnight. They then seemed well pleased, consented to leave, got their things ready, and all started with the exception of one man and his family. They parted from us all very friendly, and said that they should return when the ship arrived. Two of us employed at the hut, two cooking and watching the

tent. One of the boys which Murmdummuck gave Jim Gum still remains with us, and seems much attached to us. He is a fine intelligent lad. We are quite rejoiced at their leaving us, for during the time they were here we were always in the greatest misery, not being able to do any kind of work.

"July 18 — This morning the man and his family which stopped behind have left us. Jim Gum, Allick, and I employed at the house. About 2 o'clock the two men which left us a fortnight ago returned to us, but have not brought any mob with them, as we expected. We are hoping they won't remain long.

"July 19 — They left us at daylight this morning. We are clear of them altogether, but are still on our guard.

"July 27 — We shall now give you an inventory of what things the natives stole from us, namely: — Four tomahawks belonging to Pidgeon, etc., two axes belonging to us, throws, one wedge, one razor, one blanket, one shirt, three knives, two bags of potatoes, which we could not prevent them taking without using rough means, which we did not wish to do, on account of your orders to us.

### *Buckley's Corrected Story*

"July 28 — Four hands gone kangarooing. Buckley has informed us that when he came first to us that the story he told us about his coming here was all false. The reason, he states, of his telling us that story was

he was very much frightened of us, and thought if he had told us the truth we should have shot him. The truth is, as he states, as follows:— He was a soldier in the King's Own, and was transported out of the regiment for life for selling stolen property. It is true he has been in this country 20 years or upwards. The vessel he came in he forgets the name, but states she was bound for Van Dieman's Land, and was one of the first vessels that brought prisoners out for there. On her passage she put in at Western Port, at which place him and three others bolted from the ship, one of which they fired at from the vessel as they were swimming ashore and killed. Buckley and two more escaped, and got away in the bush. The vessel sailed in a few days. They then lived at the sea shore on mussels for several days. After some time they fell in with the natives, who killed his two comrades. They took to him, and gave him provisions to eat, and with them he has remained ever since, not having seen a white man ever since he has been here. He states that this is the truth, and nothing but the truth. He means to give himself up to you on your arriving here, and hopes that through your intercession he will be able to get his free pardon. The natives of this country, he informs us, are cannibals. They frequently eat one another; but he has never known them to eat a white man. They also eat dogs and rats."

Sunday, August 3 — Two hands gone kangarooing, four gone fishing, and mussel-gathering; boiled the last of our pork. We are now without flour or meat. Returned home with four flathead, but no kangaroo.



We have commenced eating roots, the same as the natives do.

Buckley has informed us that when those two men which left this met him at the Heads, after they told him we were here, stated that it was the intention of the remainder of the mob they left behind to rush our tent at night for the purpose of killing us, for the sake of our provisions. He told them if they attempted anything of the kind we should destroy every one of them. He immediately then proceeded on his journey to us.

October 30 — This morning about 20 natives left us. Their parting with us was a most feeling scene, and expressed their regret at leaving us. Cried and sobbed bitterly. They left behind about 20 with us.

We must say that during the time they have been here they have behaved themselves remarkably well, never offering to steal anything whatsoever, and seem to be greatly attached to us.

John Wedge was the surveyor in Batman's party, and gave the following accounts of Buckley's experiences and the life of the aborigines in the area.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE FIELD BOOK

OF J. H. WEDGE (August 1835)

(originally published in James Bonwick's *Port Phillip Settlement* (1883))

*Wed. 19* — After travelling over a fine grassy country, lightly timbered, gradually rising for about two-and-a-half miles, bearing S.85 W., we came to the river Barwourne, a steep declivity taking us down to the river. This bank, or hill, if it may be so called, is, I imagine, about 200ft. high, and from the point of which I was almost lost in astonishment at the vast extent of fine grassy plains to the west and north-west that opened upon me, extending much further, as Buckley informed me, than the eye could reach (especially in a westerly direction), and I think I do not overrate the distance in saying that I could see forty miles ahead of me . . .

*Sat. 22* — I left Buckley and the natives at our encampment, and proceeded with Alexander Todd to

ascertain the direction and extent of the Ironbark-tree Forest . . . I observed large holes, or burrows, about two feet in diameter, and which, upon inquiry, I learnt from Buckley were inhabited by a large species of Wombat, the native name for which is Ouringore. Buckley states it to weigh between one and two hundred pounds. It is eaten by the natives, by whom it is highly prized . . .

*Sun.* 23 . . . After crossing the Barwurn, which took us a little above the knees, I fell in with two families of natives, who were very friendly. One of them (Nullaboin, with whom Buckley had lived) had never seen a white man before. He had heard of a gun, and the effects of it, and was anxious to see me let it off. On my preparing to do so, he evinced great fear, and requested I would go further off. Buckley told him I would not hurt him or any one. He then sat down, and was greatly gratified at my hitting a small piece of paper set up as a mark. The two families bivouacked about fifty yards from each other, and I pitched my tent between them. The whole party of natives (eleven) remained sitting round my fire till about 10 o'clock, when I intimated I wished to go to bed, and they instantly retired to their own quarters. They kept up a conversation a great part of the night amongst themselves and with Buckley. They were anxious to know where I had been, and were curious to know why I was walking about the country.

*Mon.* 24 — After breakfast I took leave of the natives. Nullaboin and his wife were sorry at Buckley's leaving them, and shed tears on our starting.

## NARRATIVE OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY

by J. H. Wedge (January 1836)

(from Francis Peter Labilliere's *Early History of the Colony of Victoria*, Vol. 2 (1878))

William Buckley is a native of Morton near Macclesfield in Cheshire and is now about fifty-five years old. He entered the supplementary militia of that county at an early age, to the third battalion of which he was attached; and in about two years afterwards volunteered into the fourth regiment of the line. He accompanied the army commanded by the late Duke of York, to Holland, and soon after his return from that expedition was convicted of mutiny and sentenced to transportation for life. (The offence for which Buckley was transported was for mutiny, he with six others having turned out to shoot the Duke of Kent at Gibraltar.) He arrived at Port Phillip in 1802 with the detachment of prisoners destined to form an establishment at that place; and whilst there was employed at his trade of stone-mason in assisting to erect a building for the reception of government stores. A short time previous to the abandonment of the settlement by Governor Collins, he absconded with two other men named Marmon and Pye. Whilst in the bush the party experienced great difficulty in procuring

food, and suffered great privations, their chief subsistence being cockles and mussels which they picked up on the beach of Port Phillip.

Pye left his companions before they got to the river at the northern extremity of the port. The natives having set fire to the grass, afforded them the opportunity of obtaining fire which they were afterwards careful to keep with them. His other comrade (Marmon) continued with him till they had wandered nearly round the port, and then left him somewhere on Indented Head, with the intention of returning to the establishment and surrendering himself to the authorities; but whether he or Pye succeeded in their object he cannot tell, as he never saw or heard of them afterwards; he thinks it probable they fell in with the natives and were killed by them. Continuing along the beach by himself he completed the circuit of the port and afterwards proceeded a considerable distance along the coast towards Cape Otway. At this period repenting of the step he had taken, and being tired of his precarious life, and in constant dread of falling in with the natives he determined on returning to the establishment.

Soon after he had returned to the neighbourhood of Indented Head he fell in with the family of natives with whom he continued to live till he joined the party left by Mr. Batman. His memory fails him as to dates, but he supposes his falling in with the natives to have occurred about twelve months after he left the settlement. He was received with kindness by the natives who supplied him with food. The name of the chief

or head of the family was Nullaboin, to whom he attached himself; and he continued with him and accompanied him in his wanderings till he joined the party left by Mr. Batman on the 12 July 1835. From the time he was abandoned by his comrades up to this period, a lapse of three and thirty years — he had never seen a white man. For the first few years of his sojourn with the natives his mind and time were fully occupied in guarding against the treachery of other natives whom they occasionally mixed with, and in procuring food; and indeed this may have been said to be the case ever afterwards, although from his having acquired a perfect knowledge of their language, and become acquainted with their habits, the danger to be apprehended from them latterly was not so great, and not more so than was the case with the natives with regard to each other, for he was entirely identified as one of themselves. He, as is every other white person, is known by the name Ammijaic. The natives gave him a wife, but discovering that she had a preference to another man, he relinquished her, but it cost her and her paramour dearly — they were punished with death for violating the custom which prevails — for when once a female is promised as a wife, which generally happens as soon as born, the promise is considered binding; and the individual receiving the promise recompenses the parents with presents — such as kangaroo or opossum rugs, shields, clubs, and the like. Buckley has no family, legitimate or illegitimate. During the whole course of his residence, and amidst all his wanderings there were no

interesting events, save the fact of his having passed thirty-three years of his life amongst savages, and of his having retrograded from the habits of civilized life and lapsed into those of the savage; for in fact he was one amongst them, and except in cannibalism, he adopted their mode of life in everything. Indeed, isolated as he was, and without the necessaries of life to which he had been accustomed, or the means of procuring them, it was scarcely possible for him to do otherwise. Although to some it may appear strange that he should not have introduced some improvement in their mode of life, yet by those who have some experience by a residence in uncivilized countries, the difficulty of doing so will be fully understood. In fact as I have said before, his whole attention must have been directed to self-preservation, both in procuring food and in guarding against treachery. For an individual situated as was Buckley, to conciliate the natives, he must conform to their customs — if they hunt he must hunt with them; and he must participate in all their pastimes. If their condition is to be ameliorated it must be by numbers and by force of example; by becoming acquainted with the comforts of civilization may be likely to lead them to be desirous of partaking thereof.

Although Buckley was always anxious to return amongst his countrymen, he had for many years lost all hope of having an opportunity of doing so.

The circumstances which led to his discovering the party left by Mr. Batman in his neighbourhood, were that two of the natives having stolen an axe, and

being told by some of the natives that had been longer at the establishment than themselves, that they would be punished for the theft, they went away and on falling in with Buckley told him that white men were in the neighbourhood, and also the cause of their coming away from them, and intimated that they would induce other natives to join them for the purpose of returning to spear the white men. Buckley dissuaded them from making the attempt, stating that there were a great many white men where they came from, and that if any of the white men were killed, numbers would come and kill every black man that they could find. Thus intimidated they abandoned their intention. Buckley then went in search of Mr. Batman's party, and in two days joined them. They were living in a sod hut which they had built and several native families were encamped about them. On Buckley's coming to the place he was observed by one of the men, and it was with no little surprise, if not with a mixture of fear, that he and the other men contemplated the approach of a man so gigantic in appearance and whose general aspect, erect as he was and enveloped in his kangaroo skin rug, with his long beard and a head of hair of thirty-three years' growth, and bearing his spears, shield and clubs, was well calculated to instil fear into anyone; but on this as well as on many other occasions during their intercourse with the natives, they showed great tact and presence of mind by not evincing fear if they felt any. They were impressed with the belief that Buckley was the head chief, and were doubtful whether he was



peaceably inclined or not. Buckley went direct to the native encampment and sat himself down amongst them, apparently taking but little notice of the white men. They, however, went to him, and soon recognised the features of a European; and on questioning him, with some difficulty, learnt who he was. He could not then express himself in English, and on being asked questions he only repeated them as do all savages — at least all that I have fallen in with — and it was about ten days before he could so collect himself as to express himself with any degree of fluency in his own language, and it not unfrequently happened that he put and answered questions in the language of the natives. Buckley in height is six feet six inches without shoes — is well proportioned, with an erect military gait. He subsisted, in common with the natives, on roots of various sorts, fish, kangaroo and any other animals that chance brought in his way. Although his life was a wandering one, yet he resided principally on the sea coast, and in the neighbourhood of Indented Head; and never migrated far except I think upon one occasion only, when he went about one hundred and fifty miles to the westward of Port Phillip. On one occasion Buckley accompanied me on an excursion for a week, during which he fell in with the family that he had lived with. If I had any doubts as to the fact of his never having seen a white man during his residence with the natives (and I confess, knowing that the sealers were in the habit of sometimes visiting this part of the coast, I was not without them at first) they were now entirely removed.

