Three Expeditions in the Interior of Eastern Australia

With Descriptions of the Recently Explored Region of Australia Felix and of the Present Colony of New South Wales

Mitchell, T. L. (Thomas Livingstone) (1792-1855)

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Three Expeditions in the Interior of Eastern Australia
With Descriptions of the Recently Explored Region of Australia Felix and of the Present Colony of New South Wales
London
T. and W. Boone
1839

THE following Journals were written at the close of many a laborious day, when the energies both of mind and body were almost exhausted by long continued toil. The author trusts that this circumstance will account for, and palliate, some of the defects which may be discovered in his volumes. Conscious as he is of the deficiencies of his work, he nevertheless hopes that the reader will not pronounce it to be wholly devoid of interest. Though Australia calls up no historical recollections, no classical associations of ideas, it has other, and not less valid titles to our attention. It is a new and vast country, over the largest portion of which a veil of mystery still hangs; many of its productions vary in a singular manner, from those in other parts of the world; within the memory of man one British colony has risen there, in spite of adverse circumstances, to a high degree of prosperity; others have been founded, which promise to be equally successful; and it seems impossible to doubt that, at no distant period, the whole territory will be inhabited by a powerful people, speaking the English language, diffusing around them English civilization and arts, and exercising a predominant influence over eastern Asia, and the numerous and extensive islands in that quarter of the globe.

In his expeditions into the interior of Australia, the author was led cheerfully on, by an eager curiosity to examine a country which is yet in the same state as when it was formed by its Maker. With respect to the narrative of those expeditions, the sole merit which he claims is that of having faithfully described what he attentively observed; neither his pencil nor his pen has been allowed to pass the bounds of truth. There is, however, one branch of his subject on which justice and gratitude render it necessary for him to say something more. In those departments of natural history, to which he owns himself a stranger, he has received assistance of the utmost value from several distinguished persons. To the few plants which, after his unfortunate fellow traveller had sacrificed his life to the pursuit, the writer was able to collect, a permanent place in the botanic system has been given by Dr. Lindley. Much importance has been added to the work, by the researches and discoveries which Professor Owen has made, with regard to the fossil remains; and the few particulars gleaned relative to existing animals have enabled Mr. Ogilby to introduce several interesting novelties to the attention of zoologists. To these gentlemen, and also to Professor Faraday, Mr. MacLeay, and other scientific friends, the warmest acknowledgements of the writer are due, for whatever naturalists may deem worthy of praise in these pages.

The aid thus liberally afforded, acting in unison with a feeling that, as the surveys were undertaken by order of Government, it is his duty to lay the result of them early before the public, has encouraged the author to persevere steadily in bringing out these volumes; though he must candidly own that, but for these considerations, he would rather have delayed the performance of this task till he had completed another,* of a national character, which, connected as it is with the days of his early service in the cause of his country, may naturally be supposed to have stronger and more attractive claims upon him.

August 18, 1838.
* Plans of the Fields of Battle in the Peninsula.
To the Right Honourable Lord Glenelg,

HER MAJESTY’S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,

&c. &c. &c.
THIS WORK IS
WITH PERMISSION
Dedicated
BY HIS LORDSHIP’S VERY OBEDIENT
AND MOST HUMBLE SERVANT,
T. L. MITCHELL.
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* This was called the “red shrew mouse” by the men composing the party, but as no species of the Insectivora of Zoologists has hitherto been discovered in Australia, it more probably belongs to the genus Myrmecobius, recently described by Mr. Waterhouse. I venture to name this animal with considerable hesitation, having neglected to take a note of the generic characters, while the specimen was yet within my reach. If it be a true Sorex, its discovery will be as interesting to Zoologists as that of the Dipus, neither genus having been hitherto suspected to exist in Australia.
A Systematical List of Seventy-Seven New Plants

DESCRIBED IN THIS WORK.

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Chapter I.


THE journey northward in 1831, originated in one of those fabulous tales, which occasionally become current in the colony of New South Wales, respecting the interior country, still unexplored.

A runaway convict, named George Clarke, alias “the Barber,” had, for a length of time, escaped the vigilance of the police, by disguising himself as an aboriginal native. He had even accustomed himself to the wretched life of that unfortunate race of men; he was deeply scarified like them, and naked and painted black, he went about with a tribe, being usually attended by two aboriginal females, and having acquired some knowledge of their language and customs.

But this degenerate “white man” was not content with the solitary freedom of the savage life, and his escape from a state of servitude. He had assumed the cloak and colour of the savage, that he might approach the dwellings of the colonists, and steal with less danger of detection. In conjunction with the simple aborigines whom he misled, and with several other runaway convicts, he had organized a system of cattle stealing, which was coming into extensive operation on Liverpool plains, when, through the aid of some of the natives, who have in general assisted the detection of bushrangers, he was at length discovered and captured by the police.

After this man was taken into custody, he gave a circumstantial detail of his travels to the north-west, along the bank of a large river, named, as he said, the “Kindur;” by following which in a south-west direction, he had twice reached the sea shore. He described the tribes inhabiting the banks of the “Kindur,” and gave the names of their chiefs. He said that he had first crossed vast plains named “Balyràn,” and, on approaching the sea, he had seen a burning mountain named “Courada.” He described, with great apparent accuracy, the courses of the known streams of the northern interior, which united, as he stated, in the “Nammoy,” a river first mentioned by him; and, according to his testimony, Peel’s river entered the
“Nammoy,” by flowing westward from where Mr. Oxley had crossed it.

Now this was contrary to the course assigned to the Peel in the maps by early travellers, but consistent, nevertheless, with more recent surveys. Vague accounts of “a great river beyond Liverpool plains,” flowing north-west, were current, about the time General Darling embarked for England. The attention of the acting governor, Colonel Lindesay, was particularly drawn to the question by this report of Clarke, and also by the subsequent proposals of various persons, to conduct any expedition sent in search of the “great river.”

There are few undertakings more attractive to the votaries of fame or lovers of adventure, than the exploration of unknown regions; but Sir Patrick Lindesay, with due regard to the responsibility which my office seemed to impose upon me, as successor to Mr. Oxley, at once accepted my proffered services to conduct a party into the interior.

The principal object of my plan was the exploration of Australia, so that whether the report of the river proved true or false, the results of the expedition would be, at least, useful, in affording so much additional information; equally important geographically, whether positive or negative.

After I had surveyed extensive tracts of territory, I never could separate the question respecting the course of any river, from that of the situation of the higher land necessary to furnish its sources and confine its basin. I could not entertain the idea of a river distinct from these conditions, so necessary to the existence of one — and it appeared to me that if a large river flowed to the north-west of any point north of Liverpool plains — its sources could only be sought for in the Coast Range in the opposite direction; or to the eastward of these plains.

Various rivers were known to arise on that side of the Coast Range; the streams from Liverpool plains flowing northward; the Peel, the Gwydir, and the Dumaresq, arising in the Coast Range, and falling, as had been represented, to the north-westward. I proposed, therefore, to proceed northward, or to pursue such a direction as well as the nature of the country permitted, so that I might arrive, on the most northern of these streams, and then, keeping in view whatever high land might be visible near its northern banks, to trace the river’s course downwards, and thus to arrive at the “large river,” or common channel of all these waters.

The second condition necessary to the existence of a river, namely, the higher land enclosing its basin, might, in this case, have been either Arbuthnot’s Range, or that between the Darling and the Lachlan; and this seemed to me to involve a question of at least equal importance to that of the river itself, for, had the fall of all the waters above mentioned, been to the north-west, it was obvious that such a range must have been the dividing ridge or spine connecting the eastern and western parts of Australia, and which, when once investigated was likely to be the key to the discovery of all the rivers on each side, and to the other subordinate features of this great island.

Thus, the most direct and practical plan for seeking the river, was perfectly consistent with my views of general exploration.

In the selection of men to compose an exploring party, and in collecting the
articles of equipment, provisions, and means of transport, my department afforded various facilities. This aid was the more necessary in my case, because the other duties of my office, prevented me from devoting much attention personally, to the preparations for such a journey.

From the known level character of the interior, I considered that the light drays or carts used by the surveyors might easily pass, and I, therefore, preferred them to pack horses, being also a more convenient means of conveyance; I availed myself likewise of such men, carts, bullocks, and horses, as were disposable in the survey department at the time. The new Governor was expected in the course of a few months, and I was, therefore, desirous to set out as soon as possible, that I might return before his arrival.

After several weeks of anxious preparation, I had the satisfaction to find that every contingency was, as far as possible, provided for in my department. Each officer, whether employed in the survey of the different parts of the colony, or the measurement of farms, was also fully instructed respecting his duties during my contemplated absence. In the correspondence with the office at Sydney, which amounted annually to about 2000 letters, none remained unanswered; and my last cares were to leave, in the hands of an engraver, a map of the colony, that the past labours of the department might be permanently secured to the public, whatever might be our fate in the interior.

Little time remained for me to look at the sextants, theodolite, and other instruments necessary for the exploratory journey; I collected in haste a few articles of personal equipment, and having as well as I could, under the circumstances, set my house in order, I bade adieu to my family, and left Sydney at noon, on Thursday, the 24th day of November, 1831, being accompanied for some miles by my friend Colonel Snodgrass.

It was not until then, that my mind was sufficiently relieved from considering the details of my department, to enable me to direct my thoughts to the undiscovered country. I had yet to traverse 300 miles, for to that distance from Sydney the flocks of the colonists extended, before I could reach the vast untrodden soil, the exploration of which was the object of my mission. I felt the ardour of my early youth, when I first sought distinction in the crowded camp and battle-field, revive, as I gave loose to my reflections and considered the nature of the enterprise. But, in comparing the feelings I then experienced with those which excited my youthful ambition, it seemed that even war and victory, with all their glory, were far less alluring than the pursuit of researches such as these; the objects of which were to spread the light of civilization over a portion of the globe yet unknown, though rich, perhaps, in the luxuriance of uncultivated nature, and where science might accomplish new and unthought-of discoveries; while intelligent man would find a region teeming with useful vegetation, abounding with rivers, hills, and vallies, and waiting only for his enterprising spirit and improving hand to turn to account the native bounty of the soil.

My first day's journey, terminated near Paramatta, at the residence of Mr. John Macarthur. I was received by that gentleman with his usual hospitality, and although
not in the enjoyment of the best health, he insisted on accompanying me over his extensive and beautiful garden, where he pointed out to my attention, the first olive-tree ever planted in Australia. Here I also saw the cork-tree in full luxuriance — the caper plant growing amidst rocks — the English oak — the horse-chestnut — broom — magnificent mulberry trees of thirty-five years’ growth, umbrageous and green. Beds of roses, in great variety, were spread around, and filled the air with fragrance, while the climbing species of that beautiful flower was equally pleasing to the eye. I observed convict Greeks* — “acti fatis” — at work in that garden of the antipodes, training the vines to trellises, made after the fashion of those in the Peloponnesus. The state of the orange-trees, flourishing in the form of cones sixteen feet high, and loaded with fruit, was very remarkable, but they had risen from the roots of former trees, which, having been reduced to bare poles by a drought of three years’ duration, had been cut off, and were now succeeded by these vigorous products of more genial seasons. Mr. Macarthur assured me, that by adopting this plan, many fruit-trees, after suffering from the effects of long-continued drought, might be renovated successfully. The want of moisture in the climate of Australia, may occasionally compel the gardener to resort to such extreme measures for the preservation of his trees: but the orange has hitherto yielded a very profitable and constant return to those, who have attended to its cultivation in this colony. The luxuriant growth of the apple and pear, in a climate so dry and warm, is a remarkable fact; and when we consider the exuberance of the vine in the few spots, where it has as yet been planted; we are justified in anticipating from the variety of aspect and unbroken soil in these southern regions, that many a curious or luxurious wine, still unknown, may in time be produced there.

But the garden, to him who seeks a home in distant colonies, must ever be an object of peculiar interest; for there, while cultivating the trees, fruits and flowers of his native land, the recollection of early days, and of the country of his birth is awakened by the vivid colours of the simple flower which his industry has reared, and which he knows to be a native of the soil to which he himself owes his existence.

At an early hour on the following morning, I took leave of my kind host, and also of my friend Mr. Dunlop, to whose scientific assistance in preparing for this journey, I feel much indebted. Mr. James Macarthur accompanied me a few miles on the road, when we parted with regret; and I set forth on my journey in the direction of the Hawkesbury, along the road leading to the ferry, across that river at Wiseman’s. I should here observe, that I had previously arranged that the exploring party, which, being slower in its movements, had been dispatched two weeks before, should await my arrival on Foy Brook, beyond the river Hunter, where I expected to meet Mr. White also, the assistant surveyor, whom I had selected to accompany me on this expedition.

My ride, on that day, was along a ridge, which extended upwards of fifty miles, through a succession of deep ravines, where no objects met the eye except barren sandstone rocks, and stunted trees. With the _banksia_ and _xanthorrhœa_ always in sight,
the idea of hopeless sterility is ever present to the mind, for these productions, in sandy soils at least, grow only where nothing else can vegetate. The horizon is flat, affording no relief to the eye from the dreary and inhospitable scene, which these solitudes present; and which extends over a great portion of the country, uninhabitable even by the aborigines. Yet here the patient labours of the surveyor have opened a road, although the stream of population must be confined to it, since it cannot spread over a region so utterly unprofitable and worthless.

It is not until the traveller has completed a journey of fifty miles, that he enjoys the sight, doubly cheering after crossing such a desert, of green, cultivated fields, and the dwellings of man. The broad waters of the Hawkesbury then come unexpectedly in view, flowing in the deepest, and apparently most inaccessible of these rock-bound vallies. He here soon discovers a practical proof of the advantages of convict labour to the inhabitants of such a country, in the facility with which he descends by a road cut in the rock, to the comfortable inn near the ferry.

Early next morning my ride was resumed, after crossing the river in the ferry-boat, where the width is 280 yards. The Hawkesbury is here the boundary between the counties of Cumberland and Northumberland. The scenery is fine on those broad and placid waters, sheltered by over-hanging cliffs, 600 feet in height. The river appears smooth as a mirror, and affords access by boats and small vessels, to the little sheltered cots and farms, which now enliven the margin. These patches are of no great extent, and occur alternately on each bank of this noble stream, comprising farms of from thirty to a hundred acres.

The necessity for a permanent land communication, between the seat of government and the northern part of the colony was obvious, and, indeed, a road in that direction had been the subject of petitions from the settlers to Sir Thomas Brisbane, under whose auspices the track across the mountain beyond the Hawkesbury, was first discovered and surveyed by Mr. Finch. This track, with some slight alterations, was found, on a more general survey, to be the most favourable line for a cart-road in that direction, which the country afforded; and it had been opened but a short time, when I thus proceeded along it, accompanied by Mr. Simpson, the assistant-surveyor, who, under my direction, had accomplished the work. Just then, however, the first steam vessel arrived in Australia, and afforded a regular coast-communication between Sydney and the northern portion of the colony. The land communication became, in consequence, an object of less importance than before, to the small handful of settlers at least, although it was not the less essential to a respectable government, or where an armed force had been organized, as in New South Wales, solely for the suppression of bushrangers, a sub-genus in the order banditti, which, happily, can no longer exist, except in places inaccessible to the mounted police. The ascent northward from this ferry on the Hawkesbury, is a substantial and permanent work, affording a favourable specimen of the value of convict labour, in anticipating the wants of an increasing population.

The country traversed by this new road is equally barren, and more mountainous than the district between Paramatta and the Hawkesbury. Amid those rocky heights
and depths, across which I had recently toiled on foot, marking out with no ordinary labour, the intended line, I had now the satisfaction to trot over a new and level road, winding like a thread through the dreary labyrinth before me, and in which various parts had already acquired a local appellation not wholly unsuited to their character, such as “Hungry Flat,” “Devil’s Backbone,” “No-grass Valley,” and “Dennis’s Dog-kennel.” In fact, the whole face of the country is composed of sandstone rock, and but partially covered with vegetation. The horizon is only broken by one or two summits, which are different both in outline and quality from the surrounding country. These isolated heights generally consist of trap-rock, and are covered with rich soil and very heavy timber. The most remarkable is Warrawalong — whose top I first observed from the hill of Jellore in the south, at the distance of 108 miles. This being a most important station for the general survey, which I made previously to opening the northern road, it was desirable to clear the summit, at least partly, of trees, a work which was accomplished after considerable labour — the trees having been very large. On removing the lofty forest, I found the view from that summit extended over a wild waste of rocky precipitous ravines, which debarred all access or passage in any direction, until I could patiently trace out the ridges between them, and for this purpose I ascended that hill on ten successive days, the whole of which time I devoted to the examination of the various outlines and their connections, by means of the theodolite.

Looking northward, an intermediate and lower range concealed from view the valley of the Hunter, but the summits of the Liverpool range appeared beyond it. On turning to the eastward, my view extended to the unpeopled shores and lonely waters of the vast Pacific. Not a trace of man, or of his existence, was visible on any side, except a distant solitary column of smoke, that arose from a thicket between the hill on which I stood and the coast, and marked the asylum of a remnant of the aborigines. These unfortunate creatures could no longer enjoy their solitary freedom; for the dominion of the white man surrounded them. His sheep and cattle filled the green pastures where the kangaroo (the principal food of the natives) was accustomed to range, until the stranger came from distant lands and claimed the soil. Thus these first inhabitants, hemmed in by the power of the white population, and deprived of the liberty which they formerly enjoyed of wandering at will through their native wilds, were compelled to seek a precarious shelter amidst the close thickets and rocky fastnesses which afforded them a temporary home, but scarcely a subsistence, for their chief support, the kangaroo, was either destroyed or banished. I knew this unhappy tribe, and had frequently met them in their haunts. In the prosecution of my surveys I was enabled to explore the wildest recesses of these deep mountainous ravines, guided occasionally by one or two of their number. I felt no hesitation in venturing amongst them, for, to me, they appeared a harmless unoffending race. On many a dark night, and even during rainy weather, I have proceeded on horseback amongst these steep and rocky ranges, my path being guided by two young boys belonging to the tribe, who ran cheerfully before my horse, alternately tearing off the stringy bark which served for torches, and setting
fire to the grass trees (xanthorrhoea) to light my way.

This can scarcely be considered a digression from my narrative of this day’s journey, for Warrawolong was the only object visible, beyond the woody horizon. We had passed No-Grass Valley, the Devil’s Backbone, and were approaching Hungry Flat, when Mr. Simpson produced a grilled fowl, and a feed for our horses — and we alighted most willingly for half an hour, to partake of this timely refreshment, near a spring.

On re-mounting, I bade Mr. Simpson farewell, after expressing my satisfaction with his clever arrangements for opening this mountain road, a work which he had accomplished with small means, in nine months.

It was quite dark on the evening of the 26th, before I reached the inn near the head of the little valley of the Wollombi, a tributary to the river Hunter. Here, at length, we again find some soil fit for cultivation, and the whole of it has been taken up in farms. But the pasturage afforded by the numerous vallies on this side of the mountains, here called “cattle runs,” is more profitable to the owners of the farms, than the farms they actually possess, of which the produce by cultivation is only available to them at present, as the means of supporting grazing establishments. I should here observe, that in a climate so dry as that of Australia, the selection of farm land depends solely on the direction of streams, for it is only in the beds of water-courses, that any ponds can be found during dry seasons. The formation of reservoirs has not yet been resorted to, although the accidental largeness of ponds left in such channels has frequently determined settlers in their choice of a homestead, when by a little labour, a pond equally good might have been made in other parts, which few would select from the want of water. In the rocky gullies, that I had passed in these mountains, there was, probably, a sufficiency, but there was no land fit for the purposes of farming. In other situations, on the contrary, there might be found abundance of good soil, considered unavailable for any purpose except grazing, because it had no “frontage” (as it is termed), on a river or chain of ponds. Selections have been frequently made of farms, which have thus excluded extensive tracts behind them from the water, and these remaining consequently unoccupied, have continued accessible only to the sheep or cattle of the possessor of the water frontage.

In these vallies of the Upper Wollombi, we find little breadth of alluvial soil, but a never-failing supply of water has already attracted settlers to its banks — and those small farmers who live on a field or two of maize and potatoes — and who are the only beginning of an agricultural population, yet apparent, in New South Wales — shew a disposition to nestle in any available corner there. But on the lower portion of the Wollombi, where the valley widens, and water becomes less abundant, the soil being sandy, I found it impossible to locate some veterans on small farms, which I had marked out for them, because it was known that in dry seasons, although each farm had frontage on the Wollombi Brook, very few ponds remained in that part of its channel.

Nov. 27. — Early this morning, I had a visit from Mr. Finch, who was very anxious that I should attach him to the exploring party. As I foresaw, that some
delay might occur in procuring provisions, without his assistance, in this district, I accepted his services, and gave him his instructions, conditionally. I met Mr. White at the junction of the Ellalong, and we proceeded together, down the valley of the Wollombi.

The sandstone terminates in cliffs on the right bank of this stream near the projected village of Broke, (named by me in honour of that meritorious officer, Sir Charles Broke Vere, Bart.) but the left bank is overlooked by other rocky extremities falling from the ranges on the west, until it reaches the main stream. The most conspicuous of these headlands, as they appear from that of “Mattawee” behind the village of Broke, is called “Wambo.” This consists of a dark mottled trap with crystals of felspar. But the most remarkable feature in this extensive valley, is the termination thereupon of the sandstone formation which renders barren so large a proportion of the surface of New South Wales. This, in many parts, resembles what was formerly called the iron-sand of England, where it occurs both as a fresh and salt water formation. The mountains northward of this valley of the Hunter consist chiefly of trap-rock, the lower country being open, and lightly wooded. The river, although occasionally stagnant, contains a permanent supply of water, and consequently the whole of the land on its banks, is favourable for the location of settlers, and accordingly has been all taken up. The country, and especially the hills beyond the left bank, affords excellent pasturage for sheep, as many large and thriving establishments testify. At one of this description, belonging to Mr. Blaxland, and which is situated on the bank of the Lower Wollombi, Mr. White and I arrived towards evening, and passed the night.

Nov. 28. — We left the hospitable station of Mr. Blaxland at an early hour, and proceeded on our way to join the party. We found the country across which we rode, very much parched from the want of rain. The grass was every where yellow, or burnt up, and in many parts on fire, so that the smoke which arose from it obscured the sun, and added sensibly to the heat of the atmosphere.

We lost ourselves, and, consequently, a good portion of the day, from having rode too carelessly through the forest country, while engaged in conversation respecting the intended journey. We, nevertheless, reached the place of rendezvous on Foy Brook long before night, and I encamped on a spot, where the whole party was to join me in the morning. Mr. White left me here for the purpose of making some arrangements at home, and respecting the supplies which I had calculated on obtaining in this part of the country.

During the day’s route, we traversed the valley of the river Hunter, an extensive tract of country, different from that mountainous region from which I had descended, inasmuch as it consists of low undulating land, thinly wooded, and bearing, in most parts, a good crop of grass.

Portions of the surface near Mr. Blaxland’s establishment, bore that peculiar, undulating character which appears in the southern districts, where it closely resembles furrows, and is termed “ploughed ground.” This appearance usually indicates a good soil, which is either of a red or very dark colour, and in which small portions of trap-rock, but more frequently concretions of indurated marl, are
found. Coal appears in the bed and banks of the Wollombi, near Mr. Blaxland’s station, and at no great distance from his farm is a salt spring, also in the bed of this brook. The waters in the lesser tributaries, on the north bank of the river Hunter, become brackish when the current ceases. In that part of the bed of this river, which is nearest to the Wollombi (or to “Wambo” rather), I found an augitic rock, consisting of a mixture of felspar and augite. Silicified fossil wood of a coniferous tree, is found abundantly in the plains, and in rounded pebbles in the banks and bed of the river, also chalcedony and compact brown haematite. A hill of some height on the right bank, situate twenty-six miles from the sea shore, is composed chiefly of a volcanic grit of greenish grey colour, consisting principally of felspar, and being in some parts slightly, in other parts highly calcareous when the rock assumes a compact aspect. This deposit contains numerous fossil shells, consisting chiefly of four distinct species of a new genus, nearest to *hippopodium*; also a new species of *trochus; atypa glabra*, and *spirifer*, a shell occurring also in older limestones of England.*

Amongst these remains was also found embedded a very perfect specimen of fossil wood. I may add, that in the bed of the Glindon Brook, which flows from the left bank of the Hunter, rocks of argillaceous limestone are found in large round boulders, some of which are more than 15 feet in diameter.*

Nov. 29. — The whole equipment came up at half-past nine, whereupon I distributed such articles as were necessary to complete the organization of the party, and the day was passed in making various arrangements for the better regulation of our proceedings, both on encamping and in travelling. I obtained from Assistant-Surveyor Dixon, then employed in this neighbourhood, some account of Liverpool Plains — this officer having surveyed the ranges which separate these interior regions from the appropriated lands of the colony. The heat of this day was exceedingly oppressive, the thermometer having been as high as 100° in the shade, but after a thunder-shower it fell to 88°.

Nov. 30. — At length I had the satisfaction to see my party move forward in exploring order; it consisted of the following persons, viz.: —

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alexander Burnett,</th>
<th><strong>Carpenters.</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Whiting,</td>
<td><strong>Sailors.</strong></td>
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<td>William Woods,</td>
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<td>John Palmer,</td>
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<td>Thomas Jones,</td>
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<td>William Worthington,</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Souter,</td>
<td><strong>Medical Assistant.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Muirhead,</td>
<td><strong>Bullock-Drivers.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel Delaney,</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Foreham,</td>
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These were the best men I could find. All were ready to face fire or water, in hopes of regaining by desperate exploits, a portion, at least, of that liberty which had been forfeited to the laws of their country. This was always a favourite service with the best disposed of the convict prisoners, for in the event of their meriting, by their good conduct, a favourable report on my return, the government was likely to grant them some indulgence. I chose these men either from the characters they bore, or according to their trade or particular qualifications: thus,

Burnett was the son of a respectable house-carpenter on the banks of the Tweed, where he had been too fond of shooting game, his only cause of “trouble.”

Whiting, a Londoner, had been a soldier in the Guards.

Woods had been found useful in the department as a surveyor’s man; in which capacity he first came under my notice, after he had been long employed as a boatman in the survey of the coast, and having become, in consequence, ill from scurvy, he made application to me to be employed on shore. The justness of his request, and the services he had performed, prepossessed me in his favour, and I never afterwards had occasion to change my good opinion of him.

John Palmer was a sailmaker as well as a sailor, and both he and Jones had been on board a man-of-war, and were very handy fellows.

Worthington was a strong youth, recently arrived from Nottingham. He was nicknamed by his comrades “Five o’Clock,” from his having, on the outset of the journey, disturbed them by insisting that the hour was five o’clock soon after midnight, from his eagerness to be ready in time in the morning.

I never saw Souter’s diploma, but his experience and skill in surgery were sufficient to satisfy us, and to acquire for him from the men the appellation of “Doctor.”

Robert Muirhead had been a soldier in India, and banished, for some mutiny, to New South Wales; where his steady conduct had obtained for him an excellent character.

Delaney and Foreham were experienced men in driving cattle.

Joseph Jones, originally a London groom, I had always found intelligent and trustworthy.

Bombelli could shoe horses, and was afterwards transferred to my service by Mr. Sempill in lieu of a very turbulent character, whom I left behind, and who declared it to be his firm determination to be hanged.

Cussack had been a bog surveyor in Ireland; he was an honest creature, but had got somehow implicated in a charge of administering unlawful oaths.