Nullaboin and his family had never seen a white man, till he saw me, he viewed and examined me with great curiosity, opening my waistcoat and shirt, to ascertain whether the whole of my body was white. The women were equally curious, much more so than is consistent with our notions of female delicacy. They were very attached to Buckley, and both Nullaboin and his wife cried bitterly when he left them.

Buckley resides at present at the settlement formed by the gentlemen who have associated to form a new colony through the means of the friendly intercourse established with the aborigines, and he has expressed his intention of remaining for the purpose of being the medium of communication with the natives. On receiving his conditional pardon, which his excellency the lieut.-governor so humanely and promptly granted him on being made acquainted with his case, as a reward for his meritorious conduct in preventing the natives from attacking the white men, his feelings were powerfully excited, so much so, that it was some time before he had the power of utterance. Never shall I forget the joy that beamed in his countenance when I communicated that he was a free man, and again received within the pale of civilized society.

In desiring me to convey his grateful acknowledgements to the lieut.-governor for his kindness, and to the gentleman who had interested himself in his behalf he was powerfully agitated, and if ever man was sincere in giving vent to his feelings, Buckley was so in expressing his thanks on this occasion.

**NARRATIVE OF AN EXCURSION AMONGST THE  
NATIVES OF PORT PHILLIP, ON THE SOUTH  
COAST OF NEW HOLLAND**

*by J. H. Wedge (January 1836)*

*(taken from The Journal and Papers of the Parliament  
of Tasmania, Vol. 5, No. 44, (1885))*

ON landing at Port Phillip on the 7th of August, 1835, at the encampment of the party left for the purpose of maintaining the friendly intercourse which had been established with the aborigines of that part of New Holland, I found seven families of the natives residing in their huts around. The greater part of their tribe were absent at the time on a hunting excursion, but a boy came down with the white men to welcome us on our arrival. An old man (Pewitt) and his two wives were at the huts, together with some young girls who had been promised in marriage to the Sydney natives left by the first party. I soon learnt that the most friendly understanding existed with the natives — indeed I scarcely needed this information, for it was evident from the light-hearted playfulness of the boy, and the cheerfulness of the old man, and the vivacious loquacity of the females, who came and shook hands with me on my arrival. They were evidently anxious

to inform me by signs that the families who inhabited the several huts were out hunting, and that they would come home in the evening.

On the return of the various families with game which they had obtained during the day, the members severally welcomed me by a shake of the hand, and a grin in their countenances devoid of suspicion.

The only married female of our party, and her four little daughters, with whom the natives were much delighted, particularly attracted their attention. Although they brought home with them a plentiful supply of provisions, consisting of various edible roots, kangaroo rats, and calkeit (the young ants in a fly state, taken from the hollow trees), yet they soon began to importune us for bread and other things, not even excepting the cutlery. From this I inferred at once that to satisfy their newly-acquired appetite for our food and other things which we brought with us, such as knives, tomahawks, and blankets, was a sure way of conciliating them. In this conclusion at which I thus arrived I was fully confirmed by Buckley, who gave me a general outline of the characters of the different natives as they arrived, one of whom (Murradonnuke) he pointed out as being more to be dreaded, on account of his treachery, than any of the other chiefs. As one of the main objects I had in view, besides examining the country, was to make myself acquainted with the habits and dispositions of the natives, I devoted the first few days after my arrival to studying their characters. For this purpose I went out hunting with them daily, and spent the greater

part of my time amongst them. I soon satisfied myself that by a little tact and management there was no danger to be apprehended from them, although I learnt from Buckley that in the treatment of each other they were treacherous. To command their respect I found it was necessary to make them fully understand that it was in our power not only to minister to their wants and comforts, but amply to avenge any outrage. In impressing them with this idea Buckley was of great use to us by making known to them the ample means we had of furnishing them with food, blankets, etc., and explaining the object we had in view in settling amongst them, and our desire to be on friendly terms with them, which was mainly compassed by evincing a confidence devoid of fear in our deportment towards them, and by abstaining from any act which might lead them to doubt the sincerity of our intentions. I learnt from Buckley that they were cannibals. His statement on this head was confirmed by the two youths who attached themselves to me during my stay in New Holland, and who accompanied me on the several excursions I made into the interior; but they do not seem to indulge in this horrible propensity except when the tribes are at war with each other, when the bodies of those who are killed are roasted and their bones are infallibly picked by the teeth of their enemy. Of this custom they make no secret, and on being questioned speak of it as a matter of course, and describe the mode of preparing their victim for the repast. Disgusting as is this practice — the process of which is too revolting to

commit to paper — a still more horrible one, if possible, prevails — that of the mothers destroying many of their infants at their birth. The cause by which they appear to be thus influenced is the custom the women have of nursing their children till they are three or four years old. To get rid, therefore, of the trouble and inconvenience of finding sustenance for two, should a second be born before the eldest is weaned they destroy the youngest immediately after it is born. Although this explanation was given me by Buckley — and I have no doubt this is in most instances the case — yet some women perpetrate the murder of their infants from mere wantonness, and, as it would seem to us (and which is found even in the brute creation), a total absence of maternal feeling. One woman in particular, the wife of Nullamboid, I think, was pointed out to me, who had destroyed ten out of eleven of her children, one of whom she killed a few days previous to my arrival at the port. Notwithstanding the increase of the tribes is thus kept down, polygamy is common amongst them, few of the men having less than two wives, and some of them four or more.

The women, as is the case with most savages,\* are quite subservient to the men, and are kept in excellent discipline. Chastisement promptly follows the least offence, and a firestick is not unfrequently the

\*Although they are designated "savages", in contradistinction to ourselves, who are called civilized beings, yet no people upon earth in a state of nature so little deserve the appellation, if kindheartedness has any influence on our minds in wiping away the stigma of our refined expression, which in this narrative is merely used for the purpose of description.

instrument of correction. The wealth of the men may be said to consist in the number of their wives, for the chief employment is in procuring food for their lords. On one occasion I was witness to a scene that afforded me some amusement, although it was no fun to the four women concerned. My attention was attracted by the outcry of the women, who were undergoing chastisement from their husband (Murradonnuke), who punished them by throwing firesticks at them in the most furious manner. On enquiry I learnt that the only cause of their offence arose from the poor creatures not having brought home that evening a quantity of provisions sufficient to satisfy his insatiable appetite. In the regulations which prevail respecting their wives they have one which seems to have some connection with, or similar to, the Mosaic Law: on the death of a husband his wives, whatever be their number, become the property of the eldest of his brothers, or his next akin. The men are jealous of their wives. Should any intrigue be discovered it would probably lead to the death of one or both of the offending parties; although if the husband receives what he considers to be an adequate compensation he is accommodating to his friends in allowing them the favours of his wives, and I have understood that these indulgences are always to be purchased by bestowing upon the husband a liberal supply of food. The women are not allowed to have a voice on these occasions, but must obey the dictates of their tyrants. I do not believe that infidelity is frequent amongst the women, unless sanctioned by the husband. During

the whole time I was amongst them I never observed any advances or levity of conduct on their part, although it is not at all improbable that they are restrained by the dread of the consequences that would ensue were they to be detected in an illicit amour. In bestowing daughters for wives, they are promised as soon as they are born, and on these occasions the parents receive presents of food, opossum and Kangaroo rugs, clubs, spears, etc. from the person to whom she is betrothed; and this arrangement is considered to be binding, although it sometimes happens that these promises are broken by the parents, especially when the man who has received the promise belongs to another and distant tribe. When this occurs it creates a feeling of enmity, and it is not unfrequently taken up by the whole tribe, who make common cause with the aggrieved party. If they once determine on being revenged they never lose sight of their object till they have satisfied themselves by a general conflict with the tribe to whom the offending party belongs; or it sometimes happens that the poor girl and her husband are singled out, and at the dead of night the unerring spear gives both a passport to that land where the inhabitants live without hunting. Their revenge thus satiated again they become friends. The men are prohibited from looking at the mother of the girl given to them in marriage. This singular custom is observed with the strictest caution. On passing the huts of the mother-in-law, or any place where they suppose her to be, they carefully turn their heads in another direction, and evince great concern if by any chance they



should see her, although I am not aware of any penalty being attached to the offence, save that of incurring the displeasure of the parents. On meeting with Nullaboin I took notice that a young girl who had just entered the married state carefully avoided to look at him, for what reason I can't divine, unless it was that the old man had been promised her first daughter. From enquiries which I made on the spot I am induced to believe that feeling of enmity does not exist permanently amongst the different tribes, as it is terminated by a battle royal, something after the style of a row at an Irish fair.

A short time previous to my departure a few men with their wives, from an adjoining tribe, came to that amongst whom I was living, with an invitation to join them in a conflict which they meditated with an adjoining tribe. They sent two or three young men to a tribe to the westward, inviting them also to join them in their war-like excursion (or foray) on the occasion. I learnt that this hostile feeling had been created by one of these men having lost one of his eyes in a scuffle with a man belonging to the Western Port tribe. This accident happened about eight months previously, and although the party who thus sought to avenge himself was the aggressor, having wounded his antagonist with a spear, he nevertheless had determined on having satisfaction, and had succeeded in inducing his own tribe and that with which I was living, and probably would influence the other also to whom the embassy of young men had been despatched, to espouse the cause of his odd eye, in fighting for

which some lives would in all probability be lost, and a few heads broken, without enabling him to see a whit the better. They also gave especial invitation to the seven Sydney natives, and requested they would take their guns with them. This of course I discouraged, and I was not without hopes that they might be induced, through the influence of Buckley, to forego their intention of taking their revenge, although from what he said I concluded there was not much chance of such a result. Buckley said the time of their meeting was very uncertain; that it might happen in a week or two, or it might be put off for some months, but that the collision was almost certain to take place sooner or later. In these conflicts it does not often happen that many lives are lost — seldom more than one or two — and frequently all return from the fight alive, and no other mischief is done save a few heads broken, or an impression made on their coatless backs by a club or a spear, so expert are they in avoiding the missiles of their opponents. All feeling of hostility ceases with the battle, and cordiality again prevails till it is interrupted by the impulse of their feelings, which are extremely sensitive; in fact, they are nearly as pugnacious as though their birthplace had been the Green Island.

Like others uncivilized and in a state of nature, they are astonishingly dexterous in the use of the weapons employed by them in the defence of their persons and in procuring food; and in tracking each other, as well as the kangaroo and other animals, they are very expert. The most trifling disarrangement of

the grass, a broken twig, or the slightest thing which indicates the direction of the object of pursuit, is at once perceived by them, and they follow the track with ease at a brisk pace. On several occasions I witnessed their adroitness in this respect. In fact, their perceptions in seeing, hearing, and smelling are surprisingly acute, and in the pursuit of their game they evince that patient perseverance so peculiar to man living in a state of nature.

Their food consists principally of kangaroo and other animals, fish and roots of various sorts, black swans, ducks, and many other birds, and, in fact, there is scarcely any animal or bird that comes amiss to them; and many reptiles, amongst others a species of snake, comes within their bill of fare. In their appetites they are quite ravenous, and the quantity they devour at one meal would astonish even a London alderman, although they are not quite so fastidious in the quality of their viands:

I could not learn that they have any religious observances, and, indeed, from the information I gathered from Buckley I am led to believe that they have no idea whatever of a Supreme Being, although it is somewhat difficult to reconcile the fact of their believing in a future state, for they certainly entertain the idea that after death they again exist, being transformed into white men. This is obviously a new idea since they have become acquainted with us, and is an evidence that the friendly intercourse we have established with them will be degrees operate upon their minds, and gradually work an amelioration in their

condition. Of this being ultimately effected I entertain very sanguine expectations, and I think I am warranted in doing so by the result of the experiments I made to induce them to habits of industry whilst residing amongst them. The men on several occasions rendered assistance in carrying sods for the erection of our huts, and many of the women were almost constantly employed in making baskets during the last week or ten days previous to my departure. In repayment for these and other services I gave them bread on the completion of their tasks, with which they were well satisfied; and I have but little doubt, if proper arrangements were made and attention paid, that great progress might be made in a short time towards establishing more civilized habits.

Their whole time may be said to be devoted to procuring food during the day; all their thoughts seem to be directed towards ministering to their appetites. The women are the drudges of their husbands, and are seldom idle during the day, being for the most part employed either in getting the various edible roots with which the country abounds, or in making baskets and nets, and any other occupation dictated by their husbands.

Their habitations are of the most rude and simple construction, the materials with which they are made being the branches of trees, laid with tolerable compactness, and pitched at an angle of about 45 degrees. In shape they form a segment of a circle, and their size is in proportion to the number of inmates of which the family is composed.

George Langhorne, a missionary, recorded the reminiscences of Buckley — “taken verbatim nearly” — in about 1836.

## GEORGE LANGHORNE'S REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM BUCKLEY

(originally published in *The Melbourne Age*,  
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Many accounts have been written of the “Wild White Man,” who passed thirty-two years of his life among the Yarra blacks; but they are all more or less fanciful sketches, based on nothing better than hearsay and tradition. With one exception, those who knew him personally failed to extract from his lips any account of his escape from the camp in 1803, and his subsequent life among the natives. He was resolutely reserved on the subject, and for reasons that do not require explanation. The one person with whom he was not so reticent was George Langhorne, to whom he was transferred by the Government in the capacity of interpreter at £50 a year. While this connection lasted the missionary availed himself of his opportunities to obtain from him all the information he could, which he afterwards put into shape in the form of a narrative.

“I found the undertaking an extremely irksome one,” he said, “as I frequently had to frame my queries in the most simple form, his knowledge of his mother tongue being very imperfect at the time.

"He was a man of large and powerful frame, tall, erect, with a very large foot, and his age, I should say, was about fifty-five years.

"I promised myself, with his aid, soon to acquire a knowledge of the aboriginal language, but unfortunately I was placed on the Yarra with a tribe who identified him as one of another tribe with whom they were constantly at war, there always having been a deadly feud between them. He was fearful that he should be murdered if he remained with me; and at his request I solicited the governor that he should be placed at Geelong, which he subsequently was — I believe in the constabulary, under Captain Fyans, the police magistrate. I never saw him again.

"He appeared to me always discontented and dissatisfied, and I believe it would have been a great relief to him had the settlement been abandoned, and he left alone with his sable friends.

"A knowledge of his trade as a bricklayer soon returned to him, as his first act after his employment by Mr. Batman was to build for him a chimney to his house — the weatherboard house and outbuildings on Batman's Hill, then the best erections in the settlement.

"The following in his statement to me: — "I remember little of my early days. I was born at Tiverton, in England, where my uncle, Buckley, resided before I left England, but my parents had removed from thence. Some time previously to my departure I was apprenticed to a bricklayer, from whom I ran away, and enlisted in a regiment of foot, but changed into the 4th, or King's Own, when that regiment was

ordered to Holland in 1799 with the troops under the command of the Duke of York.

“ ‘On my return from that campaign I met with the misfortune which occasioned my coming out to Australia. At the barrack yard I was one day accosted by a woman, who requested me to carry a piece of cloth in a parcel to a soldier’s wife in the garrison to be made up. I knew nothing of the person. She was a stranger to me; but I took the parcel to do as she wished, and was almost immediately arrested for theft, with the cloth in my possession. It had been stolen. The woman could not be found. I was considered the thief. My statement was not believed, and I was sentenced to transportation for life, and sent out in the convict ship, forming part of the expedition of Captain Collins, intended to form a settlement on the southern coast of Australia.

“ ‘I believe the ship was the *Calcutta*, and I think we sailed from England in 1804. We arrived at Port Phillip, cattle and stores were landed, and a Government House and store commenced; but from some cause I do not remember the project of settlement was abandoned, and another proposal to form a settlement in Van Diemen’s Land was talked about.

“ ‘It was then that I and two other convicts resolved to escape, proposing to conceal ourselves in the bush until the ship had sailed, and then to endeavour to make our way to Sydney, which we thought could not be far distant. We put off the execution of our design until the stores had been re-embarked and all was ready for sea, and then, with night eluding observation,

we succeeded in escaping to the shore in one of the ship's boats, and immediately struck into the bush, carrying with us a kettle and some little provisions we managed to bring away with us.

“The boat in which we landed was left to her fate. I and my two companions travelled on until we fell in with the Yarra; and tired and weary with our journey, sat down and ate the last of our provisions. This was near the place of the present settlement. We again started on our wandering. I thought that by keeping in a northerly direction we should soon reach Sydney, at Port Jackson; but my companions differed with me, and we parted company, I resolving to travel alone.

“After proceeding some little distance my heart failed me, and in a fit of despondency I resolved to retrace my steps to the sea, and reached the Heads of the Bay in a state of exhaustion from hunger and thirst. Food I had not tasted since I left my companions, as I was afraid to eat berries or roots, fearing lest I should be poisoned. Here I subsisted on crayfish, casting a longing look to seaward in the vain hope of seeing a ship.

“Up to this time I had not seen any of the aborigines, but at length fell in with an old black fishing near the sea. He had with him his wife, or ‘bagaruk,’ and a large family of children. By this black I was treated with the greatest kindness. I partook their food and helped them in their fishing, and I gradually learned sufficient of the language to express my wants.

“I left this man and his family and wandered away into the bush and fell in with several more families of



blacks. I was sitting under a tree, bemoaning my hard fate — the spot is near a lagoon, not far from the Barwon River — when some women made their appearance. I afterwards learnt that they had come thither to gather the wattle gum, a favourite article of food with them, when diluted and prepared after their manner.

“ ‘On seeing me, they hastily ran off and informed their male companions. These came up, and viewing me for some time with ardent astonishment, made signs to me to follow them. I think I had been about two months on the coast when I fell in with these blacks. They might have heard of me when I lived in the old man’s family at the Heads, but I don’t know.

“ ‘I immediately got up and followed them, though I despaired of my life, as I feared their intention was to kill me. They then proceeded to their encampment, one black holding one of my hands, and a second holding the other, the others leading the way.

“ ‘On reaching a “willum” or breakwind, near which was a waterhole, I made them understand that I was thirsty, and they gave me water and brought me to eat some of their prepared wattle gum, after which they all sat down, and a general howling was set up, the women crying and sobbing, and tearing their faces and foreheads with their nails.

“ ‘The cause of all this, as I afterwards learnt, was that they believed me to be a black who had died some time previously, and who they thought had come again to them, a white man.

“ ‘In the evening a great dance took place, I believe

in honour of my arrival, and from this time I was to them an object of the greatest solicitude and care. They never allowed me to walk any distance unattended; and if I happened to steal away out of sight for a short while, blacks would come in search of me and fetch me back, when they would fall to weeping at my reappearance.

“‘I endeavoured to conform to their habits, to live as they lived, and to avoid giving them cause of offence, even in the smallest matter. They gave me a wife, but suspecting the circumstance occasioned jealousy in the tribe, I resigned her, and ever after lived single. This seemed to please them much, and I was no longer apprehensive of danger from them.’”

This passage suggested a comment to Langhorne:—  
“Buckley says he did not live with any black woman; but I have doubted from circumstances which came under my notice the truth of this assertion, and also I think it probable that he had children.”

Buckley's narrative proceeds:—“‘I had lived with this tribe about six months, when I fell in with one of my companions, whom I found had been living with another family of the tribe on the sea coast. He then came and lived with me, but from his reckless conduct with the women and dissolute behaviour, I was fully convinced that if he remained one or both of us would be murdered. I therefore told him that it was necessary for the safety of both parties that one or the other must leave. He left, and I never saw him or heard of him again, except by a vague rumour that he had been

killed by the blacks, which I fully believe to have been the case.

"The other who escaped with me from the ship I never heard anything of after we separated on the banks of the Yarra. It is probable he met with the same fate as the other, and perhaps on the same account.

"I now made up my mind to continue with the tribe who had received me so kindly, and to accommodate myself to their habits, and, giving up all thoughts of ever seeing my countrymen again, to live as one of them.

"My favourite place of resort was the locality now known as Buckley's Falls.

"I soon lost all reckoning of time. I think, after I had been about two years in the country, I was able to express myself in the aboriginal tongue pretty freely, and in a very short time after I could converse freely with them. But when I had attained their language I found I was fast losing my own. My situation, however, was now less irksome, and I was able to converse with them about their tribes and manners and customs.

"The subject of the Christian religion I was careful not to introduce, as I feared that they would kill me if I attempted to oppose them in their ceremonies and superstitions.

"I had always the best breakwind, or hut, and the best fire, which circumstance attracted to my fireside at night a great number of visitors of all ages. They would listen with the greatest attention while I talked to them about the English people, their firearms,

cannons, and great ships, as also about the fighting in Holland, in which I had a part.

"The affection of this tribe for me always remained the same. If I hinted at the probability of some day or other returning to my own people they would manifest the utmost grief and shed tears. The children of the tribe were very fond of me, and would often come and sleep in my 'miamfa'.

"One day I had gone down to a lagoon to wash, when, on discovering my absence, they sent in all directions in search of me. An old man, on discovering me among the reeds, took me out by the hand and immediately burst into tears. They were all overjoyed at having found me, and afterwards watched me narrowly lest I should again lose them.

"I was obliged to accompany them wherever they went, but never asked to take a part in any of their affrays or conflicts with each other. On the occasion of a fight they would place me aside out of harm's way, and my neutrality was respected by foes as well as friends. I have, however, often prevented bloodshed by acting as mediator.

"The contests between the Watouronga, of Geelong, and the Warrorongs, of the Yarra, were fierce and bloody. I have accompanied the former in their attacks on the latter. When coming suddenly upon them in the night, they have destroyed without mercy men, women and children.

"I very soon became expert in spearing fish, and was often more successful in fishing and hunting than themselves. There was at that time a considerable variety

of food for them besides the kangaroo opossum, bandicoot and sugar squirrel. They seek with great eagerness for the hedgehog, or porcupine. This is their favourite dainty. In order to ascertain if the animal is in its hole, they put in a young child with its legs foremost, who feels how and where the animal is situated, when they dig accordingly. Having obtained their prey, they enclose it entirely in a piece of bark and then roast it. Taking off the skin, they again apply the body to the fire. Thus dressed, it is excellent food.