Brown had been a soldier, and subsequently was assistant coachman to the
Marquis of —, and
Dawkins was an old tar — in whom Mr. White, himself formerly an officer in the
Indian navy, placed much confidence.
Thus it had been my study, in organizing this party, to combine proved men of
both services with some neat-handed mechanics, as engineers, and it now formed a
respectable body of men, for the purpose for which it was required.
Our materiel consisted of eight muskets, six pistols; and our small stock of
ammunition, including a box containing sky-rockets, was carried on one of the
covered carts.
Of these tilted carts we had two, so constructed that they could be drawn either
by one or two horses. They were also so light, that they could be moved across
difficult passes by the men alone. Three stronger carts or drays were loaded with
our stock of provisions, consisting of flour, pork (which had been boned in order
to diminish the bulk as much as possible), tea, tobacco, sugar and soap. We had,
besides, a sufficient number of pack saddles for the draught animals, that, in case of
necessity, we might be able to carry forward the loads by such means. Several pack-
horses were also attached to the party. I had been induced to prefer wheel carriages
for an exploratory journey — 1st, From the level nature of the interior country;
2ndly, From the greater facility and certainty they afforded of starting early, and as
the necessity for laying all our stores in separate loads on animals’ backs could thus
be avoided. The latter method being further exposed to interruptions on the way —
by the derangement of loads — or galling the animals’ backs — one inexperienced
man being thus likely to impede the progress of the whole party.
For the navigation or passage of rivers, two portable boats of canvass, had been
prepared by Mr. Eager, of the King’s dockyard at Sydney. We carried the canvass
only, with models of the ribs — and tools, having carpenters who could complete
them, as occasions required.
Our hour for encamping, when circumstances permitted, was to be two P. M., as
affording time for the cattle to feed and rest, but this depended on our finding
water and grass. Day-break was to be the signal for preparing for the journey, and
no time was allowed for breakfast, until after the party had encamped for the day.
As we proceeded along the road leading to the pass in the Liverpool range, Mr.
White overtook us, having obtained an additional supply of flour, tobacco, tea and
sugar, with which Mr. Finch was to follow the party as soon as he could procure
the carts and bullocks necessary for the carriage of these stores.
After travelling six hours, we encamped beside a small water-course near Muscle
Brook, the thermometer at four P. M. being as high as 95°. In the evening, the
burning grass became rather alarming, especially as we had a small stock of
ammunition in one of the carts. I had established our camp to the windward of the
burning grass, but I soon discovered that the progress of the fire was against the
wind, especially where the grass was highest. This may appear strange, but it is
easily accounted for. The extremities of the stalks bending from the wind, are the
first to catch the flame, but as they become successively ignited, the fire runs
directly to the windward, which is toward the lower end of the spikes of grass, and
catching the extremities of other stalks still further in the direction of the wind, it
travels in a similar manner along them. We managed to extinguish the burning grass
before it reached our encampment, but to prevent the invasion of such a dangerous
enemy we took the precaution, on other occasions, of burning a sufficient space
around our tents in situations where we were exposed to like inconvenience and
danger.

Dec. 1, Six A. M. — The thermometer at 82°. As the party proceeded, the sky
became overcast, and the absence of the sun made the day much more agreeable.
Towards noon we had rain and thunder, and this weather continued until we
reached the banks of the Hunter. We forded the river where the stream was
considerable at the time, and then encamped on the left bank. The draught animals
appeared less fatigued by this journey, than they had been by that of the former day,
owing probably to the refreshing moisture and cooler air. After the tents had been
pitched, a fine invigorating breeze arose, and the weather cleared up. Segenhoe, the
extensive estate of Potter Macqueen, Esq. was not far distant, and Mr. Sempill the
agent, called at my tent, and afforded me some aid in completing my arrangements.

I was very anxious to obtain the assistance of an aboriginal guide, but the natives
had almost all disappeared from the valley of the Hunter; and those who still linger
near their ancient haunts, are sometimes met with, about such large establishments
as Segenhoe, where, it may be presumed, they meet with kind treatment. Their
reckless gaiety of manner; intelligence respecting the country, expressed in a
laughable inversion of slang words; their dexterity, and skill in the use of their
weapons; and above all, their few wants, generally ensure them that look of
welcome,* without which these rovers of the wild will seldom visit a farm or cattle
station. Among those, who have become sufficiently acquainted with us, to be
sensible of that happy state of security, enjoyed by all men under the protection of
our laws, the conduct is strikingly different from that of the natives who remain in a
savage state. The latter are named “myalls,” by their half civilized brethren — who,
indeed, hold them so much in dread, that it is seldom possible to prevail on any one
to accompany a traveller far into the unexplored parts of the country. At Segenhoe,
on a former occasion, I met with a native but recently arrived from the wilds. His
terror and suspicion, when required to stand steadily before me, while I drew his
portrait, were such, that, notwithstanding the power of disguising fear, so
remarkable in the savage race, the stout heart of Cambo was overcome, and beat
visibly; — the perspiration streamed from his breast, and he was about to sink to
the ground, when he at length suddenly darted from my presence; but he speedily
returned, bearing in one hand his club, and in the other his bommereng, with which
he seemed to acquire just fortitude enough, to be able to stand on his legs, until I
finished the sketch. (See Frontispiece, Pl. 1.)

Dec. 2. — The party moved off at seven, and passing, soon after, near the farm of
an old man, whom I had assisted some years before, in the selection of his land, I
rode to see him, accompanied by Mr. White. He was busy with his harvest, but left
the top of his wheat-stack on seeing me, and running up, cordially welcomed us to
his dwelling. A real scotch bonnet covered the brow of a face which reminded me,
by its characteristic carving, of the “land of the mountain and the flood.” The analogy between the respective features, was at least so strong in my mind, and the sight of the one was so associated with the idea of the other, that had I seen this face on a stranger, in a still more distant corner of the earth — it must have called to mind the hills of my native land. The old man was very deaf, but in spite of age and this infirmity, his sharp blue eye expressed the enduring vigour of his mind. He had buried his wife in Scotland, and had left there a numerous family, that he might become its pioneer at the antipodes. He had thus far worked his way successfully, and was beginning to reap the fruits of his adventurous industry. Sleek cattle filled his stock-yard, his fields waved with ripe grain, and I had the satisfaction of learning from him, that he had written for his family, and that he soon expected their arrival in the colony. He immediately gave grain to our horses, and placed before us new milk; and, what we found a still greater luxury, pure water from the running burnie close by; also a bottle of “the mountain dew,” which, he said, was from a still which was “no far aff.” When I was about to mount my horse, he enquired if I could spare five minutes more, when he put into my hands the copy of a long memorial addressed to the government, which he had taken from among the leaves of a very old folio volume of Pitscottie’s History of Scotland. This memorial prayed, that whereas Scoone was in the valley of Strathearn, and that the pillow of Jacob which had been kept there as the coronation stone of the Kings of Scotland, was fated still to be, where their dominion extended; and as this valley of the Kingdon Ponds, had not received a general name, that it might be called Strathearn, &c. &c. We were finally compelled, although it still wanted two hours of noon, to drink a “stirrup-cup” at the door — when he most heartily drank success to our expedition, and I went on my way rejoicing that, on leaving the last man of the white race we were likely to see for some time, the ceremony of shaking hands was a vibration of sincere kindness.

We soon overtook the party — and had proceeded with it, some distance, when a soldier of the mounted police came up, and delivered to me a letter, from the military secretary at Sydney, informing me by command of the Acting Governor, that George Clarke — alias “the Barber,” — (the bushranger,) had sawed off his irons, and escaped from the prison at Bathurst. This intelligence was meant to put me on my guard respecting the natives, for from the well known character of the man, it was supposed, that he would assemble them beyond the settled districts, with a view to drive off the cattle of the colonists — and especial caution would be necessary to prevent a surprise from natives so directed, if, as most people supposed, his story of “the great river,” had only been an invention of his own, by which he had hoped to improve his chance of escape. (See Appendix, No. 1.)

At three P. M., we reached a spot favourable for encamping, the Kingdon brook forming a broad pool, deep enough to bathe in, and the grass in the neighbourhood being very good. The “burning hill” of “Wingen” was distant about four miles. This phenomenon appears to be of the same character as that at Holworth, in the neighbourhood of Weymouth, described by Professor Buckland and Mr. De la Beche in the following terms: — “It is probable that in each case rain-water acting
on iron pyrites has set fire to the bituminous shale; thus ignited, it has gone on
burning at Holworth unto the present hour, and may still continue smouldering for
a long series of years, the bitumen being here so abundant in some strata of the
shale, that it is burnt as fuel in the adjoining cottages; the same bituminous shale is
used as fuel in the village of Kimmeridge, and is there called Kimmeridge coal.*

“Wingen,” the aboriginal name, is derived from fire. The combustion extends over a
space of no great extent, (See Pl. 5.) near the summit of a group of hills, forming
part of a low chain which divides the valley of Kingdon Ponds from that of Page’s
River. Thin blue smoke ascends from rents and cracks, the breadth of the widest
measuring about a yard. Red heat appears at the depth of about four fathoms. No
marks of any extensive change appear on the surface, near these burning fissures,
although the growth of large trees in old cracks on the opposite slope, where
ignition has ceased, shews that this fire has continued for a very considerable time,
or that the same thing had occurred at a much earlier period. In the form of the
adjacent hills I observed nothing peculiar, unless it be a contraction not very
common of the lower parts of ravines. The geological structure is, as might be
expected, more remarkable. Other summits of the range are porphyritic,† but the
hills of “Wingen” present a variety of rocks, within a small space. In the adjacent
gullies to the south of the hill, we find clay of a grey mottled appearance, and shale
containing apparently a small quantity of decomposed vegetable matter; and near
the fissure then on fire, occurred a coarse sandstone with an argillaceous basis. To
the north-west, in a hollow containing water, which drains from beneath the part
ignited, is a coarse sandstone, in some places, highly charged with decomposed
felspar, and containing impressions of spirifers. The hill nearest to the part on fire,
on the south-west (b), consists of basalt with grains apparently of olivine; and on a
still higher hill, on the east (a), I found ironstone. A small hill (c), connecting these
two, and nearest to the part actually burning, appears to consist of trap-rock, and is
thickly strewed with agates. The hills on the opposite or south side of the valley are
composed of compact felspar, with acicular crystals of glassy or common felspar
and grains of hornblende, crevices of the stone being coated with films of
serpentine or green earth.

Dec. 3. — The party in proceeding, crossed several deep gullies in the
neighbourhood of the burning hill; and the road continued to be well marked. At
length we began to ascend the chain of hills, which connects Wingen with Mount
Murulla and the Liverpool range. On gaining the summit of this range, we
overlooked Wingen, whose situation was faintly discernible by the light blue smoke.
Three years had elapsed, since my first visit to these slumbering fires. The ridge we
were crossing was strewed with fallen trees; and broken branches with the leaves
still upon them, marked the effects of some violent and recent storm. We
descended to a beautiful valley of considerable extent, watered by Page’s river,
which rises in the main range. We reached the banks of this stream at four P. M.,
and encamped on a fine flat. The extremities from the mountains on the north,
descend in long and gradual slopes, and are well covered with grass. This was
already eaten short by sheep. Two babbling brooks water the flat, at the part where
we pitched our tents, and which is opposite to Whalan’s station; one of these being the river Page, or “Macqueen’s River,” the other known only as “the creek.” The space between them is flat, and apparently consists of a soil of excellent quality. The heat of the day was excessive, the thermometer 80° at sunset.

Dec. 4. — Mount Murulla is a remarkable cone of the Liverpool range, and being visible from Warrawolong, is consequently an important point in the general survey of the colony.

From Murulla, the range we had crossed extends eastward, enclosing the valley in which we were encamped, and which gives birth to the river Page. Our way now lay westward, towards the head of this valley, in order to cross by the usual route, the higher and principal range, which still lay to the north. We traversed, this day, six miles of the valley, and encamped beside a remarkable rock, near to which the track turned northward. I rode a little beyond our bivouac, and chanced to fall in with a tribe of natives from Pewen Bewen on Dart Brook, one of whom afterwards visited our camp, but he could tell us little about the interior country. The whole of the valley appears to consist of good land, and the adjacent mountains afford excellent sheep pasture. In the evening, a native of Liverpool plains came to our tents; I gave him a tobacco-pipe, and he promised to shew me the best road across them. Thermometer at sunset 84°.

Dec. 5. — This morning we ascended Liverpool range, which divides the colony from the unexplored country. Having heard much of this difficult pass, we proceeded cautiously, by attaching thirteen bullocks to each cart, and ascending with one at a time. The pass is a low neck, named by the natives Hecknadüey, but we left the beaten track (which was so very steep that it was usual to unload carts in order to pass) and took a new route, which afforded an easier ascent. All had got up safely, and were proceeding along a level portion, on the opposite side of the range, when the axle of one of the carts broke, and it became necessary to leave it, and place the load on the spare pack-horses, and such of the bullocks, taken out of the shafts, as had been broken in to carry pack-saddles. We reached at length, a water-course called “Currungai,” and encamped upon its bank, beside the natives from Dart Brook, who had crossed the range before us, apparently to join some of their tribe, who lay at this place extremely ill, being affected with a virulent kind of small-pox. We found the helpless creatures, stretched on their backs, beside the water, under the shade of the wattle or mimosa trees, to avoid the intense heat of the sun. We gave them from our stock some medicine; and the wretched sufferers seemed to place the utmost confidence in its efficacy. I had often indeed occasion to observe, that however obtuse in some things, the aborigines seemed to entertain a sort of superstitious belief, in the virtues of all kinds of physic. I found that this distressed tribe were also “strangers in the land,” to which they had resorted. Their meekness, as aliens, and their utter ignorance of the country they were in, were very unusual in natives, and excited our sympathy, especially when their demeanour was contrasted with the prouder bearing and intelligence of the native of the plains, who had undertaken to be my guide.

Here I at length drank the water of a stream, which flowed into the unexplored
interior; and from a hill near our route I beheld, this day, for the first time, a distant blue horizon, exactly resembling that of the ocean.

Dec. 6. — At an early hour we continued the journey towards the plains, guided by the natives, and along a cart track, which led towards some cattle stations. We crossed a low ridge of rich earth, in which were embedded nodules of limestone, and fragments of trap-rock. After passing several extremities of ridges, of a similar description, all being branches from high ranges on our left, we came upon a portion of the plains. This expanse of open level country, extended in a northerly direction, as far as human vision could reach; and being clear of trees, presented a remarkable contrast to the settled districts of the colony. The soil of these plains looked rich, the grass was good, and herds of cattle browsing at a distance, added pastoral beauty, to that which had been recently a desert.

We now turned from the track, we had thus far followed in a west-south-west direction, and parting from our friends, the natives, who insisted on our keeping the track, we again entered the woods, by turning a little to the north. My object, in proceeding in this direction, was to reach the bank of Peel’s river at Wallawoul; that stream having been laid down as holding a northerly course, and consequently I had reason to believe that it would lead to any greater river flowing to the north-west, as reported by the “barber.” But independently of this consideration, it was expedient to travel along its right bank, which commanded access to the high ranges on the east, and would therefore secure the party from any danger of obstruction from floods. I soon came on another path, and a line of marked trees, which a native, whom I met, said was the road from Palmer’s to Loder’s station. We next arrived at a deep dry bed, which in wet seasons must be filled by a very considerable stream, but in that time of drought, it was not until after riding up and down a considerable distance in search of water, that I at length found some ponds. The native name of this channel is “Nuzabella.” We crossed its bed, in order to encamp at a shady spot, where the long grass had been burnt a short while before. In other parts, the grass reached to the heads of the horses, and at this time was so liable to catch fire, and was so frequently set on fire by the natives, that with our stock of ammunition, the situation of the camp required particular attention. The bullocks were much fatigued with this day’s journey, the thermometer having stood at 96° in the shade, and at sunset, and even during part of the night, it was as high as 90°.

At twilight, on inquiring, as usual, if the horses had been tethered and spancelled, I was informed that seven had set off, and that one of the men, Worthington, who went after them, had not returned. The weather had been so oppressive during the whole journey, that I determined on resting the cattle next day. This, I did not mention, however, to the men, but I ordered all the good bush hands to be off in search at day-break. The care of cattle, and particularly of horses on such journeys, requires great attention; to stand idle on a fine morning, unable to proceed, until by some fortunate chance, stray cattle or horses are discovered in a boundless forest, is like a calm on the line, irksome enough; but there is also the risk of losing the men sent in pursuit, who, even after coming on the objects of their search, may be unable afterwards to find the camp, especially when there may be no water-course
to lead them to it.

Dec. 7. — The weather still very sultry. The horses were brought in at a quarter-past eight by Worthington, who had traced them up the valley to two miles above our former encampment. The rich soil in this valley is nearly as deep as the bed of the rivulet, which is twenty feet lower than the surface; a substratum of gravel, similar to that in the bed of the water-course, appears in the bank; the pebbles, consisting chiefly of trap-rock, seemed to be the water-worn debris of the Liverpool range. The cattle and horses being at rest, we were occupied this day in making various observations with our instruments, trying the rate of the chronometer, &c. A thunder-cloud and a little rain afforded some relief from the excessive heat of the atmosphere. The night was very calm; but the musquitoes were numerous and troublesome.

Dec. 8. — A road or track, which we found about half-a-mile east from the camp, led us very directly, on the bearing of 335°, to Loder's station, distant about six miles from our encampment. Here stood a tolerable house of slabs, with a good garden adjoining it, in charge of an old stockman and his equally aged wife. This man was named by the blacks “Longanay,” (Long Ned).* The station was situated on a fine running stream called the Cuerindie, and the state of the sheep and cattle about it proved the excellence of the pasture. We passed the limits of the territory open to the selection of settlers, in crossing the Liverpool range; and the more remote country is not likely to come into the market soon. Such stations as this of Loder were held, therefore, only by the right of pre-occupancy, which has been so generally recognized among the colonists themselves, that the houses, &c. of these stations are sometimes disposed of for valuable considerations, although the land is liable to be sold by the government. A native named “Jemmy,” whom I met with here, agreed to conduct me by the best way, for carts, to Wallamoul on the Peel, for which service I undertook to reward him with a tomahawk.† It was necessary, that we should ford the Cuerindie, which flows to the north-west, and notwithstanding the steepness of its banks, we effected a passage without difficulty, guided by “Jemmy.” One mile beyond this, another creek lay in our way. It was smaller, but much more formidable and difficult to cross, for the bottom and banks consisted of blue-mud or clay, half-hardened on the surface, yet soft and yielding below. It was not without considerable delay, that we effected the passage, for a wheel of one of the carts stuck fast in the mud, and it was necessary to dig away the earth in front of the other wheel before we could release the vehicle. At length, every thing was got across, and we fortunately met no other impediment for six miles. We then crossed the channels of two rivulets, neither of which contained any water. At half-past four I wished to encamp, and the natives having at length found a green mantling pool in the bed of the united channel of the two water-courses, we pitched our tents, at a place called “Burandua.” Bad as the water seemed to be, “Jemmy” soon obtained some which was both clear and cool, by digging a hole in the sand near the pool. This native was a quiet and sensible fellow — he steadily pursued the course he recommended for the “wheelbarrows,” as he termed our carts; and answered all my queries briefly and decidedly, either by a nod of assent,
or the negative monosyllable “Bel,” with a shake of the head. His walk was extremely light and graceful; his shoulders were neatly knit, and the flowing luxuriance of his locks was restrained by a bit of half-inch cord, the two ends hanging, like a double queue, half way down his back. He was followed by his gin and a child, which she usually carried on her back, although it seemed old enough and able to walk.

The air of the evening was very refreshing, and the sun set with peculiar brilliancy. We had travelled during the whole day on good soil, and the ploughed appearance of the surface was very remarkable in various places, particularly a little to the south of Loder’s station, where the hollows seemed to terminate in a common channel. I noticed also that the direction of all the water-courses was towards the north-west, and it was evident that the streams occasionally overflowed their banks.

Dec. 9. — This morning, the party was ready to proceed soon after five o’clock, but the barometer got out of order, while I was using it in the dry bed of the rivulet, and some time was lost in an unsuccessful attempt to repair it. This derangement of the instrument was very unfortunate, at so early a stage of our journey.

After travelling about seven miles and a half, we perceived, on our left, an open valley, in which a numerous herd of cattle was feeding; and one mile further on, we came upon a fine little stream, which was rather difficult to cross, owing to the steepness of the banks. As the men were at work, taking the carts over one by one, the native and I were amused with a large black snake, which was swimming about. On his casting a stone at it, the snake glided swiftly towards him, and the poor fellow took to his heels, cautioning me to keep off, saying it would kill my horse. But he soon returned to the charge, and having succeeded in stunning it with stones, it was at length cut in two with my sabre. On measuring this snake I found it to be nine inches in circumference, and eight feet and a half in length.

Beyond that rivulet, the country appeared tolerably open and level, so that we could pursue our course in one direction nearly eight miles. The most conspicuous hill on our right, was named by the native “Barragundy.” It was visible during the whole of our day’s journey. We at length entered upon an open and grassy plain, and found in the skirts of the wood beyond it, a channel containing water in abundance, and which was known to the natives as “Carrabobbila.” Beyond this channel arose a peaked and picturesque range, whereof the highest summit was named “Turi.” The water, where we encamped, was hot and muddy, but the blacks knew well how to obtain a cool and clean draught, by first scratching a hole in the soft sand beside the pool, thus making a filter, in which the water rose cooled but muddy. They next threw into this some tufts of long grass, through which they sucked the cooler water thus purified also from the sand or gravel. I was very glad to follow the example, and I found the sweet fragrance of the grass an agreeable addition to the luxury of drinking. But during the heat of the forenoon I had observed the female quenching her thirst with still greater satisfaction, by rushing into a pool, and drinking as she sat immersed up to the lip.

From Loder’s station, we had travelled thus far on our way to Peel’s river,
without having any road or track to follow, and I had marked the trees along our line of route, which certainly seemed favourable for a cart-road in that direction. Near Carrabobbila, we came upon the track leading to Wallamoul, which was more circuitous, passing by other cattle stations in the plains.

During the last three days of our journey, the woods were burning before us, but fortunately the fire was one day’s march in advance of our party, and thus the flames had cleared every thing away before our arrival, so that our camp was not exposed to danger. This evening, however, the country seemed on fire all around us. The weather was calm and sultry, particularly when the day closed in, and a very heavy storm, accompanied by thunder, broke over us in the night.

Dec. 10. — The morning was cloudy; and the rain, which we anxiously looked for, at length came down, and soon checked the progress of the flames. On this account, as well as on that of the want of water, it afforded providential relief to us, for the hills we were about to cross had been all in a blaze during the night. Trees lay smoking as we passed; several gullies were difficult for the passage of carts, and detained the party in its ascent; but at length we reached the top of this pass, and crossed the range, which appeared to be continuous, thus separating the basin of the Peel from that of the waters falling to Liverpool plains. We were agreeably surprised to find that the opposite side of these hills, and the whole face of the country beyond them, presented a very different appearance from that through which we had passed. A gently sloping extremity lay before us, for eight miles in the direction of our proposed route, and we were relieved from all the difficulties of crossing gullies, which had impeded our ascent on the other side of the range, We encamped at some water-holes, where this slope terminated in an extensive forest flat; over the whole of which, as my sable guide informed me, there was no other water at that time.

The grass on this side of the hills was good: and almost all the timber consisted of box (eucalyptus). The heights which we had crossed appeared to extend from the Liverpool range to the northward, as far as could be seen; but the native told me, that it soon terminated on the river “Callala” (or Peel), whose course, he said, turned westward (as he pointed); a fact corroborating so far, the statements of the bushranger.

Dec. 11. — The weather cleared up at about six A. M.: and we travelled across a good soil, throughout the whole of this day’s journey. The country appeared but thinly wooded, and without any hill or water-course. After a journey of thirteen miles, we reached the bank of the Peel at Wallamoul, the lowest cattle station upon this river. It was occupied by Mr. Brown, who had there about 1600 head of cattle. I gave to “Jemmy,” our excellent guide, the promised tomahawk, also a knife to “Monday” his brother, whom he met here. The river was so low that Mr. White and I passed over easily on a tree which the flood had laid across it. The current, however, was strong; and the men having been furnished from our stock with a few hooks and lines, caught three large fishes by sunset. I met, at this place, with some intelligent natives, from whom I learnt, that the spot where Mr. Oxley crossed the Peel on his journey, was about two miles lower down.
Dec. 12. — At an early hour this morning, one of our men caught a fish, which weighed eighteen pounds; but, according to the natives, this was no uncommon size. These fishes are most erroneously called cod by the colonists, although they certainly very much resemble cod in taste. The flakes are firmer than sea cod, and equally white, the fish affording a very light and palatable food. When dried in the same manner as the Newfoundland cod, in which state I have tasted this fish at Bathurst, I could not perceive any difference either in flavour or appearance.

Being at length about to enter the *Terra incognita*, I deemed it expedient to re-pack our stores, in order, that the load might be made as light and compact as possible, and that we might pass with less difficulty over whatever description of ground we were destined to encounter. With this view, I directed the flour to be started from casks into bags, and made such arrangements as tended materially to lessen the bulk of our provisions and other necessary stores. Having questioned the natives with regard to the course of the Peel, I learnt that, instead of flowing northward, as hitherto supposed, it took a westerly direction, and was soon joined by the “Muluerindie,” a river coming from the north-east. The natives further assured me, that there was a good ford below the junction of these streams at a place called “Wallanburra;” and I determined to proceed to this ford, as it was not advisable, with the “Muluerindie” beyond, to cross the river above the junction. Being anxious to procure another guide, the overseer at Wallamoul brought me a native named “Mr. Brown,” who agreed to accompany our party on condition that he should receive blankets for himself and his “gin,” and a tomahawk, the latter being a small hatchet, which is so valuable a substitute for their stone hatchet, that almost all natives within reach of the colony have them, even where the white man is known as yet only by name — or as the manufacturer of this most important of all implements to the Australian native.

Dec. 13. — Mr. Finch having joined us on the previous evening, without procuring the supply of flour that I had expected, I despatched him back this morning to the Hunter’s River district, with directions to procure as much flour, tea, and sugar as he could pack on six bullocks, and to follow along my line of marked trees with all possible speed. I furnished him with an official letter to Mr. Dixon, in which I instructed that surveyor to supply him with any article he could possibly spare from his own equipment, without impeding the service on which he was engaged.

And now our arrangements being as complete as we could hope to make them, under existing circumstances, we broke up our encampment, at eight A. M., and proceeded in the interesting pursuit of the course of the Peel River.

Chapter II.

Enter an unexplored region — Situation of Mr. Oxley’s camp on the Peel — Westward course of the river — Kangaroo shot — Calcareous rocks — Acacia pendula first seen — Other trees near the river — Junction of the Peel and Muluerindie — View from Perimbungay — Ford of Wallanburra — Plains of Mulluba — View from Mount...
WE advanced with feelings of intense interest into the country before us, and impressed with the responsibility of commencing the first chapter of its history. All was still new and nameless, but by this beginning, we were to open a way for the many other beginnings of civilized man, and thus extend his dominion over some of the last holds of barbarism.

About a mile and a half below Wallamoul, we crossed a small open plain, and I was informed that Mr. Oxley encamped on its southern side, and had afterwards forded the Peel at no great distance from the spot.

We crossed a succession of gentle slopes, without any gully or water-course between them. After travelling about eight miles in a north-west direction, we came upon the Peel, having thus cut off a great bend of the river. From that point our route was west and even to the southward of west, until we again encamped near the river, after a journey of fifteen miles. Some flats crossed by the party this day appeared to be subject to inundations. One gully only had impeded our carts. It was about a mile short of the encampment, and it was called “Goora” by the natives. It had evidently been long dry — had steep banks — and its bottom consisted of gravel and sand. The banks of the Peel, thus far, are composed chiefly of extensive flats of good land, thinly wooded, and occasionally flooded by the river.

Only a few of the flats, however, are quite clear of trees, but where the ground is open, the soil appears to be rich, and presents the same characters which I noticed elsewhere. We saw a numerous family of kangaroos this day, but although the dogs were let loose, such was the length of the grass, that they could not see the game. The morning had been clear, but the sky in the afternoon was overcast by a thunder storm, with a strong gale of wind. At sunset, the weather cleared up, and the sky became again serene.

Dec. 14. — The sun rose clear, and the party were in motion at seven o’clock. This day I discovered, that the native had sent back his gin early in the morning, a circumstance which I regretted, for the woman had an intelligent countenance, and having been brought from the country towards which we were travelling, she might have been of service to us. When we had proceeded a few miles, the quick eye of “Mr. Brown” distinguished the head of a kangaroo peeping at us over the long grass. On discharging my rifle at it, the animal, as he supposed, bounded off; but as I had taken very steady aim, I ran to the spot, and there found, to the astonishment of our guide, the kangaroo at which I had aimed lying dead, the ball having passed through the throat and neck. The kangaroo which leapt about on the discharge of the piece, was another which had not been previously in sight, and appeared to
have been the mate of that which fell. The distance was considerable, and the shot fortunate, as being well calculated to strengthen Mr. Brown’s confidence, who had only seen previously the heavy old muskets carried by stock-men. He surveyed with great attention the percussion lock and heavier barrel of the rifle, surprised, no doubt, at its superior make and accuracy.