"I have noticed at least four different tribes who speak different dialects. The family, or portion of the tribe, with whom I spent the greater part of the many years I was with the aborigines, was called the Wallarranga.

"In the contests of the blacks with each other, should the warriors happen to lose their spears they appear to give up all for lost and make but faint resistance.

"They are cannibals. I have seen them eat small portions of the flesh of their enemies slain in battle. They appear to do this, not from any particular liking for human flesh, but from the impression that, by eating their adversaries' flesh they themselves would become better warriors.

"Many of them are, however, disgusted with the idea, and instead of eating the flesh, merely rub their bodies with a small portion of the fat, as a charm equally efficient.

"They eat also of the flesh of a dead child to whom, when alive, they had been much attached, should the child have died a natural death. When a child dies,

they place the body in an upright position in a hollow tree, and allow it to remain there until perfectly dry, when the parents remove it and carry it about with them.

"I don't believe they possess any distinct notice of a Supreme Being as the maker and ruler of the world, nor have they a word in their language for the Great Spirit. But they have a vague idea of some supernatural beings whom they endeavour to propitiate in many ways.

"One of these is supposed to reside in a certain marsh, and to be the author of all the songs used by them, which he teaches them through his sons. The other they believe to have charge of the pole or pillar by which the sky is propped up.

"Just before the settlers came to Port Phillip this personage was the subject of general conversation. It was reported among them that he had sent a message to the Watourongs ordering them to send him a certain number of tomahawks, to enable him to make a new prop for the sky, as the present one had become rotten, and their destruction was inevitable should the sky fall upon them. To prevent so dreadful a catastrophe, and to supply the offering of tomahawks as speedily as possible, some of the blacks repaired to Westernport, and stole the ironwork from some settlers' carts left there.

"I always avoided going to Westernport for fear I should fall in with the sealers who often came over" — from the coast of Van Diemen's Land or the islands in the Strait — "and with the natives had frequent

intercourses. These men ill-treated the blacks, and were ill-treated in their turn.

“About twenty-five years ago — about the fifth year of my living among them — I first saw an iron tomahawk among them. On asking how they obtained it, they said that while I was absent some distance some white men had rowed up the Barwon in a boat, and left the tomahawk in question on the bank. On going to the place I observed their tracks, where they had been to obtain water.” These men were probably whalers or sealers. “The native tomahawk, ‘morang,’ is made of tale, shaped in an oval form, and placed in a bent stick, the two ends of which are bent over and firmly bound together.

“The blacks suffer much from skin disorders. Promiscuous intercourse of the sexes is common, and on certain festivals is enjoined. At certain times the women are formally left to the young men who have not wives. Sometimes a black man goes to a ‘willum’ to entice away a woman; the husband will allow her to go with him, but she will have a severe beating on her return.

“During thirty years’ residence among the natives I had become so reconciled to my condition that, although opportunities offered, and I sometimes thought of availing myself to them, I never could make up my mind to it. And at length, when the blacks told me of the arrival of Mr. Batman and his party, it was some time before I would go down, as I never supposed I could live among my own people after so many years’ residence among savages.”

The following account of James Morrill's (Murrell's) life and experiences with the aborigines of Northern Queensland is taken from the 1864 English edition. The pamphlet was written and edited by Edmund Gregory (probably Editor of the *Brisbane Courier*) in 1863, and some later editions appeared under his name. The following is the entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* for the period in Morrill's life after his discovery in 1863: "Lionized in Brisbane, he was presented at Government House, but does not seem greatly to have interested Governor Bowen. Appointed to the Department of Customs at Bowen, Morrill returned to North Queensland, where his knowledge and experience of the aboriginals made him much in demand as interpreter and go-between and often promoted peaceful conciliation. His knowledge of the country and its seasonal variations was often consulted by squatters and explorers. In January 1864 he accompanied G. E. Dalrymple on the expedition to open the port of Cardwell, and in April 1865 he was in charge of the *Ariel* bringing the first cargo of bonded goods to the settlement on Cleveland Bay which later became Townsville. But his privations during his years of wandering had weakened his health, and on October 30, 1865, he died at Bowen. Aborigines for many miles around came into town for a memorable mourning ceremony."



SKETCH OF A RESIDENCE  
AMONG THE  
**ABORIGINALS**  
OF  
NORTHERN QUEENSLAND  
FOR  
**SEVENTEEN YEARS**

BEING A NARRATIVE OF MY LIFE, SHIPWRECK,  
LANDING, ON THE COAST, RESIDENCE AMONG  
THE ABORIGINALS, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF  
THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, AND MODE  
OF LIVING

TOGETHER WITH  
NOTICES OF MANY OF THE NATURAL  
PRODUCTIONS, AND OF THE NATURE OF THE  
COUNTRY

BY  
**JAMES MORRILL**

A native of Abridge, near Maldon, Essex

BOSTON  
PRINTED AT NEWCOMB'S STEAM PRINTING OFFICES,  
THREADNEEDLE STREET, 1864

## CHAPTER I

Birth and parentage — Education — Choice of Profession —  
Apprenticeship — My first long voyage in the  
Ramalees — Voyage to New Zealand and back —  
Shipped on board the *Peruvian*.

I, JAMES MORRILL, was born on the 20th May, 1824, in the parish of Abridge, near Maldon, in the county of Essex, where my father and mother were also brought up from childhood before me. My father was a millwright and engineer by profession, and carried on his business in Swan Yard, in connection with one of my uncles (James Hays). I had one brother older than myself, and three sisters, who were younger. When old enough, I was sent to the National School in the village. Mr. George Bridge, an old soldier, was the schoolmaster, who, among other things, taught us the manual exercise, and frequently put us through our facings. Nothing worth mentioning marked my school course. I was as often as most boys of my age ready for a fight or a game.

When I was about 13 or 14 years of age, and had acquired an ordinary education, such as was generally given in those days, and was old enough to be of use, I went with my brother, to work in my father's shop. But I was of rather a restless disposition, the workshop

was too confining for me, I was always glad of an opportunity to get away from it, if only for a day; I was particularly pleased if I could get among the shipping, the facility for which was great, as we lived so near the coast town, and so many small craft used to come up the River Blackwater, close to where I lived. Among the friends who visited my father's house was Mr. James Firman, a pilot, who used to pilot the craft down the Blackwater River, at Maldon; I frequently went with him in the vessels he used to pilot out, and return with him in the pilot boat. Of course, I was only allowed to go in fine weather; the fine white sails and the beautiful sea quite charmed me — I was always wishing I could be a sailor, which I made no secret of. My father and mother often told me that I should be glad to be at home again, which I found true enough in my after experience.

On one of those trips with the pilot, the captain seeing me a smart lad, enquired who I was, and asked the pilot whether I should like to go to sea, to which he replied that was just what I had wanted to do for some time. He asked me if I would go with him, and on promising to buy me clothes and what other articles I wanted, in Shields, the place where he was bound for, I was only too willing to go. So without consulting my father and mother, away I went on my first voyage, in the brig *Royal Sailor*, belonging to the Maldon Shipping Company.

The captain was a very good man, he was a wesleyan, and when on shore a local preacher of that body. Every night at eight o'clock, weather permitting,

he used to call all hands together and read the bible to us, afterwards we sang a hymn; and he used to read prayers. He was a very kind man. I was engaged in the cabin and about the decks doing duty as a cabin boy.

Everything went on right that voyage, and my ardour was not in the least abated to be a sailor. I went several voyages in the same vessel, and when I was 16 years old, I was bound apprentice to the company, for four years. I served part of my time in the *Royal Sailor*, and part in another of the company's vessels, called the *Duchess of Kent*, a schooner. Nothing particular happened while I was serving my time. We were once driven in bad weather to leeward of our port, and went into the Firth of Forth for shelter.

After I finished my apprenticeship I joined my old skipper, Mr. Harper, and went four voyages with him. But I became restless again, and began to wish I was in a larger ship, and that I could go a long voyage. I made known my wish and my determination to get a larger ship, and Mr. Henry May, who was agent to the company gave me a present for good conduct, my discharge, and three letters of recommendation — one to the Sailor's Home in London, and two to large shipowners. I gave a man 5s. to show me the way to the Sailor's Home, where I saw several notices on the notice-board, among others a carpenter's mate was wanted for the *Ramalees*; I said carelessly that I would take it — having no intention of doing so — and some time afterwards went to bed. In the morning I heard someone asking for the man who was going as

carpenter's mate on the beforementioned ship. I said I did not mean it, that I had letters to certain gentlemen which I had not yet delivered, and they would get me a ship; but I was induced to give up my shipping ticket and consent to go. So without presenting my letters, I returned home to make up my outfit of clothing and tools. Everybody was very angry with me at home for acting so hastily, and told me it was a troop ship, and that I should be anything but comfortable in her. However having given up my shipping ticket there was no alternative, for the maritime laws affecting seamen were very severe.

All being ready, I left home and joined the ship at Deptford on a Friday. The following day we dropped down the stream and anchored at Gravesend. The next day, Sunday, we shipped the 11th regiment of foot for Hobart Town, whither we were bound; and a detachment of the royal artillery, for Sydney, which was intended for New Zealand — the war having broken out in the Bay of Islands. We started on our voyage some time during the week, which we were six months in accomplishing.

All troop ships were forced to carry a double complement of hands, so when we arrived at Sydney one half of us were not wanted, I obtained permission to leave the ship, for I had not been long enough from home yet, and I was anxious to see and gain as much experience as possible. I then shipped on board a little schooner lying in the cove, called the *Terror*, bound for Auckland, New Zealand; I made a successful voyage in her to Auckland and back — we brought

copper ore back with us — but not being an easy job to get a cargo in those days, some of us were discharged — myself among the number.

There were several vessels in the harbour laid on for home, but I thought I would not return yet, so I shipped on board the ill-fated ship, *Peruvian*, bound to China, with a cargo of hardwood, with what result my readers will see.

## CHAPTER II

Voyage from Sydney to China — Shipwreck — 42 days on the raft — Reaching the land — Kind reception by the natives — Death of Mr. Wilmott and a seaman — Life among the natives — Death of the apprentice boy, the captain, and his wife — Restoration to civilized life.

ON Tuesday, the 24th February, 1846, I shipped on board the ill-fated ship *Peruvian*, Captain George Pitkethley, with a full complement of hands, and passengers, as follows:— Passengers — Mrs. Pitkethley, Mr. and Mrs. Wilmott, Miss Wilmott (an infant), and a young nurse-girl; Mr. J. B. Quarry, and daughter, about six years old. Ship's company — The captain, the captain's brother (first mate), John ——— (second mate), the carpenter, John Millar (sail maker), the cook, James Dicks, James Gooley, Jack ———, and myself (able seamen); James Wilson, William ———, James ———, and another (apprentices); and two black men; the captain, officers, and apprentices were all of Dundee. I give the names as far as possible from memory, as there are no records in the Sydney Custom House of any but the passengers, and they are two short — the child of Mrs. Wilmott and nurse-girl.

On Wednesday we finished loading, and dropped down the stream. On Thursday she was cleared at the

customs, and on the sailor's unlucky day (Friday), the mail came on board, with the pilot, and we started on our voyage, with a fresh leading wind, which lasted during that day and the next. On Sunday, stunsails, main-skysails and every stitch of canvas was set, till sundown, when the weather came on threatening. All the small sails were taken in and stowed, and the wind increased very much during the night. At eight bells on the Monday morning all hands were ordered on deck to shorten sail. We got her all snug. On the following day her fine weather sails all blew away, when we got new ones bent on. The bad weather increased till Friday, when every stitch of canvas had to be taken off, and she drove under bare holes. The next day, Saturday, the weather showed signs of breaking, and the captain got sights, but it was very thick. When it moderated we got a little sail on her, to keep her steady; and at night, during the first watch, the mate made more sail. The captain said that we were in the neighbourhood of Horse Shoe Reef, or the Minerva Shoal, and told us to keep a good look out for broken water. The first watch was relieved at 12 o'clock; I was in the second watch, under the charge of the second mate. I took the wheel from 12.00 to 2.00, when I was relieved by the eldest apprentice. Between the hours of 3 and 4 o'clock, we observed what appeared to be land, or a dark cloud dead ahead of us. The second mate went down and told the captain, and immediately returned on deck; he had hardly done so, however, when the ship struck with great force on a rock, and the first sea that struck



her lifted her partly on the rock, and swept one of the boats and the second mate overboard, who was never afterwards seen. The next sea that struck her lifted her wholly on the top of the rocks, where she stuck fast; the first shock knocked her bilge off, and so much damaged her, that if she had been in deep water, she must have sunk quickly. The captain and all hands ran on deck in great confusion, most of whom were in their night-clothes, and finding that she was hard and fast on the rock, the sea still running very high, and not knowing where or how we were situated, we took shelter under the lee of the cuddy, till such time as we could see what was best to be done. At daylight a terrible scene presented itself, as far as the eye could reach there were the points of the rocks awash, but no friendly land in view. The captain ordered the jolly boat to be got over the side, as that seemed our only chance of escape. We hung her in the tackles, but no sooner lowered her within reach of the water than she stove to pieces in the broken water, and became useless. We now had only the long boat left, which was old and shaky. The captain ordered us to launch it over the side, which we did, intending to keep her there till we got the passengers and provisions into her, and then cut ourselves away. But no sooner was she put over the side than the spray and broken water filled her as she hung in the tackle. The captain ordered some hands into her to bail her out, but it was so unsafe that none would risk their lives in her excepting the first mate, who was the captain's brother. Before he had got out a couple of buckets, the stern

post was jirked out of her and left hanging in the tackles; at the same time the fore tackle got adrift, and she was carried away from the wreck with the force of the current. Lines were thrown out, but none reached him. There was a live sheep in the boat beside the mate. He then calmly sat in the bows of the boat, and bid goodbye to his brother and sister, awaiting the will of God: presently he disappeared from sight, and was seen no more. He could not have lived long. Our position being now apparently hopeless, the captain called us all into the cabin, where we engaged in religious exercises, and commended ourselves to God in prayer. We then went on deck again and discussed the propriety of making a raft; our chances of being picked up were so small, and not knowing but that we might be washed off our present resting place with the next sea, decided us in taking active steps in whatever we did. We accordingly set to work and cut away the spars of the ship, and fixed them — first the mizen mast, then the main mast — but it was very difficult to make use of them, for they came down with the sails all flying, and they were very much entangled. With these and some small spars we had in-board, we had enough for our purpose. The large outside spars we rested partly on the rocks and partly on the wreck; we lashed and nailed them strongly together, and in the centre we fixed a mast and platform of light spars, to enable us to sit and lay out of the water. When finished, the next difficulty was to get it adrift. With great labour we managed to get it first off the ship's quarter on to the rock all safe, and then into the water,

this we accomplished by mid-day on Sunday. We then began to look up the provisions, and to our dismay we found the bread all utterly spoilt with salt water, and the preserved meat, which we had previously piled on deck to put in the boats was nearly all washed over-board. To add to our misfortune, there was nothing left whole that would hold water, excepting a small keg. All we could muster then was, a few tins of preserved meat, the small keg of water, and a little brandy. This being carried safely on the raft, and placed under the captain's charge, the ladies and children were got on, also the captain's instruments and charts, and some blankets and clothing. We were at last all on the raft, and it was our intention to stay by the wreck a few days, and if possible build a boat, as there were some boat planks aboard. During the night, however, the strength of the current and the dead weight of the raft, caused it to part its moorings, and we were carried to sea. There were on the raft three ladies, two children, two gentlemen passengers, the captain, carpenter, sailmaker, cook, four able seamen, including myself, four apprentices, and two black men, stow-aways, working their passage — in all 21 souls.

It was agreed that the stores should be given out equally amongst us, and that there should be no lots drawn to take away each other's lives. One table-spoonful of preserved meat a day was served out, and the water was measured in the neck of a glass bottle, four to each person — the meat about 12 o'clock in the day; the water in the morning, middle of the day, and in the evening. All went on as well as could be

expected under the circumstances, for 23 days. The current and our small sail carried us about 40 miles a day; at first we caught a few birds which were a great treat, their blood was greedily drunk, and their raw flesh eaten with gusto; but as we neared the land we caught none. The weather was fine throughout; in the daytime there would be a light wind, which died away at sundown. The captain took sights occasionally. On the 22nd day out we saw a sail in the distance, which kept in sight about four hours, but finally disappeared, we having no means of attracting its attention, which greatly disappointed us.

A few days after this the first man died (James Quarry), leaving his child to survive him for a short time; he said the day before that he was dying, and that he should not live long. As soon as he died he was stripped and thrown over, the sharks devouring him instantly before our eyes. The next day we caught a fine rock cod fish with a line and hook baited with a bit of white rag, which was cut up in equal parts and served out. It then rained, but the sail was so soaked with salt water that we could not drink what we caught till the salt was well nigh washed out of it. We managed to get enough to eke out our small store before it cleared up again. The sucking child of Mrs. Wilmott was the next to die, and shortly afterwards the other little girl, and next to her Mrs. Wilmott herself died. Her husband then took off what clothing she had on, which was only a nightdress, and threw her into the sea; she remained in company with us longer than the others floating on the water, she was observed near us

about 20 minutes. The burial service was read over each. At this time they dropped off one after the other very rapidly, but I was so exhausted myself that I forgot the order of their names.

We next began to think how we should obtain food, our only fishing line had been broken and carried away. We had more hooks but no more line. There were plenty of sharks about and we tried to catch them. The captain devised a plan to snare them with a running bowling knot, which we did as follows: — We cut off the leg of one of the men that died and lashed it at the end of the oar for a bait, and on the end of the other oar we put the snare, so that the fish must come through the snare to get at the bait. Presently one came, which we captured and killed with the carpenter's axe, by cutting its head off. The sail-maker was looking at its head and eating it, he put his hand in its mouth, which gave him a severe bite; he did not want any of that shark to eat, for he had quite enough by sucking his own blood. The rest of us made a fine meal off him. Three days after that we caught another one in the same way, and with the same bait, which we cut up in strips and dried. We then caught another and did the same with it. Our numbers by this time were very much reduced. Shortly after this we made the Barrier Reef; we came down upon it driven by a strong current: we managed after a great deal of trouble to get the raft clear over it into deep water before dark. Two days after this we came in sight of the land, which appears to have been Cape Upstart. We were not a long way out at sea, and at night we

passed it. Two or three days afterwards we saw the land once more, and were driven towards Cleveland Bay, but just as we were preparing to get ashore in the hopes of getting water, a land breeze sprung up and drove us out to sea again. During the night, however, the sea breeze drove us in shore once more, and eventually, about midnight, we landed on the Southern Point of Cape Cleveland. One or two tried to get water but were not successful, so we laid down on the sand and went to sleep. Presently it came on to rain, which filled the holes in the rocks and from these we filled our tins. While on the raft the captain cut a notch in a piece of wood every day, and on counting them there were 42; and of the 21 who left the wreck alive only seven remained — the captain, his wife, Mr. George Wilmott, myself, James Gooley, the sailmaker, and one of the boys.

In the morning when the sun arose, we washed a dry piece of white rag; we then took a magnifying glass out of the spy-glass, set light to the rag, and made a fire. We then took some of the dried shark we had left, boiled it in a preserved meat tin, and ate it, with a drink of clear fresh water for breakfast, which we enjoyed much.

At low water, the captain, being the strongest, sallied forth in quest of food; he shortly afterwards returned for the axe, bringing a few rock oysters, which were very plentiful, sticking in large clusters to the rocks. Some of us managed to crawl and get a few and return to our camping ground, but being so long on the raft without exercise, it was very difficult to move

about at first. We continued to do this for a few days, but Mr. Wilmott and the able seaman James Gooley were so exhausted, they laid down by a water hole and died, nobody being equal to provide for more than themselves. The captain found in his rambles a native canoe and lines and spears of a fishing party of natives, who had evidently been there lately in the rainy season. The sailmaker, Jack Millar, hearing of this, determined he would go away in the canoe, which he accordingly did the next morning, but we eventually knew he was starved to death on the shores of the next bay, for the natives found his body and told us of him.

The same day he left, as I and the captain were going over a hill into the next bay, we saw a full rigged ship running down the inside channel, but not having the means of signalling her we could only sit down and cast a longing eye, wishing we were on board. She soon disappeared out of sight. We then went and got some shell fish and tried to discover the tracks of the natives, but the rainy season had washed out all traces of them. We then returned with what we had got.

After we had been 14 days on the shore we were seen by some of the natives. It appeared that for several nights they had observed falling stars in one particular direction — the direction of the rocks on which we were. They also, it afterwards appeared, have a kind of superstition in reference to falling stars; they think that they point out the direction of an hostile tribe. Something however more than usual

possessed the minds of these black fellows, and they bent their steps in the direction the stars fell, and came on to the coast, where they immediately discovered fresh made tracks, which they followed up till they came to a camp fire at the place where the boy had camped the preceding night. Indeed he had only just left. He had two large boils on his leg, and was not able to get to the general camping ground the previous night, but as soon as possible in the morning he came away; and it was a few minutes after he had gone, that the blacks came on his track. They followed him up at a distance and saw him, but as there were so many tracks they did not come near nor show themselves: they tracked him down till they came to the captain's wife — I and the captain were out. They then arranged that one of them should stay in sight and the other two should go to the camp and bring more of the tribe — they brought about 20 or 30. When I returned in the evening, the captain's wife said she had heard the natives jabbering and whistling; I did not think she had. When the captain came home she told him, and while we were talking about it — about 10 minutes after the captain came home — she heard the same noises again. She immediately jumped up and went outside to see what it was, she looked up on the rocks, and there, sure enough, she saw a number of the naked black fellows. She exclaimed — "Oh George, we have come to our last now, here are such a lot of the wild blacks." We went out to see, and there they were. They were as afraid of us as we were of them. Presently we held



up our hands in supplication to them to help us, some of them returned it; after a while they came among us and felt us all over from head to foot. They satisfied themselves that we were human beings, and hearing us talk, they asked us by signs where we had come from. We made signs and told them we had come across the sea, and seeing how thin and emaciated we were, they took pity on us, and asked us as well as we could understand where we were going to sleep. We showed them in the rock. They came in with us, and we were going to give them some of our things, but we found while we were engaged talking, some of the others had been in and cased us of everything. Eventually about 10 of the old men came in the cave-like hollow rock that we had made our camping place, to sleep with us, and they kept us separated by laying between us. They kept up a constant jabber among themselves, which led to a second and more minute examination of our persons to ascertain our sex which seemed necessary to them on account of our being clothed. And when they found we were like themselves — male and female — they were satisfied, and did not further interfere with us. They seemed to understand that the captain and his wife bore that relationship by their being always so close together, and they never afterwards troubled us. We got some light sleep during the night. At daylight the next morning, there was a great commotion among the blacks, as to what should be done with us. There were present representatives of two different tribes — the boy and myself were claimed by a tribe who had camped about

Mount Elliott; and the captain and his wife were claimed by a tribe belonging to Cape Cleveland. Not content with taking all we brought with us, they commenced to strip us. They took the boy's trousers off, but he begged to be allowed to keep his shirt and sou'wester, pointing to the sun, to make them understand that it would kill him; they seemed to understand, and allowed him to retain them. They then took all the captain's clothes off; and when they came to me and the captain's wife, we made signs to them that we were afraid of the sun, so they let us retain them. Presently seeing that we had all our clothes on and that the captain was without any, they gave him his back again. They then gave us some small roots to eat, about the size of small marbles, which we ate, and enjoyed them much — they tasted like nuts. They pointed to our stomachs, to make us understand they knew we were hungry; and to their own that they had plenty. They also pointed to the bush to tell us if we came with them, they would give us plenty to eat and drink. On our signifying our intention to go with them, they were very glad, and wanted us to join with them in a corroboree, but as we could not, we thought we should please them by singing a hymn.