Our course was still westward, and thus we occasionally touched upon the bends of the river. Adjacent to one sharp angle, we met with a rather singular formation of little hills formed by projecting strata, the strike extending in the direction of N. 30 W., and the dip being to the east, at an angle of about 30°. The rock appeared to consist, in some parts, of a buff calcareous sandstone, calcareous tuff; and, more abundantly, of limestone of a peculiar aspect, presenting at first sight the appearance of porphyry, but consisting of a base of compact limestone, with disseminated portions of calcareous spar, principally due to fragments of crinoidea. At a lower part in the same rock, less compact, I found a beautiful chalcedonic cast, apparently of a *terebra*. The calcareous sandstone consisted of grains of quartz cemented by calcareous spar, and contained fragments of shells of the *littorina* or *turbo*.

On crossing another low ridge beyond this, we descended to a valley, in which I saw, for the first time, that beautiful shrub of the interior, the acacia pendula. The foliage is of a light green colour, and it droops like the weeping willow; the bark is rough, and the trunk seldom exceeds nine inches in diameter. The wood of this graceful tree is sweet-scented, of a rich dark-brown colour, and being very hard, it is in great request with the natives for making their bommerengs and spear-heads. It appears to grow chiefly on flats, which are occasionally inundated. During this day’s journey, we also met with the *callitris pyramidalis*, a tree which in external appearance closely resembles some kinds of pine tree. The wood is of a rich yellow hue, very compact, and possesses a very agreeable perfume; it grows on the drier parts of the country. We found lofty blue gum-trees (*eucalyptus*) growing on the flats near the Peel, whose immediate banks were overhung by the dense umbrageous foliage of the *casuarina*, or “river-oak” of the colonists.

We encamped on the river at the foot of a small hill named “Perimbungay.” In this very interesting position, I could at leisure continue from the hill my observations of the country before us, while the cattle were at rest and feeding. The “Muluerindie” had joined the Peel about a mile above, and the united streams here flowed along a reach of most promising extent. “Mr. Brown” said it was so deep that the natives could never dive to the bottom. The ford of Wallanburra, by which we were to cross this river, was only a short way below, and the summit of Perimbungay commanded a view of the country beyond it. The bank here presented a section of at least 50 feet of rich earth; and flats of this character, of more or less width, occur between the river and the hills. In the left bank at the camp, I found a conglomerate rock, consisting of water-worn fragments of serpentinite and trap, cemented by calcareous spar. The men were very successful in fishing; the cod-perch which they caught weighing upwards of nine pounds each (See fig. 1. pl. 6. page 44.) With such abundance of fish, and also the kangaroo, I
hoped to feast “Mr. Brown,” but he set no value on food so common to him, preferring flour to all things else, while this was precisely the article which I was most unwilling to spare. He ate about two pounds and a half of flour daily, yet I considered his services of so much value, that I felt loth to lessen his allowance; for with all this he seldom seemed satisfied. He came to me, however, in the afternoon, pointing to his protuberant stomach, and actually declaring, that, for once at least, he did not wish any more.

Dec. 15. — To avoid, as much as possible, the heat which had proved very distressing to the cattle, I ordered the party to prepare to move off this morning soon after sunrise; and while the people were packing up and loading, I again ascended Perimbungay. The range we had crossed at Turi was near us to the westward, and a conical hill, called “Uriary,” in the direction of Turi, was the most prominent feature to the south-west. The Peel continued its course westward, passing through this range, which presented a more defined and elevated outline, where it continued beyond the river. The highest summits there, were “Periguaguey,” bearing west by south, and “Wároga.” “Turial,” a hill still more remote, bore west-north-west; and between it and Wároga appeared an opening, which I judged, therefore, to be the best direction for our route, after crossing the Peel, for I saw that it was impossible to pass to the westward of that range at any part nearer the river; but by that opening we could pursue the further course of the Peel, as the nature of the country permitted. The land immediately beyond the Peel, was inviting enough; one green hill arose from a level country which lay between the river and the base of these hills. The waters of the Peel, and the shady trees overhanging its banks, were visible for several miles; and the varying outlines of wood, tinted with the delicate lights, around which the deep grey shadows of early morning were still slumbering, contrasted finely with the rugged rocks of the hill on which I stood, already sharpened by the first rays of the rising sun. This hill consisted of trap-rock. The passage between it and the river was not very safe for the carts, so that we made a detour on leaving the camp, and did not again see the Peel until we arrived near the ford of Wallanburra, distant from Perimbungay 4¼ miles. The bed of the river was here broad and gravelly; and the banks on each side were low, qualities most essential to a good ford, but by no means common on the Peel. Two emus, the first we had seen on this journey, were drinking on the opposite side, as we approached the ford, but they ran away on seeing the party. The current was strong, though the water did not reach above the axles of the carts, and by half-past seven A. M. every thing was safe, on the other side of the Peel. On quitting the immediate banks of the river, we passed through a forest of the tree resembling pine (*callitris*), with bushes of the acacia pendula interspersed. There was also a tree new to us, having a small round leaf. After proceeding six miles, we reached the borders of an extensive open tract, named Mülluba. It could scarcely bear the usual designation of plain (the term applied in New South Wales to almost all land free from trees), for the undulations were as great as those which occur betwixt London and Hampstead, and, indeed, the whole territory bore a remarkable resemblance to an enclosed and cultivated country. The ridges, of the kind already
described, I observed in directions, both with the slopes, and across them, exactly resembling furrows in fallow land. Trees grew in rows, as if connected with field enclosures, and parts, where bushes or grass had been recently burnt, looked red or black, thus contributing to the appearance of cultivation. The soil was, indeed, well worthy of being cultivated, for it consisted of a rich black mould, so loose and deep that it yawned in cracks, as if for want of feet to tread it down. It appeared very probable, however, that in wet weather such parts of the country might be too soft for the passage of carts. I then supposed the ridge on our left might be that called Hardwick's range, by Oxley; its general direction being about 20° to the westward of north. We at length reached the remarkable opening in that range, which I had observed from Perimbungay, and passing through it, over a narrow flat, we arrived at a low woody country westward of these ranges. Having now travelled sixteen miles, I was anxious to encamp here, but we could not, at first, find any water-course; and one small, dry channel appeared to be the only line of drainage in wet weather from the extensive open country of Mülluba. It struck me at the time, that much might be done to remedy the natural disadvantages, whether of a superfluity of water lodging on the plains in rainy seasons, or of too great a scarcity of moisture in dry weather. Channels might be cut in the lines of natural drainage, which would serve to draw off the water from the plains, and concentrate and preserve a sufficient supply for use in times of drought, when it would not be obtained elsewhere.

We had followed the dry channel for about a mile and a half in search of water, without much prospect of finding any, when we came to a rocky part, which still contained, in several pools, more indeed than sufficient for all our wants, and here we gladly encamped. The range no longer intercepted our view to the westward, and I lost no time in ascending one of its pointed summits, named “Ydire,” accompanied by Mr. White, and our guide, “Mr. Brown.” From this hill, the view extended far and wide over the country to the westward. The most conspicuous feature in that landscape, was a lofty flat-topped hill in the middle distance, being somewhat isolated, and on the western border of a plain which extended from our position to its base. The native name of this was “Boonälla.” A singular-looking pic, someway northward of Boonalla, next drew my attention. This, according to my sable authority, was “Tangulda.” A meandering line of trees bounded an open part of the intervening plain, and marked the course, as my guide informed me, of the “Nammoy.” Now the hills I have just mentioned, and the course of this river, had been exactly described by the bushranger, and the scene made me half believe his story.

I determined to proceed to the pic of Tangulda, this being the course also recommended by my guide, as the best for the continued pursuit of the Nammoy.

Liverpool plains, which appear to the colonists as if boundless to the northward, were now so far behind us, that their most northern limits were barely visible to the southward, in two faint yellow streaks. The basin in which these plains are situated, belongs, however, to the Nammoy, which receives all their waters; and, in the extensive landscape before me, there appeared to be an opening near Tangulda,
through which the whole of these waters probably passed to the north-west.

The bushranger’s tale was, that he had reached the “Kindur,” or “large river,” by proceeding north-east by north from “Tangulda.” I then perceived only a few low hills to the eastward of that pic: circumstances, which rendered the account of his journey beyond it, also probable.

I had scarcely time to complete a sketch of these hills, before the sun went down. Mr. White took bearings of the principal summits, and at the same time obtained their respective names from the native. The range that we had ascended consisted of porphyry, having a base of fawn-coloured compact felspar, with grains of quartz, and crystals of common felspar. We reached the tents, distant from the hill a mile and a half, as night came on. The moon soon rose in cloudless splendour, and received our particular attention, for we were uncertain how soon we should be compelled to depend on the chronometer alone for the longitude, which thus far, we had been enabled to connect with the survey of the colony, by means of Barragundy and other hills towards Liverpool range.

Dec. 16. — We proceeded over a perfectly level surface, wooded rather thickly with a broad-leaved eucalyptus, and the acacia pendula. The air was cool, and a most refreshing breeze met us in the face during the whole of this day’s journey; the thermometer at sunrise was only 52°. After travelling upwards of ten miles, we crossed the corner of an open plain, and five miles further on, we reached the bank of the river Nammoy, and encamped about noon. This stream, having received the Conadilly from the left bank, had here an important appearance: the breadth of the water was 100 feet, its mean depth 11¾ feet; the current half a mile per hour, and the height of the banks above the water 37 feet. The course of the “Muluerindie,” from the junction of the “Peel” to that of the “Conadilly,” is somewhat to the southward of west. Below the junction of the “Conadilly,” where the well known native name is the “Nammoy,” it pursues a north-west course. The men threw in their lines, but caught during the day only two fishes, similar to those we obtained at Perimbungay. The alluvial bed of the stream consisted of marl, fragments of red quartz, and other rocks. A very hard yellow calcareous sandstone also occurred in the bank.

Dec. 17. — Leaving the ground at an early hour, the party travelled for about two miles along the river bank, the stream appearing deeper and broader as we proceeded. Six miles on, we came upon a narrow branch from the river, which we avoided by turning a little to the right. We next reached a very large stock-yard, which the natives said had belonged to “George the Barber,” meaning the bushranger. We saw besides, the remains of a house, the “gunyas,” or huts, of a numerous encampment of natives; and the bones of bullocks were strewed about in great abundance, plainly enough shewing the object of the stock-yard, and that of the Barber’s alliance with the aborigines of these parts. The whole country was on fire; but although our guide frequently drew our attention to recent footmarks, we could not discover a single native.

We encamped near this stock-yard, beside a lagoon of still water, which was as broad and deep as the main stream. The water was nearly on a level with the surface
of the surrounding country, and was obviously supplied from the overflows of
the Nammoy, then at some distance to the westward. We caught some small fish,
two of them being of a rather singular kind, resembling an eel in the head and shape
of the tail, although as short in proportion to their thickness as most other kinds of
fish. (Fig. 2. pl. 6. page 44.) We found granular felspar in the bank. The pic of
Tangulda lay due north of our camp, distant about two miles; and, in the afternoon,
I set out on foot to ascend it, accompanied by Mr. White and the carpenter. On
approaching its base, the bold rocks near the summit, were reddened by the rays of
a sun setting in smoke; while the whole mass of woody hill, below that summit,
seemed more imposing, as it overhung a level country, which had no visible
horizon. We reached the top at a little after four P. M. by a steep and rocky ascent;
and although the atmosphere was dim, the view was very important. I saw the
“Nammoy’s” course through a cluster of hills, between which it passed to a lower
country in the north-west. These hills were connected, on the right bank, with the
pic on which we stood, and with a low range in the east and north-east, whose
western extremities appeared to terminate on the vale of the Nammoy, as far
northward as I could then see them in perspective. The barber had positively stated,
that the only practicable way to the “big river” was north-east by north from
Tangulda; and it now appeared, that the lowest part of this range lay exactly in that
direction. Some bold and remarkable hills appeared at no great distance to the right
of that line; but the country between Tangulda and the lowest part of that horizon,
seemed so level or gently undulating, that I felt it my duty, before I traced the
Nammoy further, to explore the country in the direction, so particularly described
by the bushranger. On my return to the camp in the evening, I made a drawing of
the eel-fish, which we had caught early in the day. (Fig. 2. pl. 6. page 44.)

Dec. 18. — We now quitted the line of the Nammoy, and proceeded in the
direction north-east by north from Tangulda. We thus continued our route in a
straight line up a long valley, until at ten A. M. we reached the crest of the low
range previously mentioned. The rock consisted of a calcareous breccia, with water-
worn pebbles. The carts had ascended to the crest without difficulty, and the
descent to the country beyond was equally favourable. Half-way down, the dogs
killed a female kangaroo, with a nearly full-grown young one, which she retained to
the last, within her pouch. The death of no animal can excite more sympathy than
that of one of these inoffensive creatures. The country beyond the low range was
more open for two miles; the only trees being “iron bark.” At 15 miles we met an
impenetrable scrub of forest oak (*casuarina*), through which no passage appearing
near, we were compelled, hot as the day was, to cut our way with axes where the
trees were smallest and least numerous. We thus cleared our course for a mile and a
half, when we had the good fortune to see once more an open forest before us, and
after a journey of eighteen miles, the party encamped on a dry water-course, but
without much prospect of finding any water. We had carried eleven gallons from
our last camp, but the men had already experienced the full benefit of this, in
cutting through the scrub, during a hot wind, after having travelled fifteen miles.

When the camp was fixed, I rode forward with Mr. White and the native, and
soon entered an extensive valley, beyond which, I could just perceive, through the general smoke, a majestic chain of mountains extending to the westward. I never felt less love for the picturesque than at that time, for grand as the outline was, I could perceive no opening by which I could hope to cross it. Our present urgent want, however, was water, and fortunately, at a distance of upwards of four miles from the camp, we reached the stream watering that valley, and which we thankfully saluted with our parched lips, its waters being cool and clear. Imprinted on their sandy margin, however, our native guide discovered, apparently with horror, the fresh traces of human feet. The trees bore numerous marks of the “mogo” or stone hatchet, the use of which distinguishes the barbarous from the “civil” blackfellows, who all use iron tomahawks. Although “Mr. Brown” made the woods echo with his “cooys” — their inhabitants remained silent and concealed, a circumstance which seemed to distress him very much.

On returning to the party, we received the agreeable intelligence, that some very good water had been found in a deep hole within a short distance of the tents. The supply, however, was not sufficient for the bullocks, which were consequently restless, and seemed so much disposed to ramble during the night, that two men placed in charge, found it extremely difficult to keep them together. This difficulty suggested the plan, which I on subsequent occasions adopted, of confining these animals at night, within a temporary stockyard of ropes, tied between trees.

Dec. 19. — We left the ground at six A.M. and in an hour and a half, arrived at the stream of the valley, which I now named Maule’s river. Here, leaving Mr. White with the party to encamp, that the cattle might be watered and refreshed during the day, I proceeded with the native and two men, to examine the mountains before us. As we advanced along a rising ground, the native discovered a dog, and on following it to a little brook, we came to a fire, with a large snake roasting upon it; and a wooden water-vessel on the ground beside it. The reptile was evidently the intended breakfast of somebody, whom our approach had disturbed. “Mr. Brown” soon discovered that the fugitives were females, and, following their track, he found a bag, apparently thrown down in hasty flight. He called loudly and repeatedly, at the same time tracing the footsteps through the long grass into a rocky glen, but no person appeared.

We placed the grilled snake, as it seemed quite cooked, within the wooden bowl, and we left also a head-band (uluguèr), which we had found near the fire, and we then continued our journey up the mountains. This range consisted of a different rock from any I had seen in the country, a chocolate coloured trapan conglomerate. A very dark colour distinguished these rocky masses, which terminated in pointed obelisks, or were broken into bold terraces of dismal aspect. In the little stream, were many pebbles of vesicular trap, probably an amygdaloid with the kernels decomposed, but containing particles of olivine; also pebbles of a syenitic compound, consisting of quartz, hornblende, and felspar; and of compact felspar, mottled green and white, the green colour probably being due to chlorite or green earth, and they enclosed also decomposed crystals of mica and hornblende. After climbing about one mile and a half, we reached a lofty summit, where I hoped
to obtain a view beyond the range, or at least to discover how it might be crossed, but I was disappointed. Distant summits, more lofty and difficult of access, obstructed our view towards the east, north, and even west; while the only link connecting the hill we had gained with those still higher, was a very bold, naked rock, presenting a perpendicular side, at least 200 feet in height. To proceed further in that direction, was therefore quite out of the question. (See plate 7.)

As we descended, we came suddenly on an old woman, who, as soon as she saw us, ran off in terror. I ordered the two men who accompanied me to keep back, until “Mr. Brown” could overtake and tell her, that we intended no harm; and she was easily persuaded, after a brief conversation with our guide to allow us to come near. She presented a most humiliating specimen of our race — a figure shortened and shrivelled with age, entirely without clothing — one eye alone saw through the dim decay of nature — several large fleshy excrescences projected from the side of her head like so many ears — and the jawbone was visible, through a gash or scar, on one side of her chin. The withered arms and hands, covered with earth by digging and scraping for the snakes and worms on which she fed, more resembled the limbs and claws of a quadruped. She spoke with a slow nasal whine, prolonged at the end of each sentence; and this our guide imitated in speaking to her. The mosquitoes tormented her much, as appeared from her incessantly slapping her limbs and body. “Mr. Brown’s” conversation seemed animated on some subject, but not, as I at last suspected, on that most important to us; for, when I inquired, after he had spoken a long time, what she said of the “Barber” and the way across the mountains, he was obliged to commence a set of queries, evidently for the first time. She said horses might pass, pointing at the same time further to the eastward — but our guide seemed unwilling to put further questions, saying she had promised to send at sunset to our tents two young boys, who could inform us better. Even in such a wretched state of existence, ornaments had their charms with this female, though the decency of covering was wholly disregarded. Around her brow she had kangaroo teeth fastened to the few remaining hairs, and a knot of brown feathers decorated her right temple. The roasting snake, which we had seen in the morning, belonged, as we now learned, to this witch of the glen.

The boys did not visit us in the evening, as “Mr. Brown” had expected; and he appeared unusually thoughtful, when I found him sitting alone by the water-side, at some distance from the camp. I was then making arrangements for carrying across the range, the bulk of our provisions and equipment on pack-horses and bullocks, intending to leave the remainder of our stores at this spot, in charge of two men armed; but of this measure “Mr. Brown” did not approve.

Dec. 20. — When the pack-horses had been loaded, and we were about to start, leaving the remainder of our provisions in charge of two men, we discovered that our native guide was missing. I had promised him for his services, a tomahawk, a knife, and a blanket, and as I supposed he was already far beyond his own beat, he might have had the promised rewards, by merely asking for them. We had always given him plenty of flour, also his choice of any part of the kangaroos, we killed. It had been observed by the men, that the intelligence received from the old woman
had made him extremely uneasy, and he had also expressed to them on the previous evening, his apprehensions about the natives, in the country before us. I was very sorry for the loss of “Mr. Brown.” He was very comical, as indeed these half-civilized aborigines generally are; he liked to be close shaved, wore a white neckcloth, and declared it to be his intention of becoming, from that time forward, “a white fellow.” I concluded that he had returned to his own tribe; and, that he had been unwilling to acknowledge to me, his dread of the “myall” tribes. We proceeded up the valley, or to the eastward, with the pack animals, and endeavoured to pass to the northward, where we found a valley in that direction, but at length, it became impossible to go forward with some of the bullocks, which were not used to carry pack-saddles.

The passage was almost hopeless — indeed it was so bad, that I was at length convinced it might be easier to pass to the northward in any other direction than this, and that it would not be prudent to struggle with such difficulties, and separate my party for the purpose of crossing a range, which, for all I could see, might be easily turned by passing between its western extremity and the river Nammoy. We had now tried the course pointed out by the bushranger, and, having found that it was wholly impracticable, I determined upon returning to Tangülda, and by pursuing the Nammoy, to endeavour to turn this range, and so enter the region beyond it. With this resolution, I moved back to the depôt, which we left in the morning, and having reached it, made preparations to retrace our course. Mr. White followed Maule’s river for some miles to the westward, so that we could judge of the direction, in which it fell into the Nammoy. This evening, as Burnett, the carpenter, was seated beside a pool with his gun, silently engaged in watching some ducks, two natives approached on the opposite side to fill a small vessel with water, they looked around very cautiously, as if conscious that we were near, but Burnett very prudently did not allow them to see him.

Dec. 21. — The whole party having started early, we this day reached the former encampment near Tangülda, a distance of twenty-one miles, in seven hours.

Dec. 22. — I set out before the party moved off, in order to mark the line of route for the carts, and to fix on a spot for the camp. I rode over firm and level ground, on a bearing of 295°, which I knew would bring me to the little hill observed from Tangülda, where the Nammoy passes to the lower country beyond. The morning was so foggy, that I could see none of the hills. The perfume from the recently burnt bushes of acacia pendula, was most fragrant, and, to me, quite new. At six miles I came upon the river which was flowing rapidly northward. Its deeper bed and sparkling waters, looked very different from the stagnant lagoon we had left that morning. The grass along the banks was excellent, and on the little hill beside the river, hung pines (Callitris pyramidalis) in abundance. Lofty blue gum-trees grew on the margin of the stream, and the place, upon the whole, seemed favourable for the formation of a depôt, where I might leave the cattle to refresh, while I proceeded down the Nammoy in the canvass boats, with the materials for constructing which, we were provided. This river was the channel of the united waters of the Peel, Muluerindie and Conadilly. Some of these streams traversed
extensive plains, subject to inundation, but the low rocky hills in this
neighbourhood, afforded perfect security. The country smoked around us on all
sides; and the invisible blacks, the Barber’s allies, were not well disposed towards
us, but in a position like this our depot would be secure. I accordingly made
preparations for constructing our boats and launching them on the Nammoy as
soon as possible. With four adjoining trees cut off at equal height, we formed a
saw-pit, and a small recess which had been worked in the bank by the floods,
served as a dock in which to set up and float the boats. We had fixed upon this
spot, because it appeared more favourable for launching, than that higher up the
river, where the water was shallower, and drift timber lay across it.

The course of the Nammoy, as far as it could be traced from the hill, was
northward, and the evening being clear, I could perceive very plainly in the same
direction, the western extremity of the range, which we had so needlessly
endeavoured to cross.

Chapter III.

Fires in the bush — Rocks of Bullabalakit — Boat launched — Bees load my rifle
with honey — Embark on the Nammoy in canvass boats — Impediments to the
navigation — Boat staked, and sinks — The leak patched — She again runs foul of a
log — Provisions damaged — Resolve to proceed by land — Pack up the boats, and
continue the journey — Pass the western extremity of Nundawar Range — Unknown
tree — Water scarce — Providential supply — Cray-fish — Traphill on plains — Cut
through a scrub — Meet a tribe of natives — Again obliged to cut our way —
Fortunate discovery of water — Dry vallies — Mount Frazer — The party in distress
for want of water — Water found next day — Ducks — Wheel Ponds — Excessive
heat and drought — Description of the woods — Meet with natives — Cross the dry
bed of a river — A friendly native with his family — No water — Reach the Gwydir —
Cross it with one man — Prevented by a native with spears from shooting a kangaroo
— Re-cross the river.

Dec. 23. — THIS morning all hands were at work. Some good pine-trees were
brought to the saw-pit, and one laid upon it. The sailors were set to paint the inside
of the canvass for the boats; the “doctor” to clear out the dock, previous to laying
down the keel, &c.; and the bullock-drivers and smith to make a stock-yard. At 11
A.M. I discovered the grass near our tents to be on fire, but with the assistance of
the people, it was fortunately extinguished. All the country beyond the river was in
flames, and indeed, from the time of our arrival in these parts, the atmosphere had
been so obscured by smoke, that I could never obtain a distinct view of the
horizon. The smoke darkened the air at night, so as to hide the stars, and thus
prevented us from ascertaining our latitude. One spark might have set the whole
country on our side in a blaze, and then no food would remain for the cattle, not to
mention the danger to our stores and ammunition. Fires prevailed fully as
extensively, at great distances in the interior, and the sultry air seemed heated by the
general conflagration. In the afternoon, I took my rifle and explored the course of
the river some miles downwards, an interesting walk, where probably no white
man’s foot had ever trod before. I found a flowery desert, the richest part of the
adjacent country being quite covered with a fragrant white amaryllis in full bloom.*
The river widened into smooth deep reaches, so that I felt sanguine about our
progress with the boats. In returning, I examined the hills on the right bank. One,
named “Einerguendi,” by “Brown,” consisted of compact felspar, coloured green
by chlorite, with grains of quartz and acicular crystals of felspar. The hill
immediately over our camp was “Bullabalakit,” and consisted partly of granular
felspar, probably tinged greenish with chlorite; and partly of concretionary porphyry, the
concretions being mottled red and white, and containing grains of quartz and
crystals of common felspar; the white concretions resisting the action of the
atmosphere, stood in relief on the weather surface; I noticed also a vein of
amethystine quartz.

Dec. 24 and 25. — Ribs and thwarts were necessary to distend the canvas boats,
and though we had brought only moulds of each sort, yet we had tools and hands
to make them, when required. We also sawed the “pine” wood into thin planks to
form a floor in each boat, whereon to lay our stores. We made the ribs of blue gum
(eucalyptus). The weather was excessively hot, yet the men worked hard at the saw-
pit, not-wittingstanding; but all our activity was in danger of being fruitless, for the
river each day fell about four inches!

Dec. 26. — At half-past one, P.M. the first boat was launched on the Nammoy,
and the keel of the second immediately laid down. The delay occasioned by the
preparation of these boats, was more irksome, as the waters of the river continued
to subside.

Amongst the objects, which in this country were quite new to me, were the
insects continually buzzing about my tent. Of these, a fly as large as a small bee, and
of a rich green and gold colour, being a species of stilbum, occasionally surprised me
with a hum, almost as musical as the tones of an Eolian harp. But the habits of the
bees were very remarkable, judging from a singular circumstance, which occurred
respecting my rifle, for I found that a quantity of wax and honey had been
deposited in the barrel, and also in the hollow part of the ramrod. I had previously
observed, one of these bees occasionally enter the barrel of the piece, and it now
appeared that wax and honey had been lodged immediately above the charge, to the
depth of about two inches. The honey was first perceived in the hollow part of the
ramrod; and although an empty, double-barrelled gun lay beside the rifle, neither
wax nor honey was found in either of its tubes. The bee, which I frequently
observed about my tent, was as large as the English bee, and had a sting.

Dec. 28. — This day I sent off one of the men (Stephen Bombelli) with a despatch
for the government at Sydney, giving an account of our journey thus far, and stating
my intention of descending the Nammoy in the boats. Bombelli was mounted on
horseback, armed with a pistol, and provided with food for twelve days, being
sufficient to enable him to carry the despatch to Pewen Bewen, and to return to the
depôt, which I had arranged to establish here.
Dec. 29. — We launched the second boat, and having loaded both, I left two men in charge of the carts, bullocks and horses, at Bullabalakit, and embarked, at last, on the waters of the Nammoy, on a voyage of discovery.

We passed along several reaches without meeting any impediment, but, at length, an accumulation of drift timber and gravel, brought us up, at a spot, where two large trees had fallen across the stream, from opposite banks. From the magnitude of these trunks and others which, interwoven with rubbish, and buried in gravel, supported them, I anticipated a long delay, but the activity of the whole party was such, that a clear passage was opened in less than half an hour. The sailors swam about like frogs, and swimming, divided with a cross cut saw, trees under water. I found, I could survey the river as we proceeded, by measuring, with a pocket sextant, the angle subtended by the two ends of a twelve feet rod — held in the second boat — at the opposite end of each reach — the bearing being observed at the same time. By referring to one of Brewster’s tables, the angle formed by the rod of twelve feet, I ascertained thus, the length of each reach. This operation occasioned a delay of a few seconds only, just as the last boat arrived in sight of each place of observation.