I accordingly gave out a hymn I knew —

God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform, etc.

to the end, which we sung, and which amazed them much. While we were by ourselves in the cave every night, we read the bible, sung hymns, and prayed, as

we had done on the raft — we had among the few books we took with us from the wreck, a prayer book, bible, and hymn book.

Next they began to make preparations to move off towards the camp — they were delighted at our going with them. Seeing the boy was unable to walk, one of them picked him up and put him on his shoulders, with his legs hanging down — the same way they carry their children when on a journey. And seeing us so weak and exhausted, two of them helped each of us along. After we had got a little way, three new arrivals came from the camp; they were told to stay somewhat in advance of us, and wait till we came up — it was on the edge of a plain — where they had made a small fire. When we came up with them they were sitting round the fire; they were powerful men, and seemed to be sitting in state, as they did not move when we came up. Great fear seized hold of me, for I thought they were chiefs; and when they came to lead me up to them to satisfy their curiosity, thinking I was going to be led up to slaughter — to be cooked and eaten — I refused and struggled against it. The fire being so small and not observing any weapons with them, it struck me they could not mean that, so I suffered myself to be led up to them, and I sat down. They looked at me and observed me shake with fear, they warmed their hands at the fire, and put them on my face, and all over my body, to reassure me, seeing which I took heart again. The captain, his wife, and the boy, underwent the same scrutiny. Here we halted for a while, and they wanted us to join them in a

corroboree again, but we could not, so they had to have it among themselves. Some of them dressed themselves after a fashion with the clothes — shirts, trousers, coats, etc., that we had saved from the wreck, and a more ludicrous scene could not be imagined; one with only a sleeve of a shirt on, another with a pair of trousers on, his legs put through the bottoms, and another hind part before — some one way and some another. They also tore the leaves out of the books, and fastened them to their hair and bodies; altogether they presented a most ludicrous appearance. In the meanwhile some were sent on ahead to the camp, to tell them to make haste and get plenty to eat, and to prepare for a grand corroboree. From where we were on the sea shore to their camp was from five to eight miles, but it was sundown before we reached the camp. The first thing they did was to lay us down and cover us over with dried grass, to prevent our being seen till the appointed time. They then collected together to the number of about 50 or 60 — men, women, and children — and sat down in a circle; then those who discovered us went into the middle, dressed up in the things they had taken from us, with a little extra paint, and danced a corroboree, in which they explained in their rude song, what they had discovered, from whence they had brought us, and all they knew about us, which greatly surprised them. That being over, we were led into the middle of the ring in triumph. The sight of us — being white people, and dressed — produced a panic, and they scampered off in all directions. After a little time,

however, being reassured, they returned one by one, and looked at us, and a few of the more courageous touched us; by and by they came nearer and examined us more minutely, till all fear was removed. After their curiosity had somewhat subsided, they led us to a gunyah, which was placed at our service, and they brought us plenty to eat and drink, and frequently came to make enquiries whether we wanted anything, and to have a peep at us. They went on preparing their evening meal, but one after the other they gradually disappeared, and went to bed. In the morning they replenished our stock of roots and got us water, and then turned out in quest of their day's wants. As they returned they brought numbers of their relations and friends from the near tribes, and in the evening they had another corroboree, explaining all about us. When they had done, they came and fetched us into their midst, as on the previous evening, to show us to them. This was continued evening after evening for about six or eight evenings successively, as representatives from the more distant tribes came in to see the wonderful people, till the most distant known to them had seen us. This was carried on to such a length that we became worn out, and we expressed our disinclination to go; but they made us understand that they would kill us if we did not; and we thought it prudent not to put them to the test, although we believed they did not mean to do so — only to frighten us. After this, things assumed their usual course at the camp. They would not, however, let us go out to get food while we were so weak, but gathered us

sufficient for all our wants. Eventually we went with them, but they dug the roots up for us till we learned to do it ourselves.

After we had been with them about five or six months, and we began to pick up their language, they made us understand that a large tribe, and a great many other tribes were coming to see us, and that they would be there in the dry season, in about four moons' time. We spent our time in wandering about with them on their fishing excursions, and in learning to snare ducks, wild turkeys, geese, and other wild fowls, which I became very expert in after awhile, much more so than the natives themselves, because I took more care in making strong string for the nooses, and in choosing the best places to set them, which made them very much attached to me.

Time ran on and the natives began to collect in large numbers — we knew them to be strange. These were the tribes we had been led to expect were coming to see us. When they all arrived, they numbered considerably over a thousand souls, this was a larger number than I had ever seen before. They belonged to about 10 different tribes. We learned that some of the tribes belonged to the country far south of where we were, which determined us, if possible, to go away with them, when they returned, hoping by that means we should be able to reach some white settlement. They had a grand corroboree, which lasted about three days, and they went through the rites and ceremonies of the Boree, or making young lads men, and instructing them in their duties towards the women —

hereafter described. The tribe I was in, went through their ceremonies by themselves, when about 50 lads were made men; and another tribe by themselves made only about 20. After it was all over, they began to move off to their various districts. We stole away, and went with the tribe that was going south. We were then well known to all the tribes, and we got distributed one in one tribe and one in another. The boy went down farther south than myself. The tribe I was in were located on the present site of Port Denison. Nearly two years after we had been living with them, intelligence was brought us that the boy was dead, and that they had burnt his remains, as they do the remains of their own dead. About six weeks after the boy died, the captain sickened and died also, I believe the death of the boy preyed upon his mind, and also the wretched state of his wife. Up to this time she managed by dint of great difficulty to keep herself partially covered, but he knew it could not last much longer, and the thoughts of her having to come so low, and our utter helpless condition, was too much for him — he sunk under it. The sight was too much for me, it almost broke my heart. I was forced to leave and go on a hunting and fishing expedition. I saw he could not last long, and I told them not to burn him, but to bury him in the ground, which they did. As soon as I heard of his death I hurried back, but before I reached the camp his wife had followed him — four days afterwards. Being in a strange tribe, I felt lonely, and I determined to go back to the tribe that claimed me as their own, thinking they would take more care

of me. After several months I reached it, and they were all very glad to see me, and asked me about the others; when I told them they were dead, they were very angry with me, and laid all the blame on me, and said I deserved a crack on the head. The tribe that the captain belonged to would have killed me if they dared, but my tribe protected me. It was the cause of a good deal of trouble between the two tribes. I was the first to go away with the captain, and when we got about 40 miles, the captain went back alone and fetched his wife and the boy, and as I did not appear, they said that it was me who had taken or decoyed them away.

After the misunderstanding was settled, I lived with the tribe year after year, as one of themselves — nothing particular happening. On one occasion when I was on the coast fishing, I saw a barque going to the north in the inner channel, but she was too far out for me to attract her attention. Shortly after this, while I was on Mount Elliott, looking for honey and bread fruit, which was not quite ripe, a report was brought to me that a vessel was seen on the coast at Cape Cleveland, where our raft had landed, and the people on board had given some of the natives some speckled shirts, which they showed me. This appears to have been Captain Till, who was on a surveying expedition.

Some time after this another vessel was seen, which was duly reported to me, and the men from the vessel went on the rocks and looked through a glass and brought down the sun to the water. I told them before, if they ever saw white men again to try and make them



understand that there was a white man living there with them; they tried their utmost to do this, but seem to have failed; the white men became alarmed, and thought they meant mischief, whereas it was only their earnestness in trying to make them understand. The following quotations from the report of the proceedings of the Government schooner, *Spitfire*, in 1860, will explain this report.

“Saturday, 15th September. Having been hove to during part of the night, we bore up at daylight, with Cape Cleveland bearing W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. about nine miles distant, and at 9.30 a.m. came to in its roadstead. Fixing on a convenient rocky promontory for making observations for latitude and longitude, we landed, and perceiving a small party of natives, I was in hopes that such friendly intercourse would take place as would enable us to gather information respecting the mouth of the Burdekin. Such hopes, however, were soon blighted; for upon an increase of their party, they suddenly made an attack, which was instantly repulsed; when they retreated with great rapidity.

“Observing a canoe passing round one of the points into a lagoon, we gave chase; and after it was deserted, we took possession, and broke it to pieces so as to cut off the communication, and prevent any immediate increase to the force of the aborigines, already numerous and violently hostile.

“Sunday, 16th September. During this day we observed considerable numbers of natives about the beaches and hills, shrieking and yelling most diabolically; finally towards the evening (as we did

not land on this day), they retired towards the south."

Nothing is said in the report about shooting the natives, but one stout able-bodied black fellow, a friend of mine, was shot dead by someone in the boat, and another was wounded; and the hideous yelling was the noise they usually made over their dead.