Several black swans floated before us, and they were apparently not much alarmed even at the unwonted sight of boats on the “Nammoy.” The evenness of the banks and reaches, and the depth and stillness of the waters were such, that I might have traced the river downwards, at least so far as such facilities continued, had our boats been of a stronger material than canvass. But dead trees lay almost invisible under water, and at the end of a short reach where I awaited the reappearance of the second boat, we heard suddenly, confused shouts, and on making to the shore, and running to the spot, I found that the boat had run foul of a sunken tree — and had filled almost immediately. Mr. White had, on the instant, managed to run her ashore, across another sunken trunk, and thus prevented her from going down in deep water, opposite to a steep bank. By this disaster our whole stock of tea, sugar, and tobacco, with part of our flour and pork, were immersed in the water, but fortunately all the gunpowder had been stowed in the first boat. This catastrophe furnished another instance of the activity of the sailors; the cargo was got out, and the sunken boat being hauled up, a rent was discovered in the canvass of her larboard bow. This, the sailmaker patched with a piece of canvass; a fire was made; tar was melted and applied; the boat was set afloat; reloaded, and again under way in an hour and a half. “Once more upon the waters,” every thing seemed to promise a successful voyage down the river, but our hopes were doomed to be of short duration, for as I again awaited the re-appearance of the second boat, a shout similar to the first again rose, and on running across the intervening land within the river bend, I found her once more on the point of going down, from similar damage sustained in the starboard bow. It was now near five P. M., and the labours of the day had been sufficient to convince me that the course of the Nammoy could be much more conveniently traced at that time by a journey on land, than with boats of canvass on the water. We pitched our tents; and on plotting my work I found we were distant, in a direct line, only about two miles
from Bullabalakit.

Dec. 30. — The cattle from the depot camp, arrived at nine A. M., four men having been sent there early this morning, to bring them with the carts and horses to the place where we had disembarked. The tea, sugar, and biscuit, having got wet in the sunken boat, I was compelled to halt this day, in order to dry these articles if possible, in the sun, and the heat being very intense, we were tolerably successful. The sugar, in a liquid state, was laid out in small quantities on tarpaulins; the tea was also spread out thinly before the sun, and thrown about frequently — and thus we were enabled, by the evening, to pack it up quite dry in canisters; the whole having lost in weight two and a half pounds. The sugar had crystallised sufficiently to be put up again, without any danger of fermentation. During many days, I had anxiously watched the smoky red hot sky, for some appearance of rain: no dew nourished the grass, which had become quite yellow, and the river upon which I set my hopes was rapidly drying up. In my tent, the thermometer generally reached 100° of Farenheit during the day, At length the welcome sound of thunder was heard, and dark clouds cooled the atmosphere long before sunset. These clouds at length poured a heavy shower on the yawning earth; flakes of ice or hail accompanied it, and we enjoyed a cool draught of iced water, where the air had just before been nearly as warm as the blood.

In emptying the water out of the sunken boat, we found a cray-fish, resembling those which I had seen in the fresh water lagoons about Lake George; the remains of this crustacean were also abundant there, at places where water had been but very temporarily lodged.*

We dismantled our boats, packing up the canvass; and in the hollow of a large tree, I buried my collection of geological specimens, that we might be loaded as lightly as possible.

Dec. 31. — Quitting this spot at seven A. M., we continued on a bearing of 20° west of north, and passed through a scrub of acacia pendula, in which grew some eucalypti. At two and three-quarter miles, we entered on a specious open plain, which appeared to extend westward to the river, a distance of about two miles. We crossed the more elevated and eastern part of this plain. We next entered a scrub of acacia pendula, which at seven miles opened into a forest of apple-trees, and other eucalypti. We soon after reached Maule’s creek, the passage of which, on account of its steep banks, cost us an hour and a half. This induced me to encamp there, influenced also by the apprehension of a want of water, at any convenient distance beyond it. On first approaching water, I had frequently an opportunity of observing, that the worst characters have the least control over their appetites, in cases of extreme privation. It was a standing order, which I insisted on being observed, that no man should quit the line of route to drink, without my permission. There was one, notwithstanding, who never could, in cases of extremity, resist the temptation of water, and who would rush to it, regardless of consequences. Now this man continued to be an irrecoverable character, and in six years after, he had lost all the advantages he gained by his services on this occasion.

The morning had been calm and very hot, but at three P. M. the sun was obscured,
to our inexpressible relief, and clouds full of thunder at length overcast the whole sky; only a few drops of rain fell about six P. M.; and at ten, the heavens became clear, the air however was cool and refreshing.

Jan. 1, 1832. — We proceeded on the same bearing, travelling over a very level surface. As we approached the western extremity of the great range, we touched on an open plain, whereof the soil was very rich. The greater portion of it lay on the left, or westward of our route, or towards the river. After crossing it, we again entered a thin scrub of acacia pendula, which having been recently burnt, was open and favourable for passing through. We afterwards crossed a succession of gentle undulations, and through an opening, along the bottom of one valley, I obtained a view over the flat country to the westward. The most remarkable feature, was a naked ridge of yellowish rock, which rose abruptly from the woody country, as if it overhung the river. I wished much to examine that singular mass, but we were proceeding with little prospect of finding water, and we had impassable scrubs before us, as well as rocky hills on our right. A valley at length appeared in our route, and in which from the nature of the mountains at its head, I hoped to find water. In this, I was, however, disappointed, for the channel, although of considerable depth, was quite dry, and I in vain searched its bed, for at least a mile upwards. At ten miles, the most western head of the range of “Nundawâr” bore north, its low western extremity being distant only about a quarter of a mile. We were about to cross some offsets from the range, when a thick scrub or brush obstructed our further progress in that direction. I entered it, and penetrated about a mile and a half without discovering any indication of water, or any opening through which the carts might pass. The weather was extremely warm, and as we had come a long journey, I determined to encamp once more on the Nammoy; and turning westward, I followed a line of flats and hollows, which led me to the nearest bend of that river. We calculated we had travelled twenty-one miles, although the distance by latitude and angles taken on the hills is less. — Thermometer 97° in the shade. Where we encamped, the river was shallow, with many dead trees in the channel; but a little lower down, it formed a deep, broad, and extensive reach. The latitude, as ascertained by the stars Aldebaran and Rigil, was 30° 24' 44" S.

Jan. 2. — We pursued a north-west course, after getting clear of the river, my object being to keep within reach of it, if possible, in case of scarcity of water. Yet with such a range on our right this was not much to be apprehended; indeed, our line of exploration was as favourable as could be wished, having a river on one hand, and a lofty range on the other; the country between, presenting no impediment to our progress northward. At about two miles, we crossed a small water-course with some pools in it, and half a mile further, the broad bed of a river, the course of which was towards the Nammoy, but it did not contain much water. It could not be a long river in either direction, though the width, the height of banks, and the large water-worn stones in its bed, gave it the appearance of being at times a considerable stream. Some caution was necessary at both these water-courses in passing the carts over, the banks of both being steep; we crossed them, however, without much delay. We next ascended, by a gradual slope, a low ridge,
which had on its summit, a species of the eucalyptus with yellow bark, presenting a
striking contrast to other trees, the line between them being also well defined. The
rock consisted of red sandstone, the first I had seen to the northward of Liverpool
range. On descending, which we did by a gentle slope, the scrub became gradually
thin, and at length opened to a clear verdant surface, extending far to the north and
west. It was now obvious, that nothing could obstruct our progress into the regions
beyond the great range. On the contrary, a beautiful open country lay at its base,
reaching quite round it to the north-east. A fresh cooling breeze from the north-
west fanned our faces, as we beheld, for the first time, that fine country. The
recollection of the rocks, which we had endeavoured to cross, further east, perhaps
heightened its beauty in our eyes, but the great range itself formed a sublime
horizon on the east, some of the summits having very remarkably pointed or
castellated forms.

One tree of an uncommon genus grew on the borders of the plain, and about a
mile to the west, one solitary hill stood in this plain, like an island in the sea. It was
flat topped, with a few trees on the summit. The uncommon tree was covered with
a yellow blossom, the leaf was dark green and shining, and the wood was white.*
The low country, which seemed most to promise water, was still distant, while the
course of the Nammoy was receding from our route as I had reason to believe,
from the position of the low ridge which I had crossed. An opening in the distance
westward seemed to mark its course. I was still disposed to pursue a middle
direction between the mountains and the river (35° W. of N.) but I bore in mind,
the necessity for turning these ranges, so as to pass into that part of the country
beyond them, at which we should have arrived if we had crossed them where we
first attempted, in order to determine the question as to the existence of the large
river there, as stated by the Barber. A rather elevated, but grassy plain, afforded
little prospect of water being near, at the time we were about to halt and rest, after a
long journey, and I had directed the men to pitch the tents, despairing of reaching
water that day, when I suddenly came upon a deep pool. I was truly sensible of the
goodness of Providence, considering that this was to all appearance the only water
within many miles, and on a plain where I had no reason to expect it. I could not
then see how the pond was supplied. Neither was this all our good fortune, for
having directed Jones (one of the men ablest at fishing,) to try the pond, to the no
small amusement of the others; he, nevertheless, drew out in a short time, a good
dish of cray-fish (or 
lobsters
, as they termed them). We had also killed a kangaroo
that morning, which enabled us to feed our famished dogs, so that our entry on this
new region could not have been more auspicious.

In the afternoon, I walked to the isolated hill of the plain, and found that it
consisted of trap-rock — a solid mass projecting from the earth, with little or no
soil upon it. Its greater elongation extended due north and south, conformable to
the direction of most of the other summits, I had ascended. The steepest side was
towards the east, and its height was 50 feet above the plain. From this hill I
perceived another like it, due south, and distant about half a mile.

The dead silence of the solitary plains around me, was broken by the sound of a
distant thunder-storm, which was then exhausting itself on the Nundawar range, while the sun was setting in perfect tranquility on the unbroken horizon of the west. Afterwards, the night was dark and stormy, and at ten it began to rain, a circumstance rather alarming to us then, considering the nature of the soil of these plains, which a few days’ rain must have rendered nearly impassable.

Jan. 3. — A fine serene morning, although the eastern mountains still echoed under clouds of thunder. We left the Lobster Pond at six, and continued our route in the direction of 35° west of north, for the first twelve miles. Having reached, at length, the northern limits of the plain, we encountered, after passing through some slight woods of acacia pendula and eucalyptus, a thick brush, through which we were obliged to open a way with axes for a mile and a half. While engaged in this work, one of the men said he heard voices. On gaining once more the opener forest, we saw two newly felled trees, which had been cut with an iron axe or tomahawk; and immediately after, we perceived the natives at a little distance. They were hurrying off, but being most anxious to conciliate them, and gain if possible some information respecting the country, I sent Dawkins, who was an eager volunteer on the occasion, forward to them, and he prevailed on several to stop and speak to him, while their women and children decamped. When they seemed no longer disposed to run, I ventured forward; but those who had got round Dawkins, on seeing me approach, made off, one by one, until none remained when I rode up to Dawkins, except a young man. Not a word was understood on either side, yet our new acquaintance talked fluently, and also repeated what we said to him. He carried no spear or weapon, with the exception of three little sticks, which he held in the left hand; neither did he wear any dress or ornament, nor was his skin much scarified. His features were not bad, and they wore an expression of extreme good nature. We now regretted more than ever the absence of “Mr. Brown,” as with his assistance we might now have learnt so much respecting the rivers and the country before us. The tribe appeared to consist of about thirty individuals; those who remained, at a distance, carried spears, and were evidently much afraid of us. The string of low slang words, which the natives nearer the colony suppose to be our language, while our stockmen believe they speak theirs, was of no use here. In vain did Dawkins address them thus, — “What for you jerran budgerry whitefellow?” “Whitefellow brother belongit to blackfellow.” Neither had the piece of tobacco, which he had put in the stranger’s mouth, any effect in bringing intelligible words out of it, although the poor fellow complaisantly chewed the bitter weed. He readily ate some bread which was given him, and on presenting him with a halfpenny, he signified by gesture that he should wear it at his breast, a fashion of the natives nearer the colony. I placed in his hand a small tomahawk, the most valuable of gifts to his tribe; and leaving him enriched thus, we quietly continued our journey, that the tribe might see, our purpose had no particular reference to them, and that they had no cause for alarm, as our behaviour to the young man must have sufficiently testified.

We soon after entered another extensive plain, on which the rich soil, when we had got half way across, changed to a stiff clay, the grass marking the change by a
difference of colour, being red on the clay and quite green on the other soil. This clay occupied the highest part of the plain. Passing through another scrub of acacia pendula, we reached a still more extensive plain, and while we were crossing it, I was informed, by the carpenter, that the wheels of one of the carts were falling to pieces, and required immediate repair. We accordingly halted, and some wedges were driven into them. The thermometer here stood at 97°. A brush of acacia pendula also bounded this plain on the north; and beyond it, we entered a scrub of forest-oak (casuarina), which was so very thick, that we were compelled to halt the carts until a way could be cut through it, for upwards of two miles; beyond that distance however the brush opened into patches of clearer ground. We had changed our course to north in the large plain, and had preserved this direction in cutting through these scrubs. It was now four P. M., and during the whole journey from six A. M., we had seen no water; the day also was exceedingly warm, and I was riding in advance of the party, and looking at some elevated ground in an opening of the wood, with thoughts of encamping there, but very doubtful whether we should ever see water again. When almost in despair I observed a small hollow, with an unusually large gum-tree hanging over it; and my delight under such circumstances, may be imagined, when I perceived on going forward, the goodly white trunk of the tree reflected in a large pond. A grassy flat beside the water proved quite a home to us, affording food for our cattle, and rest from the fatigues of that laborious day. We found these ponds in situations, which seemed rather elevated above the adjacent plains, at least their immediate banks were higher; hence we usually came upon them, where we least expected to see water, before we were acquainted with this peculiarity of the country. The pond, where we now encamped, was connected with several others that were dry, but it was quite impossible at that time to discover, which way the current ran in times of flood. The latitude was 30° 6' 30" south. In the evening, the sky was illuminated so much by an extensive fire in the woods near us, that the light was clearer in our camp than the brightest moonlight.

Jan. 4. — Continuing due north, we just avoided some thick scrubs, which either on the right or left, would have been very difficult to penetrate. The woods opened gradually however, into a thick copse of acacia pendula, and at the end of three miles, we reached the eastern skirts of an extensive open plain, the ground gently undulating. At 4¾ miles, on ascending a slight eminence, we suddenly overlooked a rather deep channel, containing abundance of water in ponds, the opposite banks being the highest ground visible. The vast plains thus watered, consist chiefly of a rich dark-coloured earth, to the depth of 30 or 40 feet. Unabraded fragments of trap are not uncommon in the soil of these plains, and I imagined there was a want of symmetry in the hollows and slopes, as compared with features more closely connected with hills elsewhere. At 8½ miles, perceiving boundless plains to the northward, I changed the direction of our route 24° east of north. The plains extended westward to the horizon, and opened to our view an extensive prospect towards the north-east, into the country north of the range of Nundawâr, a region apparently champaign, but including a few isolated and picturesque hills. Patches of
wood were scattered over the level parts, and we hastened towards a land of such promising aspect. Water, however, was the great object of our search, but I had no doubt, that I should find enough in a long valley before us, which descended from the range on the east. In this I was, nevertheless, mistaken; for although the valley was well escarped, it did not contain even the trace of a water-course. Crossing the ridge beyond it, to a valley still deeper, which extended under a ridge of very remarkable hills, we met with no better success; nor yet when we had followed the valley to its union with another, under a hill which I named Mount Frazer, after the botanist of that name. No other prospect of relief, from this most distressing of all privations remained to us, and the day was one of extraordinary heat, for the thermometer, which had never before been above 101° on this journey, now stood at 108° in the shade. The party had travelled sixteen miles, and the cattle could not be driven further, with any better prospect of finding water. We, therefore, encamped in this valley, while I explored it upwards, but found all dry and desolate. Mr. White returned late, after a most laborious but equally fruitless search northward, and we consequently passed a most disagreeable afternoon. Unable to eat, the cattle lay groaning, and the men extended on their backs watched some heavy thunder-clouds which at length stretched over the sky; the very crows sat on the trees with their mouths open.

The thunder roared, and the cloud broke darkly over us, but its liquid contents seemed to evaporate in the middle air. At half-past seven, a strong hot wind set in from the north-east, and continued during the night. Thermometer 90°. I was suddenly awoke from feverish sleep by a violent shaking of my tent, and I distinctly heard the flapping of very large wings, as if some bird, perhaps an owl, had perched upon it.

Jan. 5. — The sun’s rays were scorching before his red orb had cleared the horizon, but ere he appeared the party was in motion. No dew had fallen, yet even the distressed bullocks and horses seemed to participate in the hope which led us forward. With one accord men and quadrupeds hastened from the inhospitable valley, common sufferers from the want of an element so essential to the living world. Continuing on the same bearing of 24° east of north, we reached the highest part of some clear ground, at about two miles from where we had encamped, and from this spot I obtained an extensive view over the country before us. The ground sloped for several miles towards a line of trees, beyond which a steep ridge extended parallel to that line, and upwards to the mountains, evidently enclosing a channel of drainage, so that I ventured at once, on seeing this, to assure the men that I saw, where we should meet with water. The way to it was all down hill, open and smooth; while the Nundawàr range, now to the southward, presented, on this northern side, a beautiful variety of summits.

I galloped impatiently towards the line of wood, and found there a meandering channel full of water, with steep banks of soft earth, apparently a small river, and I hastened back with the welcome intelligence to the men. The extreme heat, and the fatigue of travelling, could not have been borne much longer. One man (Woods) had been left behind at his own request, being unable even to ride, from violent
pains in his stomach; another was also so ill that he could not walk; the bullocks still
drew, but with their tongues protruding most piteously. I sent a man on horseback
back with a kettleful of water to Woods. The cattle being unyoked rushed to the
stream, and in half an hour, we were all comfortably encamped, with good grass
beside us for the cattle. The bottom of this small river-channel was in no part
gravelly, but consisted of soft earth, in which, however, the cattle did not sink very
deep. Fragments of flint, basalt, and quartz, apparently not worn by attrition,
abound in the adjacent soil. The general direction of the water-course appeared to
be about 36° north of west. At a pond above our camp, the carpenter shot two
ducks, of a kind not previously seen by us, having a purple speck on the head, behind
the ear.

We had now arrived in the country beyond the mountains, which we had in vain
attempted to cross, having found an open and accessible way round them; it
remained to be ascertained whether the large river, as described by the bushranger,
was near; according to him it was the first river to be met with, after crossing the
range north-east by north of Tangūlda.

At four P. M. the thermometer stood at 101°. The latitude was ascertained in the
evening to be 29° 50' 29" S.

Jan. 6. — The morning was rather cool, with clouds and distant thunder. We now
proceeded in a northerly direction, until we were impeded by scrub, about three
miles from the camp. Through this we cut our way, keeping as closely in the
northern direction as the openings would allow. At length the wheels of one of the
carts, and the axle of another, became unserviceable, and could not be repaired,
unless we halted for two days. As they could only be dragged a few miles further, I
went forward as soon as we got clear of the scrubs, which extended three miles, in
search of water for an encampment. I came upon a slight hollow and followed it
down, but it disappeared on a level plain, bounded on each side by rising grounds.
One dry pond encouraged my hopes, and I continued my search along a narrow
flat, where the grass had been recently on fire. From this point, and while pursuing
a kangaroo, I came upon a well marked water-course with deep holes, but all these
were dry. Tracing the line of these holes downwards to where the other flat united
with it, I found, exactly in the point of junction, as I had reason to expect, a deep
pool of water. Once more, therefore, we could encamp, especially as two very large
ponds on a rocky bed, were found a little lower than that water first discovered.
This element was daily becoming more precious in our estimation, and I had reason
to be very anxious about it, on account of Mr. Finch, who was following in our
track. The spot on which we encamped, was covered with rich grass, and enclosed
by shady casuarine and thick brush. The prospect of two days’ repose for the cattle
on that verdure, and under these shades, was most refreshing to us all. It was,
indeed, a charming spot, enlivened by numbers of pigeons, and the songs of little
birds, in strange, but very pleasing notes.

Here I again remarked, that among these casuarine scrubs the eucalyptus, so
common in the colony, was only to be seen near water; so that its white shining
bark and gnarled branches, while they reminded us of home at Sydney, also marked
out the spots for fixing our nightly home in the bush.

Jan. 7. — The night had been unusually hot, the thermometer having stood at 90°, and there had not been a breath of wind. Few of the men had slept. Thus even night, which had previously afforded us some protection from our great enemy, the heat, no longer relieved us from its effects; and this incessant high temperature which weakened the cattle, dried up the waters, destroyed our wheels, and nourished the fires, that covered the country with smoke, — made humidity appear to us the very essence of existence, and water almost an object of adoration. No disciple of Zoroaster could have made proselytes of us. The thermometer ranged from 96° to 101° during the day, and during the last five nights had stood as high as 90° between sunset and sunrise. From the time the party left Sydney rain had fallen on only one day. We left each friendly water-hole, in the greatest uncertainty whether we should ever drink again, and it may be imagined with what interest, under such circumstances, I watched the progress of a cloudy sky. It was not uncommon for the heavens to be overcast, but the clouds seemed to consist more of smoke than moist vapour. The wind, from the time of our first arrival in the country, had blown from the north or northwest, and the bent of trees, at all exposed, shewed that these were the prevailing winds.

The country when seen from an eminence appeared to be very generally wooded, but the lower parts were perfectly clear, or thinly strewed with bushes, and slender trees, chiefly varieties of acacia. The principal wood consisted of *casuarinae* which grew in thick clumps, or scrubs, and very much impeded, as has already been stated, our progress in any given direction. I found, that these scrubs of casuarinae grew generally on rising grounds, and chiefly on their northern or eastern slopes. We saw little of the callitris tribe, after we had crossed the first hill beyond our last camp on the Nammoy. On the contrary, these casuarinae scrubs, and grassy plains seemed to characterize the country to the westward and northward of the Nundawàr range, as far, at least, as we had yet penetrated. The course of this chain of ponds appeared to be parallel to that, on which we had previously encamped, 36° N. of W. A yellow, highly calcareous sandstone occurred in the bed and banks of this stream, forming a stratum from two to three feet in thickness, and in parts of the upper surface nodules of iron-stone were imbedded.

On examining our wheels, we found that the heat had damaged them very much, some of the spokes having shrunk more than an inch. The carpenter managed, however, to repair them this day.

Jan. 8. — The morning was cool and pleasant, with a breeze from the west. We left the ponds (named Wheel Ponds), exactly at six A.M., and, after travelling a mile, entered a scrub, through which we were compelled to cut a lane with axes, for three miles; when at length the wood opened, and some trees of that species of eucalyptus called “box,” grew on the flats. At five miles from our camp I shot a kangaroo. At seven miles, as we entered a forest, we heard the sound of the natives’ hatchets, and we saw soon after, their fires at a distance. We at length came unawares upon a native in a tree, for he was so busy at work cutting out an opossum, that he did not see us, until we were very near him. A gin and child gave
the alarm, upon which he stared at the strange assemblage with a look of horror, and immediately calling to the female in an authoritative tone, she disappeared in the woods. He then threw a club, or nulla-nulla to the foot of the tree, and ascended to the highest branch. I called to him, and made such signs as I thought most likely to give him confidence, and remove his apprehensions of harm; but apparently to no purpose, for his reply was “Ogài!” pronounced in a loud imperative tone. I thought it best to proceed quietly on our way; whereupon he descended and ran off, having picked up two spears, which lay near the tree. We heard calls in various directions, and “witefellow” pronounced very loudly and distinctly. “Witefellow,” or “wite ma,” appears to be their name (of course derived from us) for our race, and this appellation probably accompanies the first intelligence of such strangers, to the most remote, interior regions. We soon after came upon the bank of a river-course, in the bed of which, although deep, broad, and gravelly, there was no water; its general direction was westward. At eight miles, we entered upon an extensive, open plain, which reached to the horizon in the direction of 10° W. of N. We crossed it, continuing our journey northward, until a thick scrub obliged me to turn to the east. At thirteen miles, being again in a wood, we heard the native axe at work, and, naturally eager to communicate with, or even see the faces of fellow-creatures in these dismal solitudes, I allowed Dawkins to go towards them unarmed, that he might, at least by signs, ascertain where water was to be found. A considerable time having elapsed without his reappearance, I went after him, and found him in communication (by signs) with a very civil native, who had just carried a quantity of wild honey to his gin and child, having first offered some to Dawkins. This man betrayed no signs of fear, neither had he any offensive weapons, but he refused to accompany Dawkins to the rest of the party, rather inviting the latter, by signs, to accompany him. For water, he pointed both to the north-east and south-west, and all around, as if it had been abundant; numerous pigeons and kangaroos also shewed, that there was some at no great distance; nevertheless, we were doomed to pass another night without any, after a long day’s journey.

On quitting the wood, where we met the native, we crossed a plain which appeared to slope westward. Night was coming on, and I directed my course towards some tall trees, where we found a hollow, but no water remained in it; yet here, we were, nevertheless, obliged to encamp. Some of the men, who had set out in search of water, had not returned when it became dark; but on our sending up a rocket, they found their way to the camp, although they had not succeeded in their search for water.

From this camp, the summits of the Nundawâr range were still visible, and very useful in determining our longitude. One cone in particular (Mount Riddell) promised from its height to be a land-mark still on these northern plains. (See outline of summits as seen on 12th January, page 79.)

Jan. 9. — Continuing our journey at half-past five A.M. over the clear plain, we came upon several ponds, distant not more than a mile, from where we had passed the night. We lost no time in watering the cattle and proceeding. At half a mile beyond, I perceived on the right, some very green grass by the edge of a hollow,
overhung by spreading eucalypti. I found there a fine lagoon of considerable extent, and brim-full of the purest water. There were no reeds, but short grass grew on the brink, and near the shore a few water-lilies. Here we filled our keg and kettles. We next crossed some slightly rising ground, and high in the branches of the trees, I perceived, to my astonishment, dry tufts of grass, old logs, and other drift matter! I felt confident that we were at length approaching something new, perhaps the "large river," the "Kindur" of the bushranger. On descending by a very gentle slope, a dark and dense line of gigantic, blue gum trees (eucalypti), growing amid long grass and reeds, encouraged our hopes, that we had at length found the "big river." A narrow tract of rich soil covered with long grass, and seared with deep furrows, intervened. I galloped over this, and beheld a broad silvery expanse, shaded by steep banks and lofty trees. In this water, no current was perceptible, but the breadth and depth of channel far exceeded that of the Nammoy. Nevertheless this was not the "Kindur," as described by the Barber, but evidently the Gwydir of Cunningham, as seen by him at a higher part of its course. We were exactly in the latitude of the Gwydir, the course of which was also westward. It was, however, a very new feature of the country to us, and after so much privation, heat and exposure — the living stream and umbrageous foliage, gave us a grateful sense of abundance, coolness, and shade. Trees of great magnitude give a grandness of character to any landscape, but especially to river scenery. The blue gum (eucalyptus) luxuriates on the margin of rivers, and grows in such situations to an enormous size. Such trees overhung the water of the Gwydir, forming dense masses of shade, in which white cockatoos (*Plyctolophus galeritus*), sported like spirits of light.

As soon as I had fixed on the camp, I forded the river, accompanied by Woods carrying my rifle. The water where I crossed did not reach above the ankle, but the steepness of the banks on each side was a great obstacle to the passage of my horse. I proceeded due north, in search of rising ground, but the whole country seemed quite level. After crossing an open plain of about two miles in length, I entered a brush of acacia pendula, and soon after I arrived at an old channel or hollow scooped out by floods. As I approached a line of bushes, I saw a kangaroo, which sat looking at my horse, until we were very near it, and I was asking Woods, whether he thought we could manage to carry it back, if I shot it; when my horse suddenly pricking his ears, drew my attention to a native, apparently also intent on the kangaroo, and having two spears on his shoulder. On perceiving me, he stood and stared for a moment, then taking one step back, and swinging his right arm in the air, he poised one of his spears, and stood stretched out in an attitude to throw. He was a tall man, covered with pipe-clay, and his position of defiance then, as he could never have before seen a horse, was manly enough. It was not prudent to retire at that moment, although I was most anxious to avoid a quarrel. I therefore galloped my horse at the native, which had the desired effect; for he immediately turned, and disappeared at a dog-trot among the bushes. By going forward, I gained a convenient cover, which enabled me to retire upon the river, without seeming to turn, as in fact I did, to avoid further collision with the natives at so great a distance from the party. The bed of the river was flat, and consisted of small pebbles, not
much worn by attrition, and mixed with sand. Many dead trees lay in parts of the channel. The average breadth of the water was forty-five yards; the breadth from bank to bank seventy-two yards; and the perpendicular height of the banks above the water, twenty-seven feet.

In the afternoon, the natives appeared on the opposite bank, and were soon after heard calling out “Witefellow, Witefellow.” Dawkins advanced quietly to the river bank to speak to them, and encourage them to cross; but they disappeared as soon as they saw him.

The “Barber” had stated, that the large river was the first water to be met with, after crossing the range in the direction of N. E. by N. from “Tangûlda.” We had reached the country beyond that range by going round it; and had at length found, after crossing various dry channels, not the great river described by him, but only the Gwydir of Cunningham. It remained for me to trace this into the interior, as far as might be necessary to ascertain its ultimate course; with the probability, also, of discovering its junction with some river of greater importance.

Chapter IV.

Change the route to trace the course of the Gwydir — A native village of bowers — Effect of sudden moisture on the wheels — Tortuous course of the Gwydir — Lines of irrigation across the plains — Heavy rain — Crested pigeon — The party impeded by the soft state of the surface — Lagoons near the river — Excursion northward — Reach a broad sheet of water — Position of the party — The common course of the river, and the situation of the range considered — Nondescript tree and fruit — Plains of rich soil, beautifully wooded — Small branches of the Gwydir — Much frequented by the natives — Laughable interview of Dawkins with a tribe — Again reach the Gwydir — A new cucumber — Cross the river and proceed northward — A night without water — Man lost — Continue northward — Water discovered by my horse — Native wears for catching fish — Arrive at a large and rapid river — Send back for the party on the Gwydir — Abundance of three kinds of fish — Preparations for crossing the river — Natives approach in the night — View from one tree fastened to another — Mr. White arrives with the party and lost man — detained by natives — Mr. White crosses the river — Marks of floods on trees — Man lost in the woods — Natives’ method of fishing — Native dog — Mr. White’s account of the river.

THE line of our route to this river, described no great detour, and the trees being marked, as also the ground, by the cart wheels, Mr. Finch could have no difficulty in following our track thus far. We were now, however, to turn from a northern, to a western course, and I accordingly explained this to Mr. Finch, in a letter which I deposited in a marked tree, as arranged with him before I set out.

Jan. 10. — This morning it rained heavily; but we left the encampment at six, to pursue the course of the Gwydir. The deep and extensive hollows formed by the floods of this river, compelled us to travel southward for several miles. In crossing one hollow, we passed among the huts of a native tribe. They were tastefully
distributed amongst drooping acacias and casuarine; some resembled bowers under yellow fragrant mimose; some were isolated under the deeper shades of casuarine; while others were placed more socially, three or four together, fronting to one and the same hearth. Each hut was semicircular, or circular, the roof conical, and from one side a flat roof stood forward like a portico, supported by two sticks. Most of them were close to the trunk of a tree, and they were covered, not as in other parts, by sheets of bark, but with a variety of materials, such as reeds, grass, and boughs. The interior of each looked clean, and to us passing in the rain, gave some idea, not only of shelter, but even of comfort and happiness. They afforded a favourable specimen of the taste of the gins, whose business it usually is to construct the huts. This village of bowers also occupied more space than the encampments of native tribes in general; choice shady spots seemed to have been an object, and had been selected with care.

We had at length been able to turn westward, keeping the river trees in view, when the rain continuing, we began to experience the effects of moisture on the felloes of the wheels. The heat and contraction had lately obliged us to tighten and wedge them to such a degree, that now, when the ground had become wet, the expansion of the whole broke the tirering of the wheel. Having no forge, we could only attempt the necessary repairs with a common fire, and for this purpose I left three men with Mr. White; and I resumed the journey with the rest of the party. The rain continuing, the soft ground so clogged the wheels, that the draught was very distressing to the bullocks. We pursued a westerly direction for five miles, over ground thinly wooded, with patches of open plain. Changing our course to 60° west of north, we traversed a very extensive tract of clear ground, until, after crossing four miles and a half of it, we reached a bend of the river, and at three P.M. encamped on an open spot, a quarter of a mile from it. At five o’clock the other cart came up, having been substantially repaired, by taking off the ring, shortening the felloes, closing them on the spokes, and then re-placing the ring again, by drilling two holes through it.

Jan. 11. — Pursuing a westerly course, I found the river on my right at five miles. At a mile further, it crossed my intended line of route, and obliged me to turn south-south-west, in which direction we intercepted the junction of the dry river, named Kareen, which we crossed on the 8th instant. The bed above the junction was narrow but deep, and the permanent character of its banks gave, to this channel, the appearance of a considerable tributary, which it probably may be at some seasons, although then dry. In a section of the bank near the junction, I observed a bed of calcareous tuff. The passage of this channel was easiest for the carts, at the spot where it joined that of the Gwydir. We travelled, after crossing, along the north-western skirts of extensive open plains, and thus reached, at five miles further, another line of trees, enclosing a chain of ponds, on which we encamped, after a journey of twelve miles.

Jan. 12. — I continued the westerly course, through woods, until at three miles we fell in with the river, and on turning to the left, in order to avoid its immediate banks, a large lagoon also obstructed our progress. The tortuous course of the river
was such, that it was only by pursuing a direction, parallel to the general course, we could hope to make sufficient progress. But in exploring the general course only of rivers, the traveller must still grope his way occasionally; for here, after turning the lagoon, we again encountered the river, taking such a bend southward, that we were compelled to travel towards the east, and even northward of east, to avoid the furrowed ground on its immediate bank.

At length we reached an open tract, across which we travelled in a south-west direction about eight miles, when we arrived at one of those water-courses or chains of ponds, which always have the appearance of being on the highest parts of the plains. As the general course of this, as far as it could be seen, was nearly east and west, I thought it might be the same as the channel, which I had named Wheel Ponds on the 7th instant; but the range of these chains of ponds, not being confined by any hills of note, I could not be certain as to the identity, or whether such channels did not separate into different branches, on that level country. The ponds they contained, even during the dry season, and the permanent character of their banks, each lined with a single row of trees, throughout a meandering course over naked plains, bespoke a providential arrangement for the support of life in these melancholy wastes, which, indeed, redeemed them from the character of deserts. We encamped on this chain of ponds, having first crossed the channel, that we might have no impediment before us, in the morning; experience having taught us that the cattle could overcome a difficulty of this kind better when warmed to their work, than at first starting from their feeding place.

Some very heavy thunder showers fell, but the sky became clear in the evening, so that we ascertained the latitude to be 29° 39' 49" S. We also obtained the bearing of Mount Riddell, and other points of the Nundawàr range, making our latitude 146° 37' 30" E.

On these ponds we first saw the beautiful crested pigeon, mentioned by Mr. Oxley, as frequenting the neighbourhood of the marshes of the Macquarie.

Jan. 13. — We packed up our tents to proceed on our journey, as usual, the weather being beautiful; but after three hours of excessive toil, the bullocks had not advanced two miles, because the stiff clay so clogged the wheels, that it could not be easily removed. Seeing the cattle so distressed, I was compelled to encamp, and await the effect of the sunshine and the breeze on the clammy surface. In the mean time, I rode northward towards the river, accompanied by Mr. White, and, at about a mile from the tents, we found one of the lagoons, which are supplied by its floods. The margin was thickly imprinted with the marks of small naked feet, in all probability, those of the gins and children, whose most constant food, in these parts, appeared to be a large, fresh-water muscle. We next traced the course of the river westward for about five miles, being guided by the line of river trees. When we arrived, we found within them a still lagoon of deep water, the banks thereof being steep like a river, and enclosing the water within a very tortuous canal, or channel, which I had no doubt belonged to the river. To the southward, the whole country was clear of wood, and presented one general slope towards the line of the river.

From our camp on the plain, Mount Riddell bore 123° 30' E.
Jan. 14. — After an unusually hot night, the morning broke amid thunder-clouds, which threatened, by another shower, to destroy our hopes of advancing this day and the next at least. Nevertheless, we lost no time in yoking the cattle, and proceeding: for the heat and drought of the previous day had already formed a crust upon which the animals could travel. Meanwhile, the thunder roared, and heavy showers were to be seen falling in two directions. One rain-cloud in the north-east, whence the wind blew strong, nearly overtook us; while another in the south-west, exhausted itself on the Nundawàr range. But, as the wind increased, the storm-clouds sank rapidly towards the part of the horizon whence it came, until the beams of the ascending sun at length overwhelmed them with a glorious flood of light, and introduced a day of brilliant sunshine.

We traversed, as rapidly as we could, these precarious plains, keeping the woods, which enveloped the Gwydir, on our right: and thus, at the end of twelve miles, we arrived on the banks of a lagoon, apparently a continuation of the line of ponds or river, which had proved such a providential relief to us, after our severe suffering from want of water under Mount Frazer. Here, however, we found a broad and extensive lagoon, nearly level with its banks, and covered with ducks. It had the winding character, and uniformity of width of a river, but no current. I thought, this reach might also contain some surplus water of the Nammoy, which could not be far distant, for we had now reached those low levels, to which we had previously traced the course of that river. We travelled along the bank of this fine piece of water for two miles, and found its breadth to be very uniform. An arm trending northward then lay in our way. The country was full of holes, and deep rents or cracks, but the soil was loose, and bare as a new-ploughed field. I, therefore, withdrew the carts to where we first came on the lagoon; not only for the sake of grass, but that we might continue our route over the firmer ground, which appeared to the eastward.

I had now on my map the Nundawàr range, with the courses of the Nammoy on one side, and the Gwydir on the other. I was between these two rivers, and at no great distance from either; Mount Riddell, the nearest point of the range bore 21½° S. of E., being distant 42 miles. The opposite bearing or 20° N. of W., might, therefore, be considered to express the common direction of these waters. In a country so liable to inundation, as the district between these rivers appeared to be, it was a primary object with us to travel along the highest or driest part, and we could only look for this advantage, in the above direction, or parallel to, and midway between, the rivers. We could, in this manner, trace out their junction with more certainty, and so terminate thus far, the survey of both, by the determination of a point so important in geography. The soil of these level open tracts consisted of a rich, dark coloured clay. The lagoon was marked by a row of stunted trees, which grew along its edge, on each side, so that the line could be distinguished from a great distance eastward, and appeared to be connected with the ponds of “Gorolei.”

Among the trees growing along the margin of this lagoon, were several which were new to me; particularly one which bore clusters of a fruit resembling a small
russet apple, and about an inch in diameter. The skin was rough, the pulp of a rich crimson colour, not unlike that of the prickly pear, and it had an agreeable acid flavour. This pulp covered a large rough stone, containing several seeds, and it was evidently eaten by the natives, as great numbers of the bare stones lay about. The foliage of the tree very much resembled the white cedar of the colonists, and milk exuded from the stalk or leaves when broken.

A great variety of ducks and other water-fowl covered this fine piece of water. We made the latitude of the camp 29° 49' S. the longitude 149° 28' E.

Jan. 15. — The country to the northward seemed so low, and the course of the Gwydir, amid so many lagoons, so doubtful, that I considered it advisable to ride in that direction, before we ventured to advance with our carts. I, therefore, set out this morning, accompanied by Mr. White, in the direction already mentioned, of 20° west of north — so that, in returning, the cone of Mount Riddell might guide us to the camp, without any necessity for continuing the use of the compass, which occasions much delay. In such cases, a hill, a star, or the unerring skill of a native, is very convenient, as obviating the necessity for repeatedly observing the compass, in returning through pathless woods towards any point, which might easily be missed without such precautions.

We found in the course of a ride of twenty miles from the camp, a much better country for travelling over, than that in the immediate vicinity of the lagoon. We crossed, at eleven miles, a line of ponds in a deep channel, whereof the bank seemed the highest ground; and, beyond them, was a rich plain, with a few clumps of trees; where the grass also was remarkably good. At twenty miles, the length of our ride, we fell in with a second chain of ponds, beyond which we saw another plain. We were delighted with the prospect of so favourable a country for extending our journey, and, not less so, with the apparent turn of the Gwydir, as indicated by its non-appearance in our ride thus far. It was obvious, that the more this river turned northward, the greater would be the probability that it might lead to a channel unconnected with that of the Darling — and terminate in some still greater water, or open out a field of useful discovery. The direction of the channels we had already crossed, however, was somewhat to the south of west — and it was difficult to account for their waters otherwise — than by supposing that they came from the Gwydir. We could trace their course to a remote distance by the smoke of the fires of the native population. The numerous marks of feet in the banks, with the abundant remains of muscles, and bones of aquatic birds, proved, that human existence was limited to these channels; not only on account of water, but of those animals, birds, and fishes also, which are man’s natural prey.

In returning, we explored the western termination of the lagoon on which we had encamped, and thus ascertained that it was not part of any channel of flooded waters. Beyond the lagoon was a plain, apparently subject to inundation, and bounded at the distance of some miles by a line of trees, which, in all probability, defined the course of the Nammoy.

Jan. 16. — The party proceeded along the course I had traced the day before. The country, as far as the first chain of ponds, was full of holes, which evidently were at
certain seasons filled with water; and the height to which the inundations rose, was
marked on the trunks of the trees, by a dark stain, which, to a certain height,
seemed universal. Considering these proofs of extensive flooding, and the soft
nature of the soil, we were then crossing, it was obvious, that a rainy season would
render our return impracticable, at least with the carts. For the first time, and with
great reluctance, we left the high ground behind us, to traverse a region subject to
inundation, without the prospect of a single hill, to which we might repair in case of
necessity. It was nevertheless indispensable, that we should find the river Gwydir,
and cross it, before we could hope to travel under more favourable circumstances.
Beyond the first channel we traversed an open plain of rich soil, similar to that of
the plains near Mount Riddell.

We reached the second channel, at a higher part than that attained by me
previously, so that the distance traversed by the party was only seventeen and a half
miles, as determined by the latitude; and this journey, although very distressing to
the cattle, was accomplished by half-past two. Thermometer 96°. Here the ponds
opened into a large lagoon covered with ducks. It was surrounded with the remains
of numerous fires of natives, besides which lay heaps of muscle shells (*unio*), mixed
with bones of the pelican and kangaroo. Lat. 29° 43' 3" S.

*Jan. 17.* — Leaving our encampment at six A.M., we first crossed a small plain,
then some forest land, and beyond that entered on an open plain still more
extensive, but bounded by a scrub, at which we arrived after travelling seven miles.
The soil of this last plain was very fine, trees grew upon it, in beautiful groups —
the acacia pendula again appearing. The grass, of a delicate green colour, resembled
a field of young wheat. The scrub beyond was close, and consisted of a variety of
dark-leaved shrubs, among which the eucalypti were almost the only trees to which
I was not a stranger. Here I halted the carts, while I penetrated three miles into this
scrub, accompanied by Mr. White, in hopes of finding either the Nammoy or the
Gwydir — but without success. Continuing the journey in the direction of 37° W.
of N., we entered an open alley, which had the appearance of being sometimes the
bed of a water-course. It terminated, however, in higher ground, where bulrushes
grew, and which seemed very strange, because we then approached a much more
open and elevated country. Most of the ground was covered with hibiscus* (with
red stalk and small flower) which grew to the height of twenty inches, and
alternated with patches of luxuriant grass, acacia pendula, and eucalyptus. At eleven
miles, we encountered a channel, in which were many ponds, its direction being,
like that of the others we had crossed, to the southward of west. Here we
encamped, the bullocks having been much fatigued, and also cut in the necks by the
yokes. The bed of these ponds was soft, and it required some search before a good
place could be found for the passage of our carts: when this was accomplished, and
the camp selected, I rode forward in a north-west direction, anxious to know more
of the country before us. I perceived the fires of the natives at no great distance
from our camp, and Dawkins went forward taking with him a tomahawk and a
small loaf. He soon came upon a tribe of about thirty men, women, and children,
seated by the ponds, with half a kangaroo and some cray-fish cooked before them,
and also a large vessel of bark containing water. Now, Dawkins must have been, in appearance, so different to all the ideas these poor people had of their fellow-men, that on the first sight of such an apparition, it was not surprising that, after a moment’s stare, they precipitately took to the pond, floundering through it, some up to the neck, to the opposite bank. He was a tall, spare figure, in a close white dress, surmounted by a broad brimmed straw hat, the *tout-ensemble* somewhat resembling a mushroom; and these dwellers by the waters might well have believed, from his silent and unceremonious intrusion, that he had risen from the earth in the same manner. The curiosity of the natives, who had vanished as fast as they could, at length overcame their terrors so far as to induce them to peep from behind the trees at their mysterious visitor. Dawkins, not in the least disconcerted, made himself at home at the fires, and on seeing them on the other side, began his usual speech, “What for you jerran budgery white fellow?” &c. He next drew forth his little loaf, endeavouring to explain its meaning and use by eating it; and he then began to chop a tree by way of shewing off the tomahawk; but the possession of a peculiar food of his own, astounded them still more. His final experiment was attended with no better effect; for when he sat down by their fire, by way of being friendly, and began to taste their kangaroo, they set up a shout which induced him to make his exit with the same silent celerity, which no doubt had rendered his début outrageously opposed to their ideas of etiquette, which imperatively required that loud “cooy,” should have announced his approach, before he came within a mile of their fires. Dawkins had been cautioned as to the necessity for using this method of salutation, but he was an old tar, and Jack likes his own way of proceeding on shore; besides, in this case, Dawkins came unawares upon them, according to his own account; and it was only by subsequent experience, that we learnt the danger of thus approaching the aboriginal inhabitants. Some of this party carried spears on their shoulders, or trailing in their hands, and the natives are never more likely to use such weapons, than when under the impulse of sudden terror.

I continued my ride for six miles in a north-west direction, without discovering any indication of either river; on the contrary, the country was chiefly open, being beautifully variegated with clumps of picturesque trees. The weather was very hot, until a thunder-shower fell and cooled the air in some degree. During the night the musquitoes were very troublesome; and the men rolled about in the grass unable to find rest.

*Jan. 18.* — At half-past six, we proceeded in a north-west direction, until at seven miles a thick scrub of acacias, obliged us to turn a little to the northward. When we had advanced ten miles, a burnt forest, with numerous columns of smoke arising from different parts of the country before us, proved almost beyond doubt, that we were at length approaching the river. Satisfied that the dense line of wood whence these columns of smoke arose, was the river, I turned westward, for the purpose, in the first place, of proceeding along the skirts of it in the opener ground; secondly, that the natives, whose voices resounded within the woods, might have time to see us; and, thirdly, that we might make out a day’s journey before we approached the river bank.
From west, I at length bent our course north-west, and finally northward, thus arriving on the banks of the Gwydir, after a journey of fifteen miles. But here, the river was so much altered in its character, that we could never have been induced by mere appearance, to believe this stream was the same river, which we came upon, about a degree further to the eastward. The banks were low and water-worn, the southern or left bank being in general the steepest, its height about 14 feet, the breadth was insignificant, not more than 12 or 14 feet; the current slow but constant; and the water of a whitish colour. I at first supposed, it might be only a branch of the river, we had seen above, until I ascertained, by sending Mr. White to examine it upwards, and a man on horseback downwards, that it preserved the same attenuated character in both directions. The course appeared to be very tortuous, and it flowed through a soft absorbent soil, in which no rock of any kind could be seen. In the rich soil near the water, we found a species of cucumber of about the size of a plum, the flower being of a purple colour. In taste it resembled a cucumber, but that it was also very bitter. Mr. White and I peppered it, and washed the slices with vinegar, and then chewed it, but neither of us had the courage to swallow it. The character of the spiders was very strange; and it seemed as if we had arrived in a new world of entomology. They resembled an enamelled decoration, the body consisting of a hard shelly coat of dark blue colour, symmetrically spotted with white, and it was nearly circular, being armed with six sharp projecting points.*

The latitude of this camp was 29° 28' 34" S.

The general course of the Gwydir, appeared to be nearly westward, between the first and last points thus ascertained by us; and this direction being also in continuation of the river seen so much further to the eastward by Mr. Cunningham, we could entertain no doubt as to the identity. The channels we had crossed before we came to the running stream at our present encampment, could only be accounted for, as separate ducts for the swollen waters of the river, when no longer confined by any immediate high ground to one great channel; and hence the attenuated state, (as we inferred) of the actual bed of the stream. This I resolved to trace through one day’s journey, and then to cross, if we found no change, and so proceed northward.

Jan. 19. — We travelled, as the dense line of river-wood permitted for eleven miles; the ground outside this belt being in general open and firmer than that nearer the river, which was distinguished by certain inequalities, and was besides rather thickly wooded. We found that on a bearing of 20° south of west, we just cleared the southern bends of the stream. We heard the natives in the woods, during our journey, but none approached the party. In order to encamp, we directed our course northward, and making the river bank, after travelling one mile, we encamped upon it. I then sent Mr. White due north, in order to ascertain if any other channel existed, but he found, on the contrary, that the ground rose gradually beyond the river, which convinced me that this, in which the water flowed, was the most northerly channel. The latitude was 29° 31' 49" S.

Jan. 20. — I gave the party a day’s repose, that I might put my map together, and duly consider the general course of the waters, as they appeared thereon, and also
the actual character of the stream, on which we were encamped. The banks consisted of soft earth, having a uniform slope, and they were marked with various horizontal lines, probably denoting the height which the water had attained during different floods. The river had a peculiar uniformity of width, and would, therefore, but for the tortuous course, have resembled a canal. The width was small in proportion to the depth, and both were greatest at the sharp bends of the channel. The water was of a white clay colour. The ground to the distance of half a mile from each bank, was broken and furrowed into grassy hollows, resembling old channels; so that the slightest appearance of such inequality was a sure indication of the river being near, while we travelled parallel to its course. The whole of the country beyond was so level, that the slightest appearance of a hollow was a most welcome sight, as it relieved us from any despair of finding water.

At four o’clock this day, the thermometer stood at 97°, the clouds were cumulostratus and cirrus, and there was a good breeze from the north-east.

Jan. 24. — The cattle being much fatigued by incessant travelling during great heat, I left most of them at this camp with Mr. White and half the men of the party, and I crossed the river, with the other portion, and some pack-animals carrying a small supply of provisions, some blankets, &c. The river was accessible to the cattle at only one place, the muddy bank by the water’s edge being so soft, that they were everywhere else in danger of sinking; the men were, therefore, obliged to carry the packages across, and load the animals on the opposite bank. This work was completed by ten A.M., and we proceeded due north, from the depot camp. We soon saw a flock of eight emus. The country consisted of open forest, which, growing gradually thinner, at length left intervals of open plain. The ground seemed to rise for the first mile, and then to slope northward towards a wooded flat, which was likely to contain water, although we found none there. Penetrating next through a narrow strip of casuarinae scrub, we found the remains of native huts; and beyond this scrub, we crossed a beautiful plain; covered with shining verdure, and ornamented with trees, which, although “dropt in nature’s careless haste,” gave the country the appearance of an extensive park. We next entered a brush of the acacia pendula, which grew higher and more abundant than I had seen it elsewhere.

After twelve, the day became excessively warm, and although no water could be found, we were compelled to encamp about two P.M., one of the party (Burnett), having become seriously ill. As the country appeared to decline towards some wooded hollows, I hoped that one of these might be found to contain a pool, especially as the wood appeared to consist of that species of casuarina which, in the colony, is termed swamp-oak, and which usually grows in moist situations. Subsequent experience, however, proved quite the reverse; for on exploring the deepest hollows, and densest thickets about our camp, not a hollow containing the least moisture could be found. Thus, the cattle were compelled to endure this privation, once more, after a hard day’s work, and during an unusually hot evening. To add to our distress, “the doctor,” as Souter was termed by his comrades, having, as soon as we halted, set out in search of water, with the tea-kettle in his hand, did not return.
When the sun had nearly set, a black swan was observed high in air, slowly winging its way towards the south-west, and many smaller birds appeared to fly in the same direction. Even the sight of an aquatic bird was refreshing to us, but this one did not promise much for the country to the northward, for, at that time of the evening, we might safely conclude, that the greater body of water lay to the south-west in the direction of the swan’s flight. I found the longitude of this camp to be 29° 23’ 54” S. making our distance from the camp, on the river, about ten miles.

Jan. 22. — The non-appearance of Souter occasioned me much uneasiness; fortunately the trees were marked along our line of route, from the river, and it was probable, that he would this morning find the line, and either follow us, or retrace his steps towards the camp on the river. The men, who knew him best, thought he would prefer the latter alternative, as he had been desirous of remaining at the depôt.

This was likely, however, to occasion some inconvenience to us, as he was a useful hand, and I did not despair, even then, of finding some use for the tea-kettle. Burnett had recovered; the morning was clear, with a pleasant breeze from the north-east, and the irresistible attraction of a perfectly unknown region, still led us northward.

The undulations were scarcely perceptible, and the woods were disposed in narrow strips, enclosing plains, on which grew abundance of grass. They occupied the lowest parts, and umbrageous clumps of casuarinæ in such situations, often led me on unsuccessful searches for water, until I was almost convinced, that these trees only grew where none could possibly ever be.

The prospect of finding any, at length, seemed almost hopeless, but I had determined to try the result of as long a journey as could be accomplished this day, with the intention of giving, in the event of failure, the little water remaining in our cask to the animals; and then to retrace our steps during the night, and the cool part of the following day, so as to regain, if possible, the depôt camp next evening.

Meanwhile, my party, faint with heat and thirst, toiled after me. In some parts of these parched plains, numerous prints of human feet appeared, but the soil which had evidently been very soft, when these impressions were made, was now baked as hard as brick, and although we felt that

“On desert sands ’twere joy to scan
The rudest steps of fellow man,”

these made us only more sensible of the altered state of the surface at that time. Water had evidently once lodged in every hollow, and the prints of the kangaroo, when pursued by the natives, and impeded by the mud, were visible in various places.

At five miles, we entered a wood of pine trees (*callitris*), the first we had seen since we left the Nammoy; but on passing through it, we discovered no other change. A thick wood of acacia pendula fell next in our way, and then several patches of casuarinæ. On approaching one of these, I observed a very slight hollow, and, on following it to the right, or eastward, about a mile, (the party having in the mean
time halted), I perceived a few dry leaves in a heap, as if gathered by water falling in that direction. Trifling as this circumstance was, it was nevertheless unusual on that level surface, and I endeavoured to trace the slope downwards, until my horse, who at other times would neigh after his companions, here pulled hard on the rein, as if to cross a slight rise before me. I laid the bridle on his neck, while he proceeded eagerly forward, over the rise, and through some wood, beyond which my eyes were once more blessed with the sight of several ponds of water, with banks of shining verdure, the whole extended in a line which resembled the bed of a considerable stream. I galloped back with the good news to the party, whose desperate thirst seemed to make them incredulous, especially as I continued our line of route northward, until it intercepted, at about a mile on, as I foresaw it would, this chain of ponds. It was still early; but we had already accomplished a good day’s journey, and we could thus encamp, and turn our cattle to browse on the luxuriant verdure, which surrounded these ponds. They were wide, deep, full, and close to each other, being separated only by grassy intervals resembling dykes. Drift timber and other fluvial relics lay high on the banks, and several wears for catching fish, worked very neatly, stood on ground quite dry and hard. Lower down, as indicated by the flood-marks, the banks were much more broken, and the channel seemed deeper, while enormous blue gum-trees (eucalypti) grew on the banks, and I was therefore of opinion that some larger river was before us at no great distance. I did not explore this channel further, being desirous to refresh my horses and rest the party for continuing our journey next morning. In the soil here, the only rock I found was a large, hard boulder, being a conglomerate of pebbles and grains of quartz, cemented by decomposed felspar or clay. Latitude 29° 9' 51" S.

Jan. 23. — After crossing the line of ponds and a slight elevation beyond them, we came upon a channel of considerable breadth, which contained several other very large ponds separated by quicksands, which afforded but a precarious passage for the pack-animals. Both banks were steep, the average width exceeding fifty yards. Beyond this river channel, the wood consisted chiefly of casuarinae. We next penetrated through two scrubs of dwarf eucalypti; and some trees of the callitris were also seen. At six miles, the woods assumed a grander character; masses of casuarinae enclosed open spaces covered with rich grass; and, being in some directions extensive, afforded park-like vistas, which had a pleasing effect, from the rich combination of verdure and shade, in a season of excessive heat. In one of these grassy alleys a large kangaroo was seen, the first, since we left the upper part of the Gwydir. The absence of this animal from the plains and low grounds was remarkable, and we had reason to conclude, that he seldom frequents those parts. At eight miles, our course was intercepted by a deep and rapid river, the largest that we had yet seen. I had approached within a few yards of the brink; and I was not aware of its being near, until I saw the opposite water-worn shore, and the living waters hurrying along to the westward. They were white and turbid, and the banks, consisting of clay, were nearly perpendicular at this point, and about twenty feet higher than the surface of the stream. On further examination, I found that the course was very tortuous, and the water deep. My horse was, however, got across
by a man wading up to the neck. The softness of the clay near the stream at some parts, and the steep water-worn face of the banks at others, rendered the passage difficult. We were all delighted, however, to meet such an obstruction, and I chose a favourable spot for our camp, within a bend of the river; and I made arrangements for bringing forward the party left with Mr. White on the Gwydir, also for the construction of a boat, by preparing a saw-pit, and looking for wood favourable for that purpose. There was abundance of rich grass along the banks of this river; and here our horses at length enjoyed some days of rest.