About three years ago there was a report brought to me by the blacks of a distant tribe, that a white man had been seen with two horses. Some of a tribe were lamenting the death of an old man, and while doing so, this white man fired in among them, and shot the son of the old man, who was lying on his dead body. The rest ran away; but eventually they apparently made friends of each other, and they got him off the horse, but by a preconcerted signal massacred him and tried to kill the horses, thinking they could speak and do mischief as the man had done, but they got away. Mr. P. Somers, of Port Denison, told me it would most likely be a Mr. Humphrey, who had left the party he was out with, in search of runs, intending to go by a new track. After this, four stray cattle were seen in our district, but I was on the coast with one of the blacks — my brother-in-law, making a possum skin rug. When I came back they showed me the tracks of the cattle, and I recognised them as being cattle. I questioned them about them; they said three had teats, and one had none, thus I understood three were cows and one was a bull. I told them they were what we ate, and they chaffed me about their great size, long tails, big ears and horns. That made me uneasy, I began to think that civilized life was not far off, and it considerably

raised my hopes of being restored to civilization. Soon afterwards, a report came into camp of a lot of white and black men on horseback, near Cape Upstart, shooting down the tribe that I had been living with, when the captain died, at Port Denison. They explained to me about the saddles for the men to sit in, the stirrups, bridles, guns, smoke, and the noise it made when fired; and asked me if it was so with us. I told them yes, and explained it all to them, which surprised them much. On hearing this, I travelled south to the Burdekin River (*Mall Mall*, native name) thinking my chances would be greater on the river than at Mount Elliott — 50 miles further inland. My tribe kept coming backwards and forwards, and they asked me why I did not come back as I had lived with them so long, they began to suspect something. I told them I would by and by, but I told them from the first that I had a wife and two children, knowing they would not think it so strange at my wanting to get away. At last I told them I wanted to see the white men, for myself — to see if they knew my people — and to get clothes, and guns, and old iron, and that I would come back again. They then gave me up, and let me do as I liked, as they saw I was bent on going. From this time forward I received almost daily reports of the white people. There were two white men and a black boy constantly in the neighbourhood where I was — the black boy being a great favourite among the gins. I was about a moon-and-a-half from the place where they were, at one of our fishing grounds (Bokodally), and I left to try and see them, but could

not. So I returned to our head camping ground again. I shortly after heard of the cattle being on the river in great numbers, and of a man being on horseback with a stock whip which he cracked, and they thought it was a gun, on hearing which, they got up the trees quite frightened. They saw him get off the horse and drink some water with his hands, but the water being hot he scraped the sand aside and got some cool, a little black dog was with him lying on the sands. They described to me that there were so many cattle, that they had drunk all the water that was in the hole, they said they would have got the fish out only they were too much afraid. Hearing this, I was very anxious to find out the white settlement, for I felt sure there was one not very far off, but having been with the blacks so long, they were not willing to let me go, telling me I should be mistaken for a black fellow. And hearing of the blacks having guns, I could not make it out, and was afraid myself, lest if I met one of the black fellows he would not be able to understand me, and I could not tell whether I should be able to make a white man understand me, having been away so long. The next news I heard was that about 15 black fellows of a fishing party belonging to the tribe I was living with, were shot down dead. I told them it served them right: if they would let me go to them and show me where they were, I might be the means of saving their lives. They reasoned among themselves that what I said was true, and they agreed to go on a hunting expedition, on a hill called by the natives (Yamarama), which was about half a mile from the station. But thinking that

the white men were the same as themselves, they were not sure whether they were there. When we got to the hill, we spread our nets and commenced our work, and while we were hunting the old women went down as spies to look for the white men. They brought word back that there was a large hut, and that they had seen red and white blankets hanging on the stock-yard fences, and heard a dog bark, and an old sheep bleating tied up to a tree; they also heard the report of a gun twice, but could not see where it came from. I then wanted to go and see for myself, but the man I was living with was not willing without somebody was with me. So he made his gin go with me. When we got clear of the hill going down towards the hut, we saw the sheep feeding in the grass, the sight of which so frightened the gin, she not having seen any before, that she ran back. I looked at the sheep but could not see the shepherd; so I went further on and came to a water hole, where I washed myself to make myself as white as possible. I went on still further till I came to the sheep pens, and saw the blankets and sheep as the gin had told me. I also saw the smoke of the fire in the hut, and heard noises. I stood behind the yard some minutes, not knowing what to do, and how best to make myself known. Presently I took courage and got on the fence to prevent the dogs from biting me, and called out so that they might hear me, "What cheer, shipmates." There were three staying in the hut, but there were only two at home then. They heard me, and knowing it to be a strange noise, one of them came out and saw me there — neither black nor

white — naked and looked surprised; he went in again and told his mate. I understood him to say, come out Bill, here is a red or a yellow man standing on the rails, naked, he is not a black man, and bring the gun. But before they had time to use the gun, I said “do not shoot me, I am a British object — a shipwrecked sailor.” Of course I meant subject, but in the excitement of the moment I did not know what I said. One said to the other “he says he is a shipwrecked sailor” — one of the men’s names it appears was Hatch, the other Wilson, who had been a sailor himself — and they told me to come round the stockyard; which I did — they meeting me half way — they cross-questioned me, and I told them when and where I was wrecked, and all about my misfortunes. They asked me whether I knew what day and what date it was. I told them no, they then told me that it was Sunday, the 25th of January, 1863. They reckoned back to 1846, when I was lost, and told me it was 17 years, and asked me if I thought it was so long. I said no not half so long. After talking some time they took me in the hut and gave me a piece of bread, and asked me if I knew what it was. I told them it was made with flour, I tried to eat a piece, but I was so overjoyed that it stuck in my throat and I could not get it down. Besides, I was not hungry, for we had caught 20 small grey wallabies during the day and we had had plenty to eat. They gave me some tea, and asked me if I knew what it was, I said yes, but that it was too sweet. I had not been accustomed to sugar, and so they put some water to it. After I had been in the hut for some

time they told me to look out and tell them what I saw. I saw a large flock of sheep with their third companion — coming home; he was a Scotsman, named Creek. They then wanted to give me some clothes, but I told them I had better go back to the natives who were on the hills in the distance, where we had been hunting all day, just as I was to tell them to go away towards the sea coast; and I would return in the morning, which they agreed to, and instructed me to tell them, that if they did not interfere with us, we should not interfere with them. They also told me that if I did not come back in the morning they should conclude I had told them a lie, and that they would put the black trackers on our track and shoot us.

When I left them I went back to the hills to the blacks, and they began to surround me and ask me whether I had seen the white people, and how many there were, I was obliged to tell them that there were a great many people, many more than themselves, and plenty of guns, and that if they went near they would be killed before they got there. I told them the white men had come to take their land away. They always understood that might, not right, is the law of the world, but they told me to ask the white man to let them have all the ground to the north of the Burdekin, and to let them fish in the rivers; also the low grounds, they live on to get the roots — ground which is no good to white people, near the sea coast and swampy. They asked me what I intended to do. I told them I was going to stay that night, but in the morning I must go back, or they would come and track me up and

shoot us all. They said perhaps they are doing so now. I assured them they were not, but that we must go further away. So we went four or five miles and camped. The next morning they all came round me again, and finding I was bound to go, they asked me if I would be back again in a few days. I told them no, I should be away quite three or four moons. They then said you will forget us altogether; and when I was coming away the man I was living with burst out crying, so did his gin, and several of the other gins and men. It was a touching scene. The remembrance of their past kindness came full upon me and quite overpowered me. There was a short struggle between the feeling of love I had for my old friends and companions, and the desire once more to live a civilized life, which can be better imagined than described.

I left them and came on to the hut. The men were glad to see me and they took me down to the water hole, washed me with soap and flannel, and brought me up and gave me some clothes. That day we tried to cross the river to get to the head station to obtain a supply of rations, but it was too swollen. We came back, and at night they killed a sheep and cooked me a chop off it. I remained a fortnight and then gave myself up to Mr. Meyers, who left me in charge of Mr. Salting, of Hiffling cattle station until the return of the commissioner's orderly from the Fanning River, who accompanied me safely into the town of Bowden. I experienced great kindness from Mr. W. H. Thomas and Mr. P. Somers, who gave me clothes and made a subscription for me.



### CHAPTER III

The Aborigines — Nomadic habits — Living in tribes —  
What they eat as food — Language — How the natives  
make fire — The ceremony of making the lads men —  
Relationship — How they dispose of the dead — Flax  
Grown and the uses they make of it — Description of  
the Country — Gold — Extinction of the race — Appeal  
for the natives.

THE aborigines among whom I have been living, are a fine race of people, as to strength, size, and general appearance: but like those of other parts of this colony, they are treacherous, jealous, and cunning. They are not black, they are more of the colour of half-castes. When born they are nearly white, but when they are three days old, the gins squeeze their own milk on them, and rub charcoal into their skins to make them black and shine. They have sunken eyes, broad noses — which are made so by their parents in infancy — and broad mouths. The infants are allowed to suck at the breast a long while, indeed, until they are old enough to get their own food. I have seen a child sucking at the breast with its next brother or sister. I have also seen the little things working in the swamps with their mothers, setting roots, and every now and then go and take a suck at the breast. The women have very few children, seldom exceeding four, and very seldom more than one at a time. I know of

about four cases of twins. I also remember that in one case when there was a boy and a girl born to a woman, the father killed the boy and saved the girl — to save the trouble of bringing them up — for they are very lazy. It caused, however, a great disturbance in the camps among their friends, who thought they ought to have brought them up. The women go in the swamps the next day after their confinement as usual, to gather food, as though nothing had happened. The men have several wives — in some instances as many as eight or nine — and it is about their wives that all their wars, fights, and feuds occur; they steal them from each other and frequently lend them, or sell them for a time, for a slight consideration.

They never stay long in a locality, as soon as one place becomes a little exhausted of food they travel to another. In the wet and cold season they put up small gunyahs to live in, but in no particular order. They live in tribes, each tribe speaking a different dialect, it can hardly be called a different language; I could speak eight of these dialects. They have no chiefs — the strongest is the best man.

They get their living by fishing, hunting, digging in the earth for roots, gathering fruits, etc. They can eat anything; among other things sharks, alligators, shrimps, shell fish, and fish of all kinds. Kangaroos, rats, wallabies, snakes, grubs, snails, and all kinds of creeping things. Wild ducks, geese, turkeys, several kinds of roots, one of which grows at the tops of the mountains, is the best eating, called (*moogoondah*), it is white, sweet, firm, dry, and grows in red clay soil.

There is another lower down, at the foot of the mountains, in the scrub, called (*malboon*), which is soft and more moist, and is very nice eating. There is another root rather of a sticky nature when cooked, which grows on the mountains, not in the scrub, but in the grass, and white, like a turnip, with a small thin leaf, called (*cornool*). There is another, smaller and darker in its colour, but in other respects very much like it, called (*cahnan*). Another, a creeper, which grows on the high banks of the freshwater rivers, with a small green leaf, the leaves very thick, called (*booan*). There is another similar to a turnip, but smaller, called (*manoon*). There is one which runs in and out among the grass, with a little blue flower, called (*cardoola* or *carlmbar*), and many others more or less like them. They have several kinds of fruits, a plum, very large, but very little flesh on it, all stone nearly, called (*cowan gowan*, or *oolubba*). There is a small currant, very blue in colour, but nearly all stone, called (*moorgah mudda*). A wild banana, full of black seed, and very little flesh. There is also a white berry, similar to the white currant, very sweet, called (*walba*). There is another, which is red, nearly all stone, called (*mooray*). There is a fruit like an apple, called (*barkabah*); a red fig, called (*cowarah*); and a black one called (*ballamoo*). The bread fruit grows on the mountains, called (*margurdah*).

Some coconuts used to wash ashore sometimes, I suppose from the other islands, as I never saw them growing in my rambles. There is plenty of honey in the hollows of the trees, from the native honey bees.

They eat honey, combs, and bees too if they are hungry. There is plenty to eat if they are not too lazy to fetch it. Human flesh cannot be considered a part of their food, although they sometimes eat it. They eat young men killed in battle, or if killed by accident, also young women and children, but never those of their enemies. They cut their enemies up in strips, dry them, and distribute the pieces through the tribe, by which means they think they have their enemies' strength added to their own, and that they will be lucky in hunting and fishing.