Jan. 24. — Early this morning, I sent back a party of the men, with the freshest of the bullocks, to Mr. White, to whom I also enclosed a letter for Mr. Finch, which I requested might be concealed in a tree with certain marks. I hoped, however, that by that time Mr. Finch might have overtaken Mr. White’s party. Four men remained with me, viz. two carpenters, a sawyer’s man, and my own servant. The morning was cloudy, and a refreshing shower fell at nine A.M.

We soon found that this river contained fish in great abundance, and of three kinds at least: viz. first, a firm but coarse-tasted fish, having strong scales; this made a groaning noise when on the hook: secondly, the fish we had found in the Peel, commonly called by the colonists “the cod,” although most erroneously, since it has nothing whatever to do with malacopterygious fishes: and thirdly, the cel-fish, which we had caught at the lagoon near Tangulda.

After maturely considering the prospects this river opened to us then, before exploring its course, it remained questionable whether it did or did not belong to the Darling. We were nearly in the prolongation of the supposed course of that river, and still nearer to its supposed outlet on the southern coast, than we were to any part of the northern coast of Australia. No rising ground could be seen to the northward or westward, and whether we proceeded in a boat or along its bank, it was desirable to explore the course of this river downwards. The horses required rest, and it was necessary to unite the party before this could be attempted. I expected Mr. Finch to arrive with the stores, and in the meantime, the preparation of a strong boat was going forward, to be ready in case our further discoveries might lead to navigable waters. With this view it was made to take into three pieces. The bottom being nearly flat, formed one portion, and the two sides the others. They were to be united by small screw-bolts, the carpenter having brought a number of these useful articles for such purposes; and when the sides and bottom were detached they could be carried on the carts. Thus we were to proceed with a portable punt, ready for the passage of any river or water, which might be in our way.

Jan. 25. — This day, we laid down the keel and principal timbers of a boat to be strongly planked, so as to be proof against the common drift-timber in the river. For this part of the work we used blue gum (eucalyptus), the only callitris we knew of being several miles back along the route.

At night some stars appeared, whereby I ascertained the latitude of this camp to be 29° 2' south. The thermometer at noon was 76°; and at four P.M. 82°.

Jan. 26. — A clear morning, with a fine breeze; the thermometer which had
ranged from 90° to 108° during the two last months, stood now at 64°. To breathe such refreshing air, and not move forward, was extremely irksome. The river rose this day a quarter of an inch. Thermometer at six, 64°. Wind south. At noon 86°.

In the evening the sky became overcast, with a cold and stormy wind. At ten P.M. I was called out of my tent to look at a firestick, which appeared in motion amongst the trees north-eastward of our camp. We had seen no natives, but their habit of carrying a light whenever they stir at night (which they do but seldom) is well known; and the light we then saw, moved in the direction of our horses and saw-pit. Our numbers did not admit of our keeping a watch, and although I had ordered the men to bring dogs on this ride, they had brought none; we could only, therefore, lie down and trust to Providence.

Jan. 27. — The clear cool weather continuing, I endeavoured to obtain a view of the horizon from a tree, raised by block and tackle to the top of another; but no point of high land appeared on any side, to break a woody horizon as level as the sea. At six A.M. thermometer 70°; wind south.

The natives to the number of ten or twelve, appeared on the opposite bank. Our attention was first drawn to them by the snorting and starting of the horses, which happened to be grazing by the river side. On seeing us approach they suddenly disappeared. About a dozen eggs, white, and the size of those of a blackbird, were found by one of the men in the sand, near the river-bank. Each contained a perfectly formed lacertine reptile. This morning, my attention was drawn by a noise resembling the growl of a dog, when I perceived a black insect nearly as large as a bird, carrying something like a grasshopper, alight, and disappear in a hole. On digging, it suddenly arose from amidst the dust and escaped; but we found there several large larvæ; this was the most bulky insect I ever saw. A beautiful species of stilbum frequently visited my tent; its buzz, having two distinct notes, had a very pleasing sound. The sandy banks abounded with a species of monedula, and others of the Bembecidæ tribe. In dead trees we found the scutellera corallifera, as described in the Appendix to Captain King's voyage.

This day the river fell nearly an inch.

Jan. 28. — Mr. White arrived with the carts and the depot party, including Souter, “the doctor,” who had wandered from our camp in search of water on the 21st instant. His story was, that on going about six miles from the camp, he lost his way, and fell in with the blacks, who detained him one day and two nights, but having at length effected his escape, while they were asleep, early on the second morning, he had made the best of his way towards the Gwydir, and thus reached the depot camp.

This day Mr. White crossed the river and examined the country for several miles beyond it, in search of the “pine” (or callitris), which we required for the completion of our boat, but he found none in that direction. About three miles to the north of our camp, he came upon a chain of large lagoons, extending in a westerly direction, and the drift marks on trees shewed, that at some seasons, a considerable current of water flowed there to the westward, rising occasionally to the height of ten or twelve feet above the surface of these lagoons. He also saw a kangaroo, a
circumstance which indicated that higher forest land was not far distant. Thermometer at six A. M. 67°. Wind N. E. high. Sky clear. At noon, thermometer 87, clear sky.

We now looked with some anxiety for Mr. Finch’s arrival, and, in order to preserve our provisions as long as possible, I determined to make the abundance of fish available, by distributing fishing-hooks to the men, and to reduce their weekly ration of pork from 3½ lbs. to 2 lbs.

In fishing we were tolerably successful; but flour was the article of which we stood most in need, and for this the country afforded no substitute, although I reduced the allowance of that also. The only starving members of the party were our unfortunate dogs, which had become almost too weak to kill a kangaroo — had any been seen there; neither did that region contain bandicoots, which, in other situations, had been occasionally caught about dead trees, with the assistance of some of the watch-dogs. We were obliged to shoot hawks and crows, and boil them into a mess, which served, at least, to keep these poor animals alive.

Jan. 29. — The cart was sent back about twelve miles for some of the callitris trees, required for planking, none having been seen nearer to our camp.

William Woods, who had gone out in search of the spare cattle early in the morning, did not return by one P. M., and as he was a good bushman, we began to feel apprehensive that the natives had detained, or perhaps, killed him. I, therefore, proceeded in search, with four men, and scoured the forest within five miles of the camp, without discovering any traces either of the natives, or of him. On returning, however, at sunset, we had the satisfaction to find, that he had reached the camp about an hour before us, having, during the whole day, been unable to find his way back to our camp, through the trackless forest.

To-day, the river fell another inch, and this failure of the waters, as upon the Nammoy, added much to the irksomeness of the delay, necessary for the completion of a boat. In the present case, however, more than on the Nammoy, the expected arrival of Mr. Finch, and the exhausted state of our cattle, disposed me to give the party some days rest, at so convenient a point, and towards which I had indeed looked forward with this view, in the efforts we made to attain it. The characters of my men were now better known to me, and I could not help feeling some sympathy for “the doctor,” as the men called Souter. He was also what they termed “a new chum,” or one newly arrived. He left the mess of his fellow prisoners, and cooked and ate by himself. In figure he was the finest specimen of our race in the party, and as he lay by his solitary fire, he formed a striking foreground to the desert landscape. In his novitiate he was most willing to do any thing his fellows required, and I felt often disposed to interfere, when I overheard such words as “Doctor! go for a kettle of water, while I light a fire,” &c. Worthington, in particular, I overheard, telling him he had been “a swell at home;” but a few days afterwards, the “Doctor” came to me, stating that an immediate operation was necessary to save the life of Worthington, and demanding the dissecting instruments. On inquiry, I found that this man, alias “Five o’clock,” had a slight swelling in the groin, for which the Doctor’s intended remedy, as far as I
could make out, was an incision in the lower part of the abdomen. I gravely assured “Five o’clock” that if “the Doctor” thought such an operation necessary, it must take place, although I should defer lending him the instruments for a day or two. Thus, I succeeded in establishing the importance of “the Doctor’s” position, and we heard no more of his having been “a swell” — or of “the swelling” of Worthington, who, on that pretext, seemed inclined to escape work.

Jan. 30. — The cart returned with some fine timber, which was soon placed on the saw-pit; meanwhile a stock-yard for the cattle, was erected on the higher ground.

No fish could be caught this day, and we supposed that the natives were busy taking them, above and below our camp, for, in their mode of fishing, few can escape. We had previously seen the osier nettings, erected by them across the various currents, and especially in the Gwydir, where some had been noticed of very neat workmanship. The frame of each trellis was as well squared as if it had been the work of a carpenter, and the twigs were inserted, at regular intervals, so as to form, by crossing each other, a strong and efficient kind of net or snare. Where these were erected, a small opening was left towards the middle of the current, probably, that some bag or netting might be applied there to receive the fish, while the natives in the river above should drive them towards it. The river continued still to fall during the day.

Jan. 31. — The sky overcast. A good supply of fish caught in the morning. A small black native dog, made its appearance about the camp, and was immediately run down and worried by our dogs. From the miserable mangey appearance of this animal, I conjectured that it had belonged to the natives, who were probably skulking about us, and who are very much attached to their dogs. I was, therefore, very sorry that this poor animal had been killed; and that no traces might remain of our apparent want of kindness, I ordered the body to be burnt, and gave positive instructions to prevent strange dogs being worried in future. This day, we completed the planking of the boat.

Feb. 1. — The night had been calm and close; and just before day-break, distant thunder, resembling discharges of artillery, was heard in the south-west. The sun rose clear, but was soon obscured, when the wind sprung up from the north-east. I sent Mr. White with a party of men down the river, to clear away any trees likely to obstruct the boat, and to ascertain whether any other impediments appeared in the channel. On his return, he reported that at the distance of some miles down, the channel was filled with dead trees of considerable size; and that, in another place, the bottom consisted of flat rocks, which occasioned a rapid or shallow of considerable length, over which our boat, being made of very heavy materials, could not be carried without considerable delay. This unpleasant intelligence, and the continued subsidence of the stream, determined me to explore its course with a party on horseback, until I could ascertain whether it took the desired direction, namely, north-west; and whether at any lower point, the channel improved so much as to enable us to relieve the cattle of part, at least, of their load, by carrying it in the boat. I was most desirous of leaving the cattle there, and some of the party, to await
the arrival of Mr. Finch, while I continued our researches with the boat, if we could possibly find water sufficient for the purpose. This method of proceeding was contemplated in my original plan on leaving Sydney, when I hoped to reach a navigable stream, where the cattle might refresh for the return journey, until the party, thus enabled to extend its operations by water, might fall back on some such depôt.

Chapter V.

Excursion down the Karaula — Its unexpected course — Formidable insects — Junction of the Gwydir — Owls and Rats — Natives at the camp during my absence — Their attempts to steal — Native dogs — Tents struck to cross — Arrival of Mr. Finch — Murder of his men — Loss of his horses — and seizure of his stores by the natives — Destroy the boat and retire from the Karaula — Forced march to the Gwydir — Numerous tribes surround the party — Good effects of sky-rockets — Funeral dirge by a native female — Dog killed by a snake — Numerous tribes follow — The party regains the plains.

Feb. 2. — I LEFT the camp with six men and four pack-animals, carrying nine days’ rations, and proceeded along the left bank of the newly-discovered river. I found the course much more to the southward than I had expected or wished. The stream separated into branches which re-united, and the channel was, besides, crossed in many places by large trees, reaching from bank to bank. After passing close by several southerly bends, in following a bearing of 20° south of west, I met the river crossing that line at right angles. This was at a distance of 7½ miles from the camp, and near the point where the water broke over a rock of ferruginous sandstone, interspersed with veins of soft white clay. The rock appeared to be stratified, and inclined to the north-east. At 4½ miles further, we again made the river on a bearing of south 10° west, after crossing a small plain, and passing through a scrub of tea-tree (or mimosa). Two miles beyond that part of the river, we crossed the junction of a chain of ponds with it; and in proceeding on a bearing of 30° east of south, we crossed, when about two miles from that junction, another chain of ponds, apparently that on which we had encamped on the 22nd of January.

After riding about four miles beyond these ponds, according to the windings of the river, but chiefly towards the south, we encamped on a high point overlooking the stream, and where the grass was good. We here caught a large cod-perch, this being by far the best of the three kinds hitherto found by us. Latitude observed 29° 12’ 3” S.

Feb. 3. — The course of the river compelled me to travel still further southward, which direction I accordingly pursued for seventeen miles, occasionally taking slight turns southeastward, in order to avoid either the bends of the river, or hollows containing lagoons. One of these, which we arrived at, after travelling about thirteen miles, was a very extensive sheet of water, a pleasing sight to us, still remembering how recently and frequently we had sought that life-sustaining
element in vain. This latter had firm banks, resembling the ancient channel of a river, although the bed was evidently much higher than the water flowing in the channel, we were then exploring; and it was further remarkable, in being contracted at one part by masses of a very hard rock, consisting of grains and small pebbles of quartz, cemented in a hard ferruginous matrix, probably felspar.

At seventeen miles we entered a plain, where grew trees of the acacia pendula, and we traversed it in the most elongated direction or to the south-west. On entering the wood beyond, a sudden, extreme pain in my thigh made me shout, before I was aware of the cause. A large insect had fastened upon me, and on looking back, I perceived Souter, “the Doctor,” defending himself from several insects of the same kind. He told me that I had passed near a tree from which their nest was suspended; and it appeared that this had been sufficient to provoke the attack of these saucy insects, who were provided with the largest stings I had ever seen. The pain I felt was extreme, and the effect so permanent, that when I alighted in the evening, from my horse, on that leg, not thinking of the circumstance, I fell to the ground, the muscles having been generally affected. The wound was marked by a blue circular spot, as large as a sixpence, for several months.

Beyond the wood, a magnificent sheet of water lay before us, and extended like a noble river in a north and south direction. Keeping its eastern bank I traced it southwards, until I reached the termination, or rather an interval, where some rocks occurred in its bed, of the same kind as those last mentioned. The produce of gradual decomposition lay around the rocks, and seemed to prove, that although these masses had been originally denuded by the current which formed the channel, the current had not flowed there for a very considerable time. We encamped between the two lagoons, separated by this interval and these rocks, in latitude 29° 27′ 27″ S.

Feb. 4. — We continued along the bank of the second lagoon, which, turning towards the east, threatened to stop our progress. At length, however, we arrived at the termination of the water, and passing over the soft mud, we proceeded southward to look for the Gwydir, which I knew could not then be far distant. We rode through groves of casuarinæ, and over small plains and burnt flats. In one of the thickets, we saw two small kangaroos, the first observed since our arrival on the banks of this large river. Emus appeared to be numerous, but very wild; pelicans abounded on the lagoons, and seemed to be remarkably tame, considering the remains of them, which we saw at the old fires of the natives. It was obvious on various occasions, however, that the first appearance of such large quadrupeds as bullocks and horses, did not scare the emu, or kangaroo, but that, on the contrary, when they would have run at the first appearance of their enemy, man, when advancing singly, they would allow him to approach mounted, and even to dismount, fire from behind a horse, and load again, without attempting to run off. At length, we perceived that the ground sloped towards the south, and at the distance of about four miles from where we had slept, we made the Gwydir. The course of this river was as tortuous as at our last camp upon it, which could not be distant more than fourteen or fifteen miles. The volume of water was so much
reduced, that in shallows, where alone the current could be perceived, I could step
across it. This stream could not, therefore, contribute much to that I was tracing,
and in search of which I now turned westward. On this course, the windings of the
Gwydir often came in my way, so that I turned to north 25° east, in which
direction, I at length reached the large river, which had been the object of our
excursion. Here it was, indeed, a noble sheet of water, and I regretted much, that
this had not been our first view of it, that we might have realized, at least for a day
or two, all that we had imagined of “the Kindur.” I now overlooked, from a bank
seventy feet high, a river as broad as the Thames at Putney; and on which the
goodly waves, perfectly free from fallen timber, danced in full liberty. A singular
looking diving-bird, carrying only its head above water, gave a novel appearance to
this copious reservoir: and there was a rich alluvial flat on the opposite bank.

I could not, however, perceive much current in these waters, and I traced the
stream downwards, anxious to discover that this breadth and magnitude continued;
but I was undeceived on arriving at a slight fall, where the river was traversed by
another rocky dyke, similar to those seen higher up, and over which it fell in a small
body like that in the rapid, near the camp. Below this fall, the river bore no such
imposing appearance, but assumed that which it wore at the various places, where
we had visited its banks, much higher up the stream. The meandering Gwydir
terminated in this river, a little way below the fall; and I could not perceive any
difference in the appearance of the larger channel below that junction.*

Thus terminated our excursion, to explore this last discovered stream; for there
was no necessity for extending it further, as I could not suppose that it was any
other than the Darling. Into this river we had traced the Gwydir; the junction of the
Nammoy, also, could not be far distant; and even that of the Castlereagh was only
about 70 miles to the south-west, which was the direction of the supposed general
course of the Darling. It was probable, that the streams we had now explored,
formed the chief sources of that river, and that we had connected its channel thus
at an intermediate point, with the basin of all those rivers which had been crossed
by Mr. Cunningham near the coast range above. It, therefore, remained for me only
to return to the party, which had probably, by that time, finished the punt; and
there to cross the river, in order to ascertain, by extending our journey, the nature
of the country forming the northern or north-western side of this extensive basin.

Returning towards the camp with these intentions, we halted to pass the night by
some ponds near the river, having observed the smoke of the natives’ fires in the
immediate vicinity. At this place, many trees bore recent marks of their stone
tomahawks, and the soft banks of the river, were much imprinted with their feet;
nevertheless, to our disappointment, none of the natives appeared; for a sight of
our fellow-men, the inhabitants of these “deserts idle,” had at length become a
subject of considerable curiosity.

Owls were numerous in these desolate regions, and I noticed many varieties. I
observed two in particular, of a very small description, not much larger than a
thrush. It was not unusual to find them half asleep sitting on branches, from which
they seldom stirred, until nearly caught by the men. Rats and mice occurred in many
parts under the surface in small holes, which appeared filled with seeds of grass and plants; and the scarcity of the former in some places seemed partly owing to the provident instinct of these little animals.

Feb. 5. — Proceeding on a bearing of 36° E. of N. we made the line of marked trees, at a distance of about twelve miles from the camp, where Mr. White remained with the party. The weather being excessively hot, and our horses tired, I halted at the ponds, which had formerly enabled the party to quench their two days’ thirst. Some fires of the natives were burning, and three of their dogs, which were very tame, hung about our camp, and would not be driven away.

Feb. 6. — We reached the camp, by nine A. M. and, I learnt, that the natives had visited it, during my absence. Burnett having shot a duck, was swimming for it to the middle of the river, when a party of them suddenly appeared on the high bank, opposite. The white figure in the water, so novel to them, continued nevertheless to swim towards the duck, until he seized it, apparently to their great amusement, and they were afterwards prevailed on to cross the river. They sat down, insisting that our men should sit also; they talked very much, and laughed at many things. They had taken their seats in a place exposed to the sun’s rays; and from this they did not stir until they had by signs expressed their wish to remove, which they then did, under the shade of a tree. At length, they ventured to walk about the tents, and they then insisted on presenting their clubs and wammeras to our men. None of the names, which we had written down from Barber’s statements, seemed at all familiar to their ears; but Mr. White obtained a vocabulary, which shewed that their language was nearly the same as that of the aborigines at Wallamoul; the only difference being the addition of _na_ to each noun, as “_namil_” for “_mil_,” the eye, &c. They were much disposed to steal. Mr. White observed one to purloin a tea-cup from his canteen, and conceal it very cleverly in his kangaroo cloak. Another, notwithstanding the vigilance of our men, had nearly got off with the carpenter’s axe. They looked rather foolish when Mr. White managed to shake his tea-cup from the cloak. The number of our party seemed an object of their attention, and they explained, by pointing in the direction in which I had gone, and by holding up seven fingers, our number, that we had not gone down the river, unobserved by them. They did not appear to be acquainted with the use of bread; but they well understood the purpose of the boat; and when _Callidé_ (the sea) was pronounced to them, they pointed in the direction of Moreton Bay, repeating very frequently the word “Wallingall.” They immediately recognised Whiting, the top-sawyer at the pit, as was obvious by their imitating, as soon as he appeared, the motion of sawing, and pointing at the same time to him. They seemed rather struck with the thickness of his wrists; indeed, they took some interest in comparing their limbs with those of the party. One man had hair and features very different from those of his companions, the hair being parted on the forehead, long, and not curled. A sailor of our party, thought he resembled a Malay. On the discharge of a double barrel, they seemed much terrified, and soon after retired, making signs that they should return, and, by gestures, invited some of the men to cross the river with them. Two tomahawks were presented to them, and one of their number was dressed out with
old clothes. Their name for the river was understood to be “Karaula.” This interview took place on the day, previous to my return to the camp.

The boat was already in the water, and every thing packed up, for the purpose of crossing the river, when Mr. Finch approached the camp, and I hastened to congratulate him on his opportune arrival. But he told a dismal tale — two of his men having been killed, and all the supplies, cattle and equipment, having fallen into the hands of the natives. This catastrophe occurred at the ponds of “Gorolei,” beyond Mount Frazer, which Mr. Finch had reached, after having been distressed, even more than our party had been in the same place, for want of water. This privation had first occasioned the loss of his horse and several other animals, so that his party had been able to convey the supplies to these ponds, by carrying forward from the dry camp, only a portion at a time, on the two remaining bullocks. Mr. Finch at length succeeded in thus lodging all the stores at the ponds, but being unable to move them further without the assistance of my cattle, he left them there, and proceeded forward on foot along our track with one man, in expectation of falling in with my party, at no great distance in advance. After ascertaining that we were not so near as he hoped, and having reached the Gwydir, and traced our route along its banks, until he again recognised Mount Frazer; he returned at the end of the second day, when he found neither his tents nor his men to receive him, but a heap of various articles, such as bags, trunks, harness, tea and sugar canisters, &c. piled over the dead bodies of his men, whose legs he, at length, perceived projecting. The tents had been cut in pieces; tobacco and other articles lay about; and most of the flour had been carried off, although some bags still remained on the cart. The two bullocks continued feeding near. This spectacle must have appeared most appalling to Mr. Finch, uncertain, as he must have been, whether the eyes of the natives were not then upon him, while neither he nor his man, possessed any means of defence! Taking a piece of pork and some flour in a havresack, he hastened from the dismal scene; and by travelling all day, and passing the nights without fire, he most providentially escaped the natives, and, had at length, reached our camp.

Thus terminated my hopes of exploring the country beyond the Karaula, and I could not but feel thankful for the providential circumstance of Mr. Finch’s arrival, at the very moment, I was about to proceed on that undertaking, trusting that I should find, in returning to this depot, the supplies which I expected him to bring. We had now, on the contrary, an additional demand on our much exhausted stock of provisions. The season, when rain might be expected, was approaching, and we had behind us two hundred miles of country subject to inundation, without a hill to which we could in such a case repair. The soil was likely to become impassable after two days rain, and our cart wheels were represented by the carpenters to be almost unserviceable. These considerations, and the hostile disposition of the natives in our rear, not only deterred me from crossing the Karaula, but seemed to require my particular attention to the journey homewards. We had at least accomplished the main object of the expedition, by ascertaining that there was no truth in the bushranger’s report, respecting the great river.
Feb. 7. — The wheels of the carts requiring repair before we could commence our retreat, the carpenters were employed on this work until three P.M. Our boat (emblem of our hopes!) was sunk in the deepest part of the Karaula. The natives were heard approaching during the morning; and crows and hawks, hovering in the air, marked their place in the woods. At length, I perceived them peeping at us from behind trees; but our feelings towards the aborigines were very different then, from what they had been, before we received the news brought by Mr. Finch, however innocent these people might be of the murder of his men. I did not, therefore, invite their approach, and they were too cautious to be intrusive. The wheels being repaired at three P.M. we turned our faces homewards, and exactly at sunset, we reached the ponds, where I had twice previously encamped.

Feb. 8. — In our line of route back to the Gwydir, we knew, by experience, that no water was to be found. The distance to that river from our present camp was twenty-three miles; but I considered it better to cross this dry tract, by a forced march in one day, than to pass a night without water. By this arrangement, we could halt on the river during the day following, to recover and refresh the cattle after so long a journey. We were accordingly in motion at ½ past 5 A.M., and the early part of the morning being rather cool, we got forward very well. After mid-day, the weather was very hot. At four P.M. the bush of one of the wheels became so loose, that the cart fell down, and it was necessary to repair the wheel, before it could proceed. Mr. White undertook this with the aid of some of the men, while I continued the journey with the rest; and it may be imagined how cleverly the work was done, from the fact, that my zealous assistant overtook us with the cart, before we reached the end of the day’s journey.

We perceived smoke arising before us, when we had arrived within six miles of our old encampment on the Gwydir, and soon after, we found the grass burning on both sides of our line of route, which, it should be observed, had been marked by us throughout, on advancing into this country, not only by the wheel tracks in the soft soil, but also by chipping the trees on both sides with an axe. We now found the track of wheels almost obliterated by the prints of naked feet, as if a great number had followed us, or rather Mr. Finch. A long continued cooy was, at length, heard at a distance, apparently the signal of our arrival, and from the confused sounds which followed, and smoke ascending in various places, it was evident, that a numerous tribe was awaiting us. The wearied cattle reached the river, just after the sun had gone down. The crossing place was extremely bad, and the poor cattle had accomplished a wonderful day’s work; nevertheless, I considered it necessary, whatever efforts it might cost us, to encamp on the other side. That bank afforded an admirable position on which I could with safety halt the next day, and guard our cattle within a fine turn of the river; whereas the side on which we were, was particularly exposed to annoyance, if the natives became troublesome; and it did not command any favourable run for the cattle, which might thus have strayed back towards the Karaula. Our lightest cart, which was the first, stuck fast in the bed of the river; the tired bullocks being unable to draw it further. The moon was about five days old, and with the assistance of its light, every thing was carried across by
the men, so that by nine o’clock, we had established our camp where I wished, the empty carts alone remaining on the bank, which we had left. The party had been travelling and working hard without intermission, during 16 hours, some men not having even breakfasted: but the next morning unveiled to them more clearly the advantages gained by these exertions.

Feb. 9. — I was awoken by the shouts of a numerous tribe of natives, and on going out of my tent, I found that they covered the opposite bank to the water’s edge. They stood on our empty carts in scores like so many sparrows, and on every old tree or stump likely to afford them a better view of my camp. But I overlooked them completely, and as they became more and more vehement in their language and gestures, the greater was our satisfaction in being on the right side of the river. What they did say, we could not guess; but by their loud clamour and gestures, all the leading men seemed to be in a most violent passion. One word only they knew of the language spoken by our stockmen, and that was “budgery,” or good; and this I concluded they had learnt at some interview with Dawkins, who used it ever and anon, in addressing them. They were handling everything attached to our empty carts, but some of our men went over to prevent any serious injury being done. All the clamour seemed directed at me, and being apparently invited by signs to cross to them, I went to the water’s edge, curious to know their meaning. They then assumed the attitudes of the corrobory dance, and pointed to the woods behind them. “Come and be merry with us,” was thus plainly enough said, but as their dance is warlike and exciting, being practised by them most, when tribes are about to fight, they must either have thought me very simple; or, as seems most likely, the invitation might be a kind of challenge, which perhaps, even a hostile tribe dared not, in honour, decline, whatever the consequences might be. These natives were the finest looking men of their race which I had seen. The peculiar colour of their bodies, covered with pipe-clay, gave them an appearance of being dressed. They were in number about 100, all men or boys, the strongest carrying spears. None of the words of “the Barber,” seemed at all intelligible to them, but on mentioning the Nammoy, they pointed to the south-west, which I knew was the direction in which that river was nearest to the camp. I recognized the gigantic pipe-clayed man, who had presented his spear at me, when we first reached the Gwydir, much higher up. That he was the man I then met, he clearly explained to me by assuming the same attitude, and pointing eastward to the place. A good deal of laughter, (partly feigned I believe on both sides), seemed to soften the violence of their speech and action; but when I brought down a tomahawk, and was about to present it to the man whom I had formerly met, and who was the first to venture across, their voices arose with tenfold fury. All directed my attention to a dirty-looking old man, who accordingly waded through the water to me, and received my present. Several other stout fellows, soon surrounded us, and with the most overbearing kind of noise, began to make free with my person and pockets. I was about to draw a pistol and fire it in the air, when White, mistaking my intention, observed that their vehemence probably arose from their impatience, at our not understanding them, which I thought very likely. They repeated so incessantly the words “Einèr,”
“Einèr,” that I ran up the bank for my book, remembering to have seen the word, and I then found that “Einèr” meant a gin, or female, as will appear on referring to the vocabulary I obtained at Wallamoul. The translation of this word produced a hearty laugh among our men, and Finch drily observed, that some would then be very serviceable. I was in doubt, whether they meant to inquire, by frequently pointing up to our tents, if we had any, or whether they wished to accommodate us with wives. At length, they rather suddenly drew together on the bank, again making signs of the corrobory dance, beckoning to some of the men to go with them, and expressing their intention to depart, but to return again to sleep there, by saying “Nàngary,” and pointing to the ground. This I understood clearly, and very soon they all disappeared. Fortunately, none ascended the bank to our tents, as it was not desirable they should know our numbers exactly. It did not appear, that they understood the nature and effect of fire-arms. Meanwhile our wheels had been found so frail, that we must have halted here under any circumstances, in order to strengthen them for the tough work they were to encounter. The carpenters, therefore, worked hard at them this forenoon. In thus returning, I gathered for my friend, Mr. Brown, a hortus siccus, of such plants as appeared new to me; the field of research being obviously, at this time, confined to our line of route. As soon as the natives were gone, I set all hands, except the carpenters, to extricate the cart, still in the bed of the river; and it was at length brought up the bank. We next yoked the bullocks to the empty drays and cart on the opposite side, and all were soon brought safely through the river. I preferred doing this work when the natives were absent, because I did not wish them to see the difficulties which the passage of a river occasioned to us.

When the sun was near setting, the voices of our unwelcome visitors were again heard, and they soon appeared gaily painted white for the corrobory; but foreseeing this return I had forbidden the men from looking towards them, and in order to discourage their approaches still more, I directed the Doctor to pace backward and forward, on the bank before our tents, with a firelock on his shoulder, and the calm air of a sentinel, but without noticing the natives opposite. They accordingly also kept back, although one of them crossed to the bullock-driver, who was alone, watching the cattle on our left, and endeavoured to persuade him to go over the river with him. The whole at length disappeared without further parley. Under any other circumstances, I should certainly have been willing to have met their civilities at least half way, but recent events had weakened our confidence in the natives. When night came on, we saw their fires behind the trees, at a little distance from the river, and we also heard their voices — but to complete the effect of our coolness in the evening, which certainly must have puzzled them, considering our kindness in the morning, I sent up a rocket, after which their very fires disappeared, and we heard their voices no more.

Feb. 10. — From this camp, the first day’s journey homeward, along our old track, was parallel to the river; the second left its banks and led in a south-east direction to Rodrigo Ponds, where we had encamped on the 17th of January. On emerging from the wooded margin of the river, this morning, I struck into a new direction,
leaving the natives to believe, that we still followed the beaten track towards our old
camp on the Gwydir; where they would, no doubt, await us that evening, while we
pursued the bearing of 64° E. of S., in hopes to pass a quiet night at Rodrigo
Ponds, thus stealing a march upon them — a manoeuvre which we successfully
accomplished.

After proceeding some miles in the new direction, we found some very bad
swampy ground before us. It was covered with holes brim full of water; and we at
length arrived, where long reeds grew in extensive patches. The inequalities of the
surface owing to these holes, required the nicest care in conducting the carts
between them, but after frequent halts, I was glad to back out of this swamp, and
only regained the firm ground by considerable turnings and windings. We were not
far probably from the Nammoy, in that reedy region, but it might have been very
extensive. On regaining its eastern skirts, I resumed the course pursued in the
morning, and passed through a tract, where the grass and trees were, to a
considerable extent, on fire. At length, however, we recognised the park-like
scenery, which we had formerly crossed; and, with no small pleasure, again we fell
in with our former track, at a distance of about three miles short of our old camp at
Rodrigo Ponds. While I stood near this spot, awaiting the arrival of the party, which
was still at some distance, I overheard a female singing. The notes were pleasing,
and very different from the monotonous strains of the natives in general. Just then,
I had been admiring the calm repose of the surrounding landscape, gilded by the
beams of a splendid setting sun, and anticipating a quiet night for the party. The
soft sounds, so expressive of tranquillity and peace, were in perfect unison with the
scene around. Nothing could have been more romantic, nevertheless I could most
willingly have dispensed with the accompaniment at that time, so associated were all
our ideas of the natives, with murder and pillage. When my men came up, I directed
them to give a “hurra,” in hopes that it would put the party, whoever they might be,
to flight. Yet, after a cheer about as rough as English throats could well utter, the
sweet strain, to my surprise, continued,

“And bade the lovely scenes at distance hall.”

But this was not the song of “hope,” but of despair, at least so it sounded to me
under the circumstances, and so it really proved to be, as I afterwards ascertained.

Men’s voices were also heard, as we proceeded quietly to our old ground, and I
could not help regretting that after having given the natives on the Gwydir the slip,
and seen no others the whole day, we should again find the very spot, on which we
were to pass the night, pre-occupied by natives. Our party set up their tents, and the
song ceased, but I proceeded with Mr. White towards the place whence the voices
came. We there saw several persons amid smoke, and apparently regardless of our
presence; indeed, their apathy, as compared with the active vigilance of the natives
in general, was surprising. A young man continued to beat out a skin against a tree
without caring to look at us, and as they made no advance, we did not go up to
them. Mr. White, on visiting their fires, however, at ten P.M. found that they had
decamped.
All this seemed rather mysterious, until the nature of the song, I had heard, was explained to me afterwards at Sydney, by the bushranger, when I visited him in the hulk on my return. He then imitated the notes, and informed me, that they were sung by females when mourning for the dead; and he added, that on such occasions, it was usual for the relatives of the deceased, to seem inattentive or insensible to whatever people might be doing around them.*

At the time, however, this behaviour of the natives only made us more on our guard, and impressed the men with a sense of the necessity for vigilance, especially during the night, when a watch was set on the cattle, and two men guarded the camp, while all the rest slept with their arms at hand.

This day two of the dogs fell behind, and as the whole were miserably poor, we at first supposed that these had died from exhaustion; but as the weaker of the two came up to us in the evening, it appeared then more probable that the dogs had been detained by the natives, who might be following our track, and that this one had escaped from them.

Feb. 11. — On the march this morning, we lost an excellent little watch-dog, named “Captain,” by the bite of a snake. While the other dogs with the party grew mere skeletons, Captain continued in good case, having fared very well on the rats, mice, bandicoots, &c. which he, under the direction of the Doctor, who shared the prey, had the sagacity to scrape out of the earth. Captain was also a formidable enemy to lizards, et hoc genus omne; but this morning his owner found him engaged with that venomous reptile, known in the colony by the name of deaf-adder, and although compelled instantly to let it go, it was too late, for poor Captain stretched out his legs and expired on the spot, having been already bitten by the poisonous reptile.

We repassed, this day, the place where only I had seen that bush of the interior, the *stenochilus maculatus*. It grew to the height of about four or five feet, and we found the fruit and flower on the same twig. Numerous small birds, with red bills, flew about these bushes, and we found, slightly attached to the tender top-twigs, their tiny nests in great numbers, some containing eggs. No instinctive sagacity, such as we perceive in birds elsewhere, to conceal their nests, was here apparent, nor was it required; but such nests must have fallen an easy prize even to very little boys, had there been any; so that the security these birds enjoyed, seemed truly characteristic of the desert, and absence of birds of prey.

The party arrived at the old camp by Pelican Ponds, early in the day. Here, as the men were growing weak, I found it necessary to restore to them the full allowance of rations, especially as they could no longer derive any support from the hope of making great discoveries, for no travellers could have felt more zealous in the cause, than these poor fellows had done throughout the journey.

Feb. 12. — Our way to the next encampment, was long, and great part of the ground full of holes, and unfavourable for travelling. Indeed, I considered it the worst portion of country, intervening between us and the Liverpool range. This was precisely, where the effect of rainy weather on the soil, was to be most dreaded, and, after having been so long exposed to be cut off in these low levels, from any
higher ground, by floods; the lowering character of the sky, now that we were about to emerge, only rendered me more impatient to see the hills again. We accordingly set off at a very early hour, and after travelling seven miles, we halted for ten minutes to water the cattle at some ponds, where, as the weather was uncommonly warm, the men were also refreshed with some lime-juice mixed with the water. The cattle came on very steadily afterwards, notwithstanding the heat.

The blue summit of Mount Riddell, at length arose above the horizon, and was as welcome as the sight of land, after a long voyage.

When we had proceeded about half-way to the next camp, we discovered that we were followed closely by a numerous tribe of natives. One of our men having dropped behind, fell in with them, and was nearly detained by a fellow who flourished a large iron tomahawk over his head. Another of our party who came in contact with a native, and who requested him by signs to come to me, understood him to express by similar means, his intention to go northward. The main body, however, amounting to one hundred or upwards, continued to move parallel to our route, and in lines of twos and threes. Fortunately, we were approaching the open plains, where I knew we should be comparatively secure from any treacherous assaults, and it was, therefore, probable that they would not follow us so far. We were advancing, however, towards those, who were feasting on my supplies, not far from the base of the mountain cone, which was then our land-mark. The natives there were not unlikely to be formidable enemies, encouraged by their late success; and, with such prospects before us, it was by no means agreeable to be thus followed in rear by others. I was accordingly much inclined to question the intentions of these, if they continued to accompany our party beyond the woods. As we approached the plains, we perceived fire and smoke before us, on the banks of the large lagoon, where we were to encamp, and on an angle of ground where our passage was confined between the lagoon and a narrow muddy channel from the east, we saw seven new but deserted huts, which had been erected on our track, as if to watch our approach. On reaching them we found one large hut in the centre, and the others arranged in a semicircle round it, the whole being of a very substantial construction, and neatly thatched with dry grass and reeds. We arrived at our old ground after a journey of nine hours, which was the time exactly in which we had before traversed the same distance.

Our tents now commanded a view of the open plains between us and the woods, from which we had at length emerged. The bold outline of the Nundawàr range in the opposite direction was a comfortable prospect for us; although we were still to investigate the particulars of the tragedy which had been acted at their base. A very hot wind blew strongly in the afternoon, and I was prepared to advance towards the natives, had they followed us into the plain. Mr. White in the mean time kept a sharp look out; but the natives prudently remained within their woods.

At the lagoon, we again found the beautiful crested pigeon, which seemed peculiar to these parts, as on both occasions we had seen it here, and only in this vicinity. The remarkable tree on which the fruit had been before abundant, bore now, with the exception of a young crop, one solitary specimen; the rest having
been pulled and eaten by the natives, as appeared from the stones which lay about. That single specimen could only be preserved in a drawing; and this I made, as well as a very high hot-wind, and our critical situation with respect to the natives, permitted.

Chapter VI.

Proposed movements — Hot wind — Heavy rains set in — Country impassable for several days — Excursion to the plundered camp of Mr. Finch — Recover the cart and trunks — Bury the bodies — Columns of smoke — Signals of the natives — Courage and humanity of one of the men — Homeward journey continued — Difficult travelling — Civility of the tribe first met — Musquitoes troublesome — Regain the Nammoy — Ascend Mount Warroga — Re-cross the Peel — Conclusion.

WE had arrived at the point, where I considered it necessary to quit our former route, and cross the open country towards the range, that we might thus fall into our old track within a few days’ journey of our last camp on the Nammoy. This direction would cut off ten days’ journey of the route outward, and extended across open plains, where the party would be much more secure than in the woods, at a time when the natives had given us so much cause to be vigilant. But these plains, however favourable, afforded only an accidental advantage, for had the situations of wood and plain been reversed, we must still have endeavoured to penetrate by the route, which was the most direct.

Feb. 13. — Keeping the lagoon on our right, we travelled, as its winding shores permitted, towards the hills, and we thus made a good journey of ten miles, in the direction of Mount Frazer. In our way, we crossed a chain of ponds which entered the lagoon from the east, and was doubtless a branch from some of the channels, crossed by us in our outward journey; but it was difficult to say which, from the winding course and number, of those which thus intersect the country.

When we had proceeded a few miles, a loud cooy was heard from the banks of the lagoon, and on perceiving smoke ascending also, I rode across to ascertain what natives were there; but although I found newly-burnt grass and a tree still on fire, also many trees from which the bark had been newly stripped, I could discover no inhabitants.

These ponds coming from the eastward, at length lay in our way so much, that it was necessary to cross them; and having effected this at a dry part of the hollow channel, we encamped on the banks, as it was unlikely that any water might be found beyond, for some distance. It now appeared very probable, from their general direction, that these were a continuation of Bombelli’s Ponds, named after my unfortunate courier whose bones still lay there. That point, our present camp, and Meadow Ponds, where I intended to strike again into our former track, formed an equilateral triangle, the length of each side being about twenty-two miles. I could, therefore, during the next twenty-two miles of our route, make an excursion to the scene of pillage from any point, which might be most convenient. I preferred
the earliest opportunity, in hopes of surprising the natives; and I accordingly prepared to set out the next morning, accompanied by Mr. Finch and seven men on horseback, leaving Mr. White with eight men, equally well armed, to guard the camp. By this arrangement, the bullocks which had been rather hard wrought, would enjoy a day’s rest. I availed myself of every precaution, as far as prudence could suggest, in selecting a position for our camp, and arranging the carts for defence. A better one against surprise, could not have been found, as it overlooked an open country for several miles on all sides.

A hot wind, which had blown during the day from the south, brought a very gloomy sky in the evening, when the wind veered to the south-east. The sun set amid clouds of a very uncommon appearance, too plainly indicating, that the rain was at length coming. We had now, however, left those low levels and dense scrubs, where the natives began to hang about us like hungry wolves; and I could not reflect on what might have been the consequence, had we been delayed only one week longer there, without feeling grateful for our providential escape. It was obvious, that had we got fast in the mud, or been hemmed in by inundations, we might have been harassed on one side by the natives of the Gwydir, and on the other by the plunderers of Mr. Finch’s party, until we shared a similar fate. We had now, fortunately, arrived within sight of the hills, the country around us was open, and with these advantages, the nature of our position was so different, that I could occupy the country, divide my party, visit the camp of Mr. Finch, and recover what we could from that scene of plunder.

Feb. 14. — This morning, it rained heavily, and the dark sky promised no better weather during the day. I, therefore, gave up at once my intention of dividing the party here, and moved the whole forward at an early hour, being desirous to push the carts as near the hills as possible, before the plains became too soft; and with this view I deferred my intended visit to the plundered camp, until after the termination of another day’s journey. The soil, as from experience we had reason to expect, had become very soft, and the rain pouring in torrents, it became so, more and more. The wheels, however, did go round, and the party followed me over a plain, which scarcely supported even a tuft of grass, on which I could fix my eye in steering by compass, through the heavy rain. At length I distinguished half a dozen trees, towards which we toiled for several hours, and which grew, as we found, when we at length got to them, beside a pond of water; the only one to be seen on these plains. There was also some grass beside it, and we encamped on its bank, placing the carts in a line at right angles to the trees, thus taking possession of all the cover from an attack that could be found. We had travelled eight miles over the open plain in a straight line, and considering the state of the earth, I was surprised that the cattle had made any progress through it. When the clouds drew up a little, I was not sorry to discover that the plain was clear of wood to a considerable distance on all sides, nor to recognize some of the hills over-looking our old route. According to the bearings of several of these, I found that the plundered camp was only seventeen miles distant; and as the ground was so soft that we could not move farther with the carts, until fair weather had again rendered it passable, I resolved to
halt the party here, until after my intended excursion to Bombelli’s Ponds.

Feb. 15. — The rain continued but not without some intermission. At one time
the wind came from the north, and in the evening the moon made her appearance
amid fleecy clouds, which raised our hopes.

Feb. 16. — The rain poured from a sky that might have alarmed Noah. The
ground became a sea of mud; even within our tents we sank to the knees, no one
could move about with shoes — the men accordingly waded bare-footed. The
water in the pond was also converted into mud. Ground crickets of an undescribed
species — which perhaps may be called *Gryllotalpa Australis* — came out of the
earth in great numbers.

At three P. M. the blue sky appeared in the west, and the nimbus clouds subsided.
Towards night the wind died away, and the full moon rising in a most serene sky,
encouraged us once more to indulge in the hope of getting home.

Feb. 17. — A beautiful clear morning, but this was nevertheless a *dies non* to us,
owing to the impassable state of the surface of the earth. An emu came very near
our tents, and by carrying a bush *a la* “Birnam” we got several shots, without,
however, having the good fortune to hit it. We had the satisfaction to find that the
ground was drying very fast. In the evening the mountains to the eastward were
seen clearly, for the first time. They appeared to be very rocky and steep, much
resembling the outline of Teneriffe or Madeira; and no trees appeared on the
highest pinnacles.

Feb. 18. — The weather continuing fine, it was now in my power to visit the
unfortunate camp of Mr. Finch. Leaving Mr. White, therefore, in charge of ours, I
proceeded this morning towards that spot, accompanied by Mr. Finch, and a party
mounted on pack-horses. We pursued a direct line, traversing every scrub in the
way, in expectation of surprising some of the natives. After riding six miles, we
passed one of their encampments, where they appeared to have recently been, as
the fire was still burning. In the scrubs we saw several flocks of kangaroos, eight or
ten in each; and on the plains, we this day saw a greater number of emus than we
had before fallen in with during the whole journey.

Reaching, at length, the open plains beyond Brush Hill, I once more traced the
line of that water-course, which may truly be said to have saved our lives, when we
first providentially fell in with it, just as the men were beginning to sink, overcome
by extreme and long-continued thirst. To us, it had afforded then the happiest of
camps, after such a deliverance; and now, we were to witness in the same spot, a
scene of death. Having struck into the old track of the carts as we approached the
place, we found the pistol of Bombelli within a foot of the track. This was
surprising; for although Mr. Finch had informed me, that Bombelli lost it in the
grass, after adjusting some harness, (a fatal loss, poor fellow, to him), it is seldom
that any article so dropped, escapes the quick-sighted natives, to whom the surface
of the earth is, in fact, as legible as a newspaper, so accustomed are they to read in
any traces left thereon, the events of the day. For the lost pistol, Burnett, who had
charge of the arms, carefully sought, as he felt a commendable and soldier-like
desire, to carry back to Sydney, in good order, our full complement of fire-arms.
A lonely cart, and two dead bodies covered by the remains of Mr. Finch's equipment, now marked the spot, where we had formerly encamped. The two bullocks were no longer to be seen. The natives had revisited the spot, since Mr. Finch last quitted it, and had carried off the remainder of the flour, and great part of the canvass of the tent. The bodies were covered by a pile of various articles, such as saddles, bows and yokes, harness, pack-saddles, trunks, canisters, &c. The savages appeared to have been ignorant of the use of sugar, tea, and tobacco, articles which the aborigines nearer to our colony prefer to all other things. A large canister of tea had been emptied on the ground, a similar canister, more than half full of sugar, lay on its side, so that its contents were still good, the lids of both canisters having been carried off. The whole stock of tobacco lay scattered about the ground, and destroyed by the late rains. A spade, a steel-yard, and a hammer were left; although iron had been so desirable, that one of the iron pins of the cart was carried away. The two hair trunks belonging to Mr. Finch, and which contained his clothes, papers, &c. remained on the heap, uninjured and unopened, while the truly savage plunderers had carried off, apparently as stuff for clothing, the canvass of the tent. From these circumstances it was obvious that the murderers were quite unacquainted with the colonists or their habits.

The bodies were now in the most offensive state of putrefaction, and already so much decayed, that we could not even distinguish the persons, except by the smaller frame of Bombelli. The body of the bullock-driver lay under the cart, where he had been accustomed to sleep; that of Bombelli about four feet from it. No dress appeared to have been on either, besides the shirts, and one side of each skull was so shattered, that fragments lay about on removing the remains into a grave. It seemed most probable, that the natives had stolen upon them when asleep.

I ought to state here, that Mr. Finch, on first leaving the settled districts, had five men, two of whom, having behaved ill, he had been obliged to send back to the colony.

Having interred the bodies, we loaded the cart with such articles as still remained serviceable, and yoking it to three of the horses which the men had brought, we returned towards the camp. By the smoke, which arose from various parts we perceived that the aborigines were watching our proceedings, and I considered it desirable, under all circumstances, to return to the camp that night, although the distance was seventeen miles.

On approaching these remains of Mr. Finch's party, in the morning, I had proceeded under cover of the scrubs, that the natives might be as little as possible aware of our movement or intentions. We now returned towards our camp along the original track, as being a direction not only more favourable for the cart, but more expeditious; for as the route was already marked, no further care respecting the line was necessary, and I could thus devote my whole attention to the natives, who were about. When we reached the head of the highest slope, near the place whence I first saw these ponds, a dense column of smoke ascended from Mount Frazer, and, subsequently, other smokes arose, extending in telegraphic line far to the south, along the base of the mountains; and thus communicating to the natives,
who might be upon our route homewards, the tidings of our return. These signals were distinctly seen by Mr. White at the camp, as well as by us.

The sun set soon after we passed Mount Frazer, but, fortunately, not until the woods no longer intervened between us and the camp. On that naked horizon, we might hope at length to see our fires, although they were then nine miles distant, and I knew the bearing sufficiently well to be able to travel by compass nearly in their direction. A few bushes on the outline of the horizon were long useful, as precluding the necessity for repeated references to the compass, but a dark cloud arose beyond and obscured the western horizon. Just then a good old pack-horse, named Rattler, knocked up, and I reluctantly gave orders to leave him behind, when Whiting, the old guardsman, volunteered to remain with him, and bring him on after he had rested: this in the face of both hunger and danger, I duly appreciated, and long remembered, to his advantage. We soon after came upon some surface water, and refreshed the tired animals. Precisely at eight o’clock, as I had arranged with Mr. White, a rocket ascended from the camp, and to us was just perceptible, like a needle in the remote distance. That little column of fire, however, was enough to assure the fatigued men; and it enabled me to mark two stars in the same direction, which guided me on towards the camp. At length we could distinguish the large fires made there for the same purpose; and by ten o’clock we had terminated the arduous labours of the day, and I had the satisfaction to find, that the party under Mr. White had remained undisturbed. Two more rockets were afterwards sent up for the guidance of Whiting, and a huge fire was also kept burning, until, at three A. M. the old soldier arrived safe, bringing up the old horse, which, after resting a while, and drinking at the water, (found by Whiting as well as by us) had come on tolerably well.

Feb. 19. — Notwithstanding the fatigues undergone by a portion of the party, we were all glad to quit the muddy camp this morning; and we continued to travel towards the old route, on the same bearing by which we had approached it. The ground was still soft, rendering the draught heavy, and our homeward progress was accordingly very slow. At length, however, we reached the ponds, which we recognized as the same we had formerly crossed about a mile and a half more to the eastward, and I now named them Welcome Ponds. To these salutary waters Mr. Finch had fallen back, when unable to find any at Mount Frazer. We this day traversed an open plain, extending the whole way between the two camps. I observed, as we proceeded, a hill to the southward, the summit of which was equally clear of timber as the plains, above which its height was 80 or 100 feet. The sides were grassy and smooth. I named it Mount Mud, in commemoration of the difficulties with which we had contended in its neighbourhood. Welcome Ponds, on which we now encamped, had been converted by the late rain into a running brook. The slopes of the ground on its banks were so anomalous, that but for the actual current of the water to the westward, and the situation of the hills on the eastward, whence alone it could come, I must have remained in doubt as to the direction of the fall of the waters in that channel. The banks of these water-courses on the plains, as I have elsewhere observed, are the highest parts of the ground.
This higher ground appeared here to rise towards the west, along the banks of the brook, which, flowing also westward, seemed to run up hill. The soil was mixed with pebbles of vesicular trap, probably amygdaloid with the kernels decomposed, and containing particles of olivine. There were also pebbles of a quartzose conglomerate, and others of decomposed porphyry, the base consisting of granular felspar, with crystals of common felspar. It is not improbable that good millstones might be obtained from the range of Nundawar. The grass was, fortunately, much better here than at the last camp.

Feb. 20. — During the night a heavy thunder-storm broke over us, and was accompanied by so much rain, that the ground was too soft in the morning for us to proceed. I accordingly halted till one o’clock. We then succeeded in crossing the brook, immediately above our encampment, and continued, first southward to avoid a scrub, and then almost east. On a portion of open ground, the progress of the party was slow enough, but in an open kind of scrub, where I hoped to have got on better, the ground proved to be still less favourable, for water lay in hollows, which at any season might have been soft, and were then impassable. The cattle at length could draw no longer, the carts sinking to the axles; by attaching a double team, however, and drawing each cart successively forward to our intended camp, we effected the transit of the whole by sunset, and fixed our home for the night on a hard bank of gravel, beside Meadow Ponds, and to my no small satisfaction, on the line of our former track. We had travelled five miles only, but to hit this point, which was exactly at an angle of that route, was a desideratum with me, and we had now before us a line of marked trees leading homewards, and relieving me from all further anxiety as to the line to be pursued.

The ponds were now united by a stream of beautifully clear water, and were so far different from those we had left that morning, in which the water had a clayey or muddy colour. During this day’s journey we killed a snake, measuring seven feet in length, and eight inches in diameter; and the fat of this reptile was considered a useful addition to a dish at dinner. In the water-course we found pebbles, similar to those at the last camp.

Feb. 21. — Proceeding at an early hour, we now traversed, with satisfaction, the scrub through which, during very hot weather, we had formerly been obliged to cut our way. The ground beyond it was soft, and the labour distressing to our jaded cattle. About three P.M. we encamped on a rising ground, where some water, which had fallen during the late rains, had lodged in hollows, in sufficient abundance to satisfy our wants. In respect to this essential article, indeed, the late rains had supplied enough, to leave me more at liberty in the choice of camps. From the site selected here, the view of the mountains to the eastward was rather fine, especially as the ground sloped towards them. Behind us on the west was a dense scrub; not the most pleasant of neighbours, when savage natives were about.

Feb. 22. — We traversed without much difficulty the plains where we had, on our advance, halted to make certain repairs; and we next entered the scrub, where I had presented the tomahawk to the young native, as a reward for the confidence with which he had approached us, when the rest of his tribe fell back. We had not
advanced far beyond the scene of that interview, when I perceived a number of natives, running before me along our line of route. I hastened after them, when I perceived several men advancing to meet me. They halted in a rather formal manner at some distance, and I next came upon their spears, which, with a stone hatchet, had been laid across our track. There, I alighted from my horse, and proceeded slowly towards them on foot, inviting them as well as I could to come forward, and which they accordingly did. Three men met me at half-way. One of these seemed rather old, another was very stout and fat, and the third had an intelligent countenance and thin person, but was so thickly covered with the most raised sort of scarifications, that I was half inclined to think, that the slightness of his frame might be partly owing to the lacerations, which covered it. Other members of the tribe soon joined us, and as the carts by this time had arrived at the spears on the ground, I took one up and explained to the natives, that the wheels passing over would break them; still these strange people would not remove them, and I concluded, that this prostration of their weapons, was intended to make us acquainted with their friendly disposition towards us. They began to call loudly to their gins, who stood assembled under a large tree at some distance, and we plainly understood the invitation of the men to visit these females. But our party was much more disposed to fight than make love; and I have little doubt that by throwing a single spear the natives would have pleased them more, than by all the civility they were evidently anxious to shew us; so desirous were they, at that time, to avenge the late murders — when even the odour of corruption still hung like a pestilence about the articles, recovered from the plundered camp. The natives, however, perhaps out of pure cordiality, in return for our former disinterested kindness, persisted in their endeavours to introduce us very particularly to their women. They ordered them to come up, divested of their cloaks and bags, and placed them before us. Most of the men appeared to possess two, the pair in general consisting of a fat plump gin, and one much younger. Each man placed himself before his gins, and bowing forward with a shrug, the hands and arms being thrown back pointing to each gin, as if to say — Take which you please. The females on their part, evinced no apprehensions, but seemed to regard us, beings of a race so different, without the slightest indication of either fear, aversion, or surprise. Their looks were rather expressive of a ready acquiescence in the proffered kindness of the men, and when at length they brought a sable nymph vis a vis to Mr. White, I could preserve my gravity no longer, and throwing the spears aside, I ordered the bullock-drivers to proceed. I endeavoured to explain by gestures, that two of our party had been killed by their countrymen, and pointed to the place, so that, as Mr. White thought, they understood me. On seeing the party again in motion, most of the natives disappeared, one or two only lingered behind trees, and it then occurred to me, to offer them a small iron tomahawk in exchange for that of stone, which lay beside the spears. I therefore sent Dawkins to them, to make a bargain if he could, but on going back he saw most of the natives running off with spears in their hands, and could not make his object understood by those who remained. The earth, in this part of our old track, had become very soft, and although the surface
undulated, it possessed a peculiar rottenness, so that where the upper crust bore me on horse-back, the carts would suddenly sink to the axle. The horses at length began also to sink through the surface crust, and we were approaching a hollow which appeared likely to be still worse, when our wheel-carriages at length got quite fast, and then, recollecting some gestures of the natives, I understood their meaning. They had pointed forward along the way we were pursuing, holding the hands as high as the breast, as if to show how deep; and then to the eastward, as if to say — that direction would be better. We were now forced to retrace our steps, and in following the course indicated by the natives, we made a slight detour, and travelled over hard ground into our old track again. This useful information given so kindly by these natives, convinced me that no treachery was intended, although among the men, who had so recently buried their comrades, I believe a different opinion prevailed.