They have no written language whatever, and consequently very little tradition. It is very guttural in sound, and extremely limited in power of expression. Of course they have no means of teaching their language but by imitation and memory, assisted by their wants. The different animals are arranged according to the size of their feet, hence the sheep have the same name as their wallabies (*cargoan*); all kinds of sailing vessels have the same names as their canoes, because they float on the water (*woolgoora*). The heavenly bodies are named differently, the sun is (*ingin*), which they think is a body of fire, because of its warmth, and especially so since they saw us light rag with a burning glass. The moon (*werboonburra*), they say is a human being, like themselves, and comes down on the earth, and they sometimes meet it in some of their fishing excursions. They say one tribe throws it up and it gradually rises and then comes down again, when another tribe catches it to save it from hurting itself. They accordingly think there is a

new sun and moon every day and night. There is a large open space on Mount Elliott with not a vestige of vegetation on it, whilst up to the very margin of it is a thick scrub, and they told me it was done by the moon, which once threw its circle stick round it, meaning its boomerang, and cut it off. Throwing the sun and moon up by one tribe and catching them by another, will easily be recognised as their explanation of the rising and setting of those bodies. They have no knowledge of the earth beyond the locality they inhabit. The stars and comets are both the same in name (*mi goolerburda*). They think the falling stars indicate the direction of danger, and that comets are the ghosts or spirits of some of their tribe, who have been killed at a distance from them, working their way back again, and that they come down from the clouds on the coast. We saw one this last dry season which they thought was one of the tribe who had been killed in war. They think all the heavenly bodies are under their control; and that when there is an eclipse, some of their tribe hide it with a sheet of bark to frighten the rest. About six years ago, there was nearly a total eclipse of the sun, the only one I saw. I asked an old man what it meant, and he told me his son had hid it (the sun) to frighten another of his tribe. But they are very uneasy during its continuance. They pick up a piece of grass and bite it, making a mumbling noise, keeping their eyes steadily fixed on it till it passes over, when they become easy again and can go to sleep comfortably. They think they have power over the rain (*durgun*) to make it come and go as they like.

The rainbow (*terebare*) they think, is the clouds spewing fish in the lagoons, and roots on the hills, or something for their good, wherever the end points. They are very frightened at thunder (*teegoora*), and lightning (*timulba*), although I never knew an instance of any harm being done with the lightning. They have no knowledge of how they came into existence, they think they live and die like dogs, but there is a kind of innate fear of death, and they have some thought that they will jump up white fellows; the reference to their friends in the comets points to some undefined hereafter, but the knowledge of the future is nearly obliterated. They told me that their forefathers witnessed a great flood, and nearly all were drowned, only those who got on a very high mountain (*Bibbiringda*, which is inland of the north bay of Cape Cleveland) were saved. I understood them to refer to the flood mentioned in scripture, especially as they say only a few were allowed to go up.

They can only count five (*Woggin*) 1, (*Boolray*) 2, (*Goodjoo*) 3, (*Munwool*) 4, (*Murgai*) 5. For any number beyond these, they put up their 10 fingers together; beyond that again, the 10 fingers of another person, and so on for three or four persons, till they come to a moon; and when they refer to fish, roots, or things in general, they can only say a few or plenty. They measure time by moons and wet and dry seasons.

The language is very irregular, and it seems to me totally impossible to systematise it in any way. The following is a list of the principal words: —

- Nannie — earth  
 Ejugabah — fire  
 Doongalla — water  
 Ingin — sun  
 Wurboonburra — moon  
 Nilgoolerburda — stars,  
     comets  
 Durgun — rain  
 Telebare — rainbow  
 Teegoora — thunder  
 Timulba — lightning  
 Moggoor — clouds  
 Bundara — sky  
 Munyah — man  
 Youngoorah — woman  
 Mowdruman — boy  
 Murgunman — girl  
 Colaman — babies  
 Deenah — feet  
 Cockool — cattle, named  
     after large kangaroos  
 Oombal — horses, named  
     after dogs  
 Oodra — kangaroo, large, on  
     the plains (male)  
 Bourgoola — ditto ditto  
     (female)  
 Coondoola — emu  
 Prorogwan — native  
     companion  
 Moongun — opossum, or  
     wild cat  
 Munbrebare — flying squirrel  
 Cundulmule — wood, or  
     kangaroo rat, because of  
     the foot being like a  
     kangaroo's  
 Kooroongun — common rat
- Carbul — carpet snake (very  
     harmless and good eating)  
 Tabaray — legs  
 Toobun — arms  
 Cabankabun — hands  
 Coode — head  
 Teeburra — eyes  
 Deeragun — ears  
 Weir — hair  
 Telli — tongue  
 Tingool — teeth  
 Moolin — lips  
 Mooda Mooda — neck  
 Ugar — breast  
 Nhamoon — teats  
 Boolco — belly  
 Doolga — back  
 Woolgoora — canoe, ships  
 Cargoan — sheep, named  
     after small kangaroos on  
     the mountains  
 Carmoomulle — black snake,  
     yellow belly, lives both in  
     the water and on the land  
 Othubuda — a long thin light  
     brown snake, lives in the  
     grass, to be bit by which  
     is certain death. They have  
     no antidote against snake  
     bites  
 Dungaburre — a large brown  
     snake with red spots on its  
     belly, these are all good  
     eating  
 Mooraynburra — turkey,  
     named after the red-  
     currant, because they are  
     very fond of it

Gungur — iguana (green,  
harmless), there are three  
kinds of iguanas

Coonbinmulla — light dark  
speckles, short thick tail,  
harmless

Coobirangil — all one colour,  
light brown (rather  
dangerous)

Booloon — albatross

Noogooral — goose

Yamarah — duck

Waboora — small

Wadoolbil — large

Queearilla — plenty

Enugedy — enough, that  
will do

The natives get fire by friction, by rubbing two soft pieces of wood of the same kind together, they generally use the wood of the black fig as being the easiest. They take a branch off, a little thicker than your finger, split it up and put it on the ground, the flat side upwards, and hold it down with their feet; they then take a sound piece, round and straight, about 12 inches long, and put one end on the flat side of the piece on the ground, holding it up between their hands, and then commence rolling it rapidly between them, pressing it into the piece beneath, so that it begins to make a hole in it, as though they were boring it; after they have done that for a minute or two, they make a notch on the side of the piece at the bottom, so that the fine dust they make while the boring process is going on shall fall down on some dry grass they have there to catch it, they then repeat the rolling process till the sparks come, at last pick up the dry grass with the dust in it, and blow it till it lights up.

The ceremony of making the lads young men, takes place about once every six years. They had four ceremonies of this kind while I was with them. For eight or nine months immediately previous. they have to go



in the bush to provide for themselves, during which time they are never allowed to see a female, this is to test their fitness to take a wife; if they do see a female, they think they will waste away. After the nine months are over they are brought into the camp, cane rings are put on their arms and tightened very much, so as to stop the circulation of the blood. Their arms swell very much, which puts them in great agony. They are then left in that torture all night — their cries are terrible to hear. To keep their fingers from contracting and thus deforming them, they sit with their hands and fingers spread out on the ground, with the heels of their feet tightly pressed on them. In the morning they are brought into the presence of their mothers, sisters, and relatives; and just above and below the mark of the cane ring on their arms they make small incisions to let the blood flow and prevent inflammation. While this is being done, their mothers and relatives are crying and cutting themselves from head to foot with sharp stones, in token of joy at seeing them. When this is somewhat subsided, places are provided for them to sleep under, with boughs to shade them from the sun, as they could of course get no sleep during the night. While they are sleeping the old gins go into the swamps and get roots to make cakes for them, and the men get all the spears the young men have been carrying with them during the nine months they have been away, and fix them in the earth on a clear space in a semi-circle, fastening grass festoons from head to head of the spears. In the evening all being ready, they wake up, generally about 80 in

number, and they are each seated under a festoon in a reclining position. Then their sisters or female cousins lay with their heads on their arms, to press down the swollen or cut places, and they believe nothing harmful will come of it after that. While they are laying there, a lot of cakes are thrown up and scrambled for by the lookers on, who had gone through the ceremony before them; they then go to their several fires. In the morning they are taken a little way in the bush again, and dressed up with shells, and the down of birds stuck on their heads, painted, and made to look to the best advantage, they are then brought back to choose and take their sweethearts, and the whole ceremony closes with a grand corroboree.

After this is over there is a good deal of quarrelling and fighting among them. They steal the wives of the old and weak men, and daughters from their parents, which leads to fighting, and often extends between two tribes, and then there is a war, which is not, however, of a very sanguinary nature. They often get some terrible blows, and sometimes one gets killed, but they cannot keep it on many hours, for they are forced to go and get supplies in the shape of food, in the swamps, and they seldom renew the conflict.

They are very strict in their relationship. When girls are about 10 years old they are not allowed to sleep at the same fire with their brothers. The intended mother-in-law of a young man, is not allowed to look at him, until such time as the before-mentioned ceremony is over. And as families they are very distinct.

They burn their dead, and for 12 months carry the burnt remains about tied up in a sheet of bark, and afterwards, throw it into a water hole. Their tomahawks (*bullgoo*) are made of stone, and latterly they have got a good deal of iron (*bingulburra*) amongst them, with which they make a kind of chisel, by fastening a piece between two pieces of wood with which they make their spears, boomerangs, etc.

There is very fine flax grown there, which they find very useful in making their fishing and hunting nets. They make very good mesh nets. They place their net for hunting in the most frequented paths of the kangaroo, or whatever they are hunting for, and they then go and beat them up and drive them in. They catch a great many birds with snares, merely loose knots, which are placed in the thick grass and reeds in the swamps, and as the birds go through in quest of food, in the night, they are caught.

The country about Mount Elliott, where I have been living is well watered and grassed. It is very low and swampy in many places. There is abundance of fresh water. At the top of Mount Elliott there is a never-failing spring of beautiful water, which finds its way down exactly opposite sides of the mountain. It is such a thick scrub, and there is such an abundance of food in it, and plenty of water, that if the aborigines were driven from the country all around they would find a safe asylum there. There are a great many alligators in both the fresh and salt water creeks, and particularly in one large freshwater lagoon. I have seen dozens of natives dragged down and killed by them.

I had a scratch on my knee from one myself, the scar of which I shall carry to my grave. I was also bitten by a whip snake, which made me swell up for two days. I have seen dozens die from the bites of snakes.

I have frequently been asked if I knew whether it was a gold bearing country. Not having had any experience, even by report, of such countries, I cannot tell. I remember once when out, looking for some coloured earths to paint myself with, I picked up a piece of what I thought to be coloured ochre, but it was very heavy and hard. I also remember once when on Mount Elliott, I was getting stones for tomahawks, etc., that they were very much like those I have seen in the jeweller's shop windows in Queen Street, with pieces of yellow metal in them, but whether it was gold I know not, I should think it was not, if it had been, it would probably have occurred to me.

The work of extinction is gradually but surely going on among the aboriginals. The tribe I was living with are far less numerous now than when I went among them. What with the wars, fights, destruction by the settlers and black police, and the natural deterioration in the people themselves, they are fast disappearing. During the time I was among them, I suffered a great deal from rheumatism, which has left its mark on me, so much so, that I have very little strength left, and I feel I should not have lasted much longer amongst the natives.

It will perhaps be pardonable in me if I refer to a suggestion thrown out by a correspondent in the *Courier* newspaper, to the effect that the natives who

were so kind to me should be dealt with in a similar manner, as those who succoured Burke, Wills and King. I would just call attention to what I previously mentioned; almost their last wish to me was with tears in their eyes that I would ask the white men to let them have *some* of their *own* ground to live on. They agreed that they might be *allowed* to retain that on the other, at all events that which was no good to anybody but themselves — the low swampy grounds near the sea coast. It would be useless to send them flour, they would not eat it, not knowing anything about it; nor cattle or sheep, they would run away from them with fear, besides if they once understood the use of them as food, it would make it more dangerous to the settlers, but a good blanket would be invaluable, so would some small tomahawks, knives, old iron hoops, and fishing hooks.