No other impediment obstructed our progress through these woods, which consisted of the iron-bark species of eucalyptus, and we soon emerged on the plains, where the surface being composed of clay, was found much the best for travelling upon at that season, and altogether free from that rottenness, which in some parts of the forest, had this day so greatly impeded the party. We encamped on the ground, which we had formerly occupied at Lobster Pond.

During this and the two preceding days, the party was tormented by a very large species of musquitoes, which had not been previously seen on this journey. They were most troublesome when the morning was growing warm. Their colour was grey, and they had thin black parallel stripes on the back. We met these tormenting insects, on first entering the woods from the plains. During the drought, a smaller species had been troublesome at night, as I had frequently experienced, when obliged to sit, sextant in hand, awaiting the passage of stars near the meridian. I found that the burning a little bullock dung in my tent, cleared it of all musquitoes for the night.

Feb. 23. — This morning we were early en route, in hopes to reach the Nammoy. I took care to find again the tree which bore the yellow flowers; as it certainly was rare, being the only one of the description seen throughout the journey. Now, however, the flowers had given place to young fruit, which were of the size of an acorn, and grew on a long hooked stalk.

In crossing the low ridge, which separates the plains from the Nammoy, we again toiled through very soft ground. It occurred chiefly on the sides of slopes, and in the midst of forests of eucalypti, where I should have expected the hardest kind of surface. We made the Nammoy, however, in good time; this being the first of our former stages, which we had been able to accomplish in one day, since the wet weather commenced. The late rains had produced no change in the waters of this river; a circumstance shewing, perhaps, that less had fallen in the south-east than on the plains where we had been.

None of the kind of fish, that we most prized (Gristes Peelii), could now be caught in this river, though abundance of that which the men commonly called bream (cernua bidyana), a very coarse but firm fish, which makes a groaning noise when
taken out of the water; and here it may be observed, that the colour of the cod or Peel’s perch was lighter, and that of the Eel-fish (*Tandanus*), darker, in the Karaula, than in any other river.

Feb. 24. — A fine cool morning. I attempted to cut off a slight detour in our old track, by travelling nearer to the course of the Nammoy; but a soft and swampy flat soon compelled me to seek the former wheel-marks, and even to proceed still nearer to the base of the hills, for the sake of hard ground. We next travelled westward of our line, thus crossing an excellent tract of country; and without further impediment, we arrived on Maule’s creek, which we crossed with all our carts and equipment to encamp on the left bank. The limpid stream was not much, if at all augmented.

From this side of the country, now that smoke no longer obscured the horizon, the outline of the great range was very bold, a lofty and very prominent pyramid crowning the most elevated south-western extremity, and forming as important a point for the survey of the country to the southwest, as Mount Riddell presents for that towards the northwest. This point I named Mount Forbes, after my friend Capt. Forbes, 39th Regiment, then commanding the mounted police in New South Wales. That great range presents three principal heads, of which Mounts Riddell and Forbes are the northern and southern, the central or highest being Mount Lindesay.

Feb. 25. — The party moved to the former encampment at Bullabalakit. In passing near the place, where we set up our tents, on quitting the canvass boats, I sought my buried specimens of rocks, and found, that for once, I had been able to hide, so that the natives could not find. The treasure however consisted only of stones. My notes addressed to Mr. Finch, which I had hidden in trees as we advanced, never escaped their notice, neither had the provisions left for the use of my unfortunate courier Bombelli, at the camp we now again occupied, been suffered to remain, where we had cautiously buried them. All the planks of sawn timber left at our old saw-pit, had been collected in a heap, and partly burnt.

From the hill over the camp, the view of the horizon was at length unobscured by smoke, and I found it possible to connect the distant points of the Nundawàr range, with those then between us and the colony. Many hills, which I had not before seen to the eastward, were also visible. A heavy thunder shower fell in the afternoon, and it was accompanied by a violent gale of wind, which blew down Mr. White’s tent, and very materially injured mine.

Feb. 26. — The party continued towards that portion of the Nammoy at which we first arrived, on advancing into those desolate regions, and we passed our old encampment beside the barber’s stock-yard near Tangulda. After travelling about eight miles we met Mr. Brown of Wallamoul and his stockman on horseback. They had followed our track thus far, on the information, they had received from the native, “Mr. Brown,” and were proceeding to examine the barber’s stock-yard. They informed us, that our native guide confessed to them, that his dread of the savage natives had induced him to return.

The men caught several large “cod” (Peel’s perch), one of which weighed 13
Feb. 27. — As we continued our homeward journey, Mr. Brown overtook us. He had found various brands of his cattle, on portions of hide about the stock-yard. He assured me, I should find no water at my old encampment, where I intended again to halt, for that he had passed the previous night there without water. I, however, had the satisfaction to find as much as ever on the rocky bed of the water-course, where it is not so liable to be absorbed. Having arrived early at this spot, I again ascended the range, and proceeded along its crests to one of the highest summits, named Wárroga. From this point, I could at length recognize Mount Murulla, Oxley’s Pic, Moan, and other pinnacles of the Liverpool range, and with which, I now connected my last station upon the Nammy. From Ydíre, a hill nearer the camp, I also obtained, in returning, some observations, and one angle of great value with Mount Forbes, much required, for the purpose of mapping the country we had explored. On the side of Wárroga, we saw a very large black wallaroo, which sat looking at us with apparent curiosity.

Scurvy now began to affect the party. We endeavoured to counteract the progress of this disease by plentiful issues of lime juice, and some portable, vegetable soups, but of the latter we had but a very small supply. Dysentery did not alarm us much, for the Doctor generally set the patients to rights in eight and forty hours, with something he found in the medicine chest.

Feb. 28. — The morning was fine,* when we again saw the plains of Múllaba, on passing through the gorge under Mount Ydíre. As we travelled across the plains, on which the young verdure, first offspring of the late rain, already began to shoot — four emus were observed quietly feeding at no great distance, apparently heedless of our party. I approached them with my rifle, on a steady old horse, and found that this large quadruped, however strange a sight, did not in the least alarm those gigantic birds, even when I rode close up. I alighted, levelled my rifle over the saddle and fired, but missed, as I presumed, for the bird merely performed a sort of pirouette, and then recommenced feeding with the others as before. I had no means of reloading without returning to the party, but I was content with discovering that these birds might be thus approached on horseback — for in general the first appearance of men, although miles distant, puts them at once to their speed, which, on soft loose earth, perhaps surpasses that of a horse.

The ford of Wallanburra was now our only separation from the christian world. That once passed, we might joyfully bid adieu to pestilence and famine, the lurking savage, and every peril of “flood and field.” Under the sense of perfect security once more, and relieved from the anxiety inseparable from such a charge, every object within the territory of civilized man, appeared to me tinged couleur de rose.

The Peel was crossed without difficulty, and on the following morning, leaving the party in charge of Mr. White, I commenced my ride homeward through the woods, followed only by my man Brown; and on reaching Segenhoe, I forwarded to the Government, my official despatch, announcing the return of the party, and the result of the expedition.

On my arrival at Sydney, I learnt, that the life of the convict Clarke had been
spared, and that my report of the course of the Peel and the Nammoy coinciding, as notified in my first despatch, with his description of these rivers, had encouraged the Government to place more confidence in his story. It was now obvious, however, that the account of his travels beyond Tangulda — was little else than pure invention. I examined him in the hulk at Sydney, in the presence of the acting Governor, and was quite satisfied, that he had never been beyond the Nundawàr range. Nevertheless he persisted in his story of the river, and a party of mounted police, commanded by Captain Forbes of the 39th regiment, repaired to the Nammoy, in search of a gang of bushrangers, but not without hopes of finding “the Kindur.”

That active and enterprising officer reached the Gwydir in lat. 29° 27' 37" S., long. 150° 5' E. Tracing upwards, its course, or a branch of this river, he arrived near the western extremity of the Nundawàr range, and ascended the hill named by him Mount Albuera. Being accompanied by a native of Bathurst, he ascertained that the aboriginal name of the singular looking hill, forming the western extremity of that range, was “Courada,” (the name of the Barber’s “burning mountain,”) and his plains of “Ballyran” were found to be those crossed by my party, in returning from Snodgrass Lagoon.

*Couràda from the Plains.*

This journey of discovery proved, that any large river flowing to the north-west, must be far to the northward of latitude 29°. All the rivers south of that parallel, and which had been described by the Barber as falling into such a river as “the Kindur,” have been ascertained to belong wholly to the basin of the Darling.

The country we traversed was very eligible in many parts, for the formation of grazing establishments — as a proof of which it may be mentioned, that flocks of sheep soon covered the plains of Mùlluba, and that the country around the Barber’s stock-yard, has ever since the return of the expedition, been occupied by the cattle of Sir John Jamieson. At a still greater distance from the settled districts, much valuable land will be found around the base of the Nundawàr range. The region beyond these mountains, or between them and the Gwydir, is beautiful; and in the vicinity, or within sight, of the high land, it is sufficiently well watered to become an important addition to the pastoral capabilities of New South Wales.

*Meteorological Journal kept during the Expedition to the North-West, commenced on crossing Liverpool Range, 1831.*

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<th>DATE</th>
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<td>S.E. Overcast. Overcast.</td>
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<td>— 26</td>
<td>W.S.W.</td>
<td>S.W. Cirrus above Cumulostratus.</td>
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<td>— 28</td>
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<td>Light E.S.E. Clear.</td>
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<td>— 29</td>
<td>N.N.W.</td>
<td>S.W. — Cirrus.</td>
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<td>— 30</td>
<td>N.E.</td>
<td>N.N.E. Cirro cumulus.</td>
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<td>N.N.E.</td>
<td>E.N.E. Clear. Cumulus.</td>
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<td>E.S.E. Cumulus.</td>
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<td>N.E.</td>
<td>N.E. Clear. Clear.</td>
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<td>Light N.E. Airs.</td>
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<td>S.E. — Clear.</td>
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<td>Cirrus.</td>
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<td>Cirrus above cumulus.</td>
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<td>Cumulus.</td>
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<td>Light S.W.</td>
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<td>Cirrus.</td>
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<td>Calm.</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td>Cirrus above cumulus.</td>
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<td>Light N.E.</td>
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<td>— 28.</td>
<td>South.</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td>Cirrus above cumulus.</td>
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<td>— 29.</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>N.N.W.</td>
<td>Overcast.</td>
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* Pirates.

* Originally Snodgrass Valley — but “Vox populi vox Dei.” The present name is shorter, and has the additional merit of being descriptive — for the valley contains but little grass.
* On my return from the interior in 1835, I learnt with much regret, that a war had commenced between my old friends and the mounted police.

* These shells having been submitted to Mr. James De Carl Sowerby, I am indebted to that gentleman for the following description. Class Conchifera. Order, Dimyaria. Genus, Megadesmus. Valves equal, inequilateral, thick, their edges even; umbones nearly central; hinge sunk, with an antiquated area and one? or two? large teeth in each valve; ligament external, large; impressions of the abductor muscles strong, nearly equal, united by the impression of the mantle, at the posterior extremity of which is a small shallow sinus; no lunette. A genus of heavy shells in some respects resembling *Astarte*, in others especially in having a striated area within the beaks, *Hippopodium*, from which it is distinguished by the position of the umbones and the presence of a thick tooth in the hinge. There appear to be four species, which may be named *Megadesmus globosus* (Pl. II. page 14.) *M. levis* (fig. 1.) *M. antiquatus* (fig. 2.) and *M. cuneatus* (fig. 3. Pl. III. page 15.) the *cuneatus* differs from *antiquatus*, only in having the shell a little contracted towards the anterior side. The large shell (Pl. IV. page 16. fig. 1 and 2.) is near to *Isocardia*, but Mr. S. would not venture to say it belongs to that genus. The *Trochus* (Pl. IV. fig. 3 and 4.) may be called *T. Oculus*.

* The fossil vegetation seems to consist chiefly of the *Glossopteris Brownii*, (of Brongniart) a fern which occurs in a stratum of *ironstone* at Newcastle, and in one of the same mineral on the southern coast, also in *sandstone* in the valley of the Hunter, and abundantly in the *shale* near the coal wrought at Newcastle.

* They understand our looks better than our speech.

* Vol. 4, part I. Second Series — Geological Transactions, Professor Buckland and Mr. De la Beche on the Geology of the neighbourhood of Weymouth.

† The porphyry of a hill three miles south of Wingen, consists of a base of reddish brown compact felspar, with embedded crystals of common felspar and disseminated carbonate of lime.

* His wife, whom the natives had told me of as “a white gin,” was perhaps the only white woman then dwelling beyond the mountains. She was enveloped in numerous flannel petticoats, and presented a singular contrast to the undraped slender native females, some of whom with children I saw about the place, and who appeared to be treated by her with great kindness.

† A small axe used for numerous purposes by the natives of Australia.

* Even before my men had seen this spot, the native name, in their mouths, was corrupted into “*Terrible Billy*!”
* Also a striated shell (pl. 4. fig. 5.) near to *Buccinum globulare* of Phillips, Vol. 2nd, 16 and 15; but Mr. Sowerby thinks it is different, and more probably a *Littorina*, and would call it *L. filosa*.

* For a description of this fish, see note to ch. 5. page 95.

* *Calostemma candidum*, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis . . . tubo perianthii limbo multo breviore, coronã truncatã dentibus sterilibus nullis, umbellis densis, pedicellis articulatis exterioribus multo longioribus.

* A species of *astacus*, which, as far as I am aware, comes very close to the common European cray-fish.

* See the Journal of my next Journey, Chap. viii. page 313.

* Meaning; Why are you afraid of a good white man? The white man is the black man’s brother.

* “A forest” means in New South Wales, an open wood, with grass. The common “bush” or “scrub” consists of trees and saplings, where little grass is to be found.

* *Hibiscus (Trionum) tridactylites*, (Lindl. MS.); annuus, pilosus, foliis radicalibus subrotundis integerrimis caulinis digitatis; lacinii pinnatifidis lobis distantibus cuneatis apice dentatis, calyce piloso.

* “Why are you afraid of a good white man?” &c.

* The natives’ mode of hailing each other, when at a distance in the woods. It is so much more convenient than our own holla, or halloo, that it is universally adopted by the colonists of New South Wales.

* An undescribed species of *Cancriform Espeira*, belonging to the subgenus *Gasteracantha* of M. Hahn.

* Family, PERCIDÆ; Genus, ACERINA; Subgenus, CERNUA, Flem. or RUFFE; Species, CERNUA *Bidyanâ mihi*, or Bidyan RUFFE. — Colour, brownish yellow, with the belly silvery white. The three middle pectoral rays are branched. The dorsals confluent. The first dorsal fin has 11 spines, the ventrals having 1+6 rays, and the anals 3+6. (See Plate 9.) OBS. — *Bidyan* is the aboriginal name.

† Family, PERCIDÆ; Genus, ACERINA; Subgenus, GRISTES, Cuv. or GROWLER; Species,
GRISTES Peelli *mihi*, or COD-PERCH. — Colour, light yellow, covered with small irregular dusky spots, which get more confluent towards the back. Throat pinkish, and belly silvery white. Scales small, and concealed in a thick epidermis. Fins obscure. The dorsals confluent. The first dorsal has 11 spines, and the caudal fin is convex. (Plate 6. fig. 1. page 44.) OBS. — This fish may be identical with the fish described by M. M. Cuvier and Valenciennes, Vol. 3. p. 45, under the name of “Gristes Macquariensis” but it differs from their description in not having the edge of the second dorsal and anal white; and besides, is in many respects very different from the figure given by M. Guerin of the Gristes Macquariensis in the Iconographie du Regne Animal.

♀ Family, SILURIDÆ, Cuv.; Genus, PLOTOSUS, *Lacepède*, or EEL-FISH; Subgenus, TANDANUS *mihi*; Species, PLOTOSUS Tândanus *mihi*, or Tândan EEL-FISH. — Colour, silvery. The dorsal fin placed half way between the pectoral and ventral has six rays, of which the middle two are the longest. (Plate 6. fig. 2. page 44.) OBS. — This is an Asiatic form of fish; whereas the Gristes is an American form. Tândan, is the aboriginal name.

* Genus, VESPA; subgenus, ABISPA; species, *Abispa Australiana* (*mihi*). Head, antennæ, and feet yellow; eyes black; the scutellum of prothorax yellow; the scutum of mesothorax black, with the scutellum yellow; the scutum of metathorax yellow, with the scutellum black, and the axillæ yellow. The wings yellow, with dusky tips. The first segment of abdomen has the petiole black. The second segment is black, and the rest yellow.

* The situation of this junction, afforded a curious illustration of the principle which guided me in choosing my route from the great Nammoy Lagoon on the 14th of January. Having been then between two rivers (at A), I chose the bearing of 20° west of north, as given by the bearing of the high land (B) in the opposite direction, and this junction (C) was now found to be exactly in that line. That high land was a projecting point of a range; the course of rivers is conformable to the angles of such ranges, and, therefore, the rivers on each side of me (at A), were not so likely to come in my way in the direction of A C, as in any other direction I could have chosen. The chance of finding firm ground in that direction was also better, as the rivers were only likely to continue separate by the protrusion of some remote offset of ground between them, from the salient feature B.

* See Appendix, vol. ii.

* This custom is not peculiar to Australia, it prevailed also in the East —

“A melancholy choir attend around,  
With plaintive sighs, and music’s solemn sound:  
Alternately they sing, alternate flow  
Th’ obedient tears, melodious in their woe.”

Pope’s *Iliad*, Book XXIV. v. 900.
The note here is, “This was a custom generally received, and which passed from the Hebrews to the Greeks, Romans, and Asiatics. There were weepers by profession, of both sexes, who sung doleful tunes round the dead.”


It is admitted by all that this last practice obtained, and the following passages are proofs of it. Jer. ix. 17, 18. “Call for the mourning women that they may come, and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters.”


* This mode of communicating intelligence of sudden danger, so invariably practised by the natives of Australia, seems quite in conformity with the customs of early ages as mentioned in Scripture. “O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-hacerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction.” — Jer. vi. 1.

* See Chapter viii. of next Journey for a description of this tree.

* “Felicissimos eran los tiempos,” (the weather was fine), said Cervantes — which words Smollett literally translated, “Happy were the times.” Both meanings would apply to our case then.
Journal of an Expedition Sent to Explore the Course of the River Darling, in 1835,

BY ORDER OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

Chapter I.


ON returning to Sydney from the banks of the Karaula, my attention was immediately drawn to other duties, and especially to those of the department of roads and bridges, which had also been placed under my direction.

I did, however, entertain hopes, that I should be permitted at a subsequent period, to continue my journey towards the north-west.

In May 1833, the local authorities were informed, that His Majesty's Government judged it expedient, an expedition should be undertaken to explore the course of the River Darling, and that this service should be performed by the survey department.

Until that time, I had understood the supposed course of the Darling to have been sufficiently evident, but from the necessity for this survey, and circumstances which I had not, until then, fully considered, I began to entertain doubts on that subject. It seemed probable, from the divergent courses of the Macquarie and Lachlan, that these rivers might belong to separate basins, and that the dividing ridge might be the "very elevated range," which Mr. Oxley had seen, extending westward between them. It was obvious that this range, if continuous, must separate the basin of the Darling from that of the river Murray.

As a preliminary step towards the exploration of the Darling, Mr. Dixon was sent, in October 1833, with instructions to trace the ranges between the rivers Lachlan and Macquarie, by proceeding westward from Wellington Valley. Instead, however,
of doing this, Mr. Dixon first followed the Macquarie downwards from Wellington Valley, and then crossing to the Bogan, which flowed at that time bank-high, he followed the course of this river for 67 miles, and finally returned without having seen any of the high land between the Macquarie and the Lachlan, which he had been sent to investigate. A season so favourable for exploring that high land, did not occur for four years afterwards, but it was within that period, and during a long continued drought, that the two succeeding expeditions were sent to ascertain the course of the Darling.

Preparations had been made for the departure of the expedition in the month of March following, but my duties as a commissioner, to investigate claims to grants of land, having been then urgent, the undertaking was deferred until the next season.*

In the mean time, two light whale boats were built by Mr. Eager of the dock-yard at Sydney; and wood was cut for the felloes of wheels which would be required for a boat-carriage and carts, and it was laid up to season in the lumber yard at Paramatta.

In completing the equipment for the journey, in the following year, at the same place, I was much indebted to the zealous assistance of Mr. Simpson, of the department of roads.

The boat-carriage was constructed according to a model, made by my friend Mr. Dunlop, King’s Astronomer at Paramatta, and the plan of it will be easily understood by the accompanying figure. One boat was made to fit within the other, the thwarts of the larger or outer one, being taken out. The double boat, thus formed, was suspended on belts of canvass, which supported it buoyant and clear of the frame work. Those parts of the canvass of the carriage, most liable to friction, were guarded with sheepskin and greased hide. The smaller boat was suspended within the larger, also on canvass, so as to swing clear of the outer boat’s sides; and the whole was covered by a tarpaulin, thrown over a ridge poll.

Besides Mr. Richard Cunningham, who was attached to the expedition as botanist, Mr. Larmer, a very young assistant surveyor, was appointed to accompany me; the services of the other officers of the department being required for duties within the settled districts.

The following men composed the party:

- Alexander Burnett, Overseer.
- Robert Whiting, Carpenter.
- William Wood, Sailors.
- John Palmer,
- Thomas Jones,
- John Souter, Medical Attendant.
- Robert Muirhead,
- Charles Hammond, Bullock-drivers.
- John Baldwin,
Nine of these men (distinguished by italics), had been under my command on my former expedition, and were consequently well acquainted with the service. Their subsequent steady conduct, also satisfied me, as to their eligibility for the contemplated journey.

At noon, on the 9th March, 1835, I had, at length, the satisfaction of seeing this party leave Paramatta, with an equipment fit for the undertaking. The boats appeared to swim very well in their carriage, which was followed by seven carts, and as many pack-horses, affording the means of carrying provisions for five months. Two mountain barometers were borne by two men, the only service required of them, while travelling. The whole party in motion towards the unknown interior, and prepared for sea or land, was to me a most gratifying spectacle. The cares of preparation were at an end, and I could still count on three weeks of comparative leisure at Sydney, during which time I could arrange the business of my office. The cattle station at Buree, where I intended to commence operations, was distant 170 miles from Sydney, and as it was necessary, that the party should travel slowly, in crossing the mountains with the boat-carriage; and equally indispensable that the cattle should rest some days after arriving at Buree; I calculated, that the expedition could not be ready to advance from that point, in less than three weeks from the time, at which it left Paramatta.

On the 31st of March, I quitted Sydney on the important errand of geographical discovery. My horse, which had been in training by Brown for some weeks, seemed impatient of roads, and full of spirit, a pleasant sensation, at all times to the rider, and very congenial to the high excitement of such an enterprise.

We soon arrived at Paramatta, where I obtained the loan of a good chronometer from Mr. Dunlop, at the observatory. Having noted various important memoranda and suggestions, and partaken of an early dinner, I bade my scientific and obliging friend farewell, and pursued my journey along the western road.

I arrived, in a few hours, at Emu ferry, on the river Hawkesbury, the boundary there of the country of Cumberland. I had traversed the country in its greatest
width, by this western route; and thus crossed by far the best portion. Unlike the northern sandstone district, where the road towards Wiseman’s ferry could be made, only by following one continuous ridge, the surface being intersected by deep and precipitous ravines, we were enabled here, the surface rock being trap, to travel along a perfectly straight road over a gently undulating surface. The soil in this district is good, consisting chiefly of decomposed trap. The land is wholly in the hands of individuals, and, in a climate sufficiently moist, would answer well for cultivation. The road passes near Prospect Hill, which is the most conspicuous eminence in the county, and is cultivated to the summit. The rich red soil derived from the subjacent trap-rock, produces crops as abundantly now, as when it was first tilled, upwards of thirty years ago.

Nearly the whole of the western portion of this country, consists of soil equally good; but it remains for the most part occupied by the original wood. It is, however, very generally enclosed by substantial fencing, and affords good pasturage. There is some rich, alluvial land on both banks of the Hawkesbury, and some of it, near this road, is let for as much as 20s. per acre.

The mansion of Sir John Jamieson, situated several miles above Emu, commands an extensive view over that noble stream, the rich margins of which are hemmed in, on the west, by the abrupt precipices of the Blue mountains. The intermediate space beyond the ford, is called Emu plains. At the inn near this ford, I passed the night, being desirous to cross the Blue mountains next day.

A pril 1. — At day-break we crossed the river in the punt. The Hawkesbury is 130 yards broad at this ferry, being the broadest fresh-water stream known in Australia, before the discovery of the Murray.

We now entered the county of Cook, so named by me, in considering that its lofty summits must have been the first land, that met the eye of the celebrated navigator, on his first approach to the eastern coast. Here again, we meet with that precipitous, inaccessible kind of country, which distinguishes the sandstone formation, so extensive in Australia. This arenaceous deposit, for a long time, confined the colonists within the line of the Hawkesbury, and until the want of fresh pastures, during dry seasons, compelled them to explore these rocky regions. One party succeeded in penetrating the country to the westward, by following the continuous line of high land, which separates the ravines of the valley of the river Cox on one side, from those which belong to the valley of the Grose on the other. In this direction, the road to the interior country, was accordingly opened by Governor Macquarie; and the ravines, on each side, are too deep and precipitous to admit of any extensive alteration of the line, although it has recently been much improved, especially in the ascent to these mountains above Emu, and in the descent from them to the interior country. These were the chief difficulties in making the original road across this mountain mass, as the old passes of Lapstone Hill and Mount York still testify. The upper region being once gained, it presents considerable uniformity of feature, at least along the connecting ridge. The rise is gradual from a height of about 1000 feet above Emu plains, to 3,400 feet its maximum, near King’s Tableland, 25 miles further westward. This mass of
sandstone is intersected by ravines, deep in proportion to the height of the surface, until the profound depth of the valleys adjacent to the Weatherboard Inn and Blackheath, inclosed by rocky precipices, imparts a wild grandeur to the scenery, of a very uncommon character. The whole mass consists of a coarse, ferruginous sandstone, composed of angular or slightly worn grains of quartz cemented by oxide of iron. There is scarcely a patch of land, along the line of road, fit for cultivation. One solitary spot, rather better than the rest, has been wisely appropriated for an inn, and at a point very convenient for travellers, being about half way across these mountains. This inn is about 2,800 feet above the sea, and the clouds and temperature give it the climate of England. Potatoes of an excellent quality grow there, also gooseberries; and a fire is as frequently agreeable as in the latitude of 52° N.

The only summits which meet the traveller’s eye, above the common horizon, are Mounts Hay and Tomah, situated about twelve miles northward of the road — the river Grose passing between them. These heights consist of trap-rock and grey porphyry, and like Warrawolong, are crowned with lofty trees.

Some idea may be formed of the intricate character of the mountain ravines in that neighbourhood, from the difficulties experienced by the surveyors, in endeavouring to obtain access to Mount Hay. Mr. Dixon, in an unsuccessful attempt, penetrated to the valley of the Grose, until then unvisited by any European; and when he at length emerged from ravines, in which he had been bewildered four days, without reaching Mount Hay, he thanked God (to use his own words in an official letter), that he had found his way out of them. — (See the accompanying View of the Grose; also a general view of the sandstone territory, in Vol. 2. Pl. 38.)

Mr. Govett was afterwards employed by me to make a detailed survey of the various ramifications of these ravines, by tracing each in succession, from the general line of road; and thus by a patient survey of the whole, he ascertained at length, the ridge connected with Mount Hay, and was the first to ascend it. Guided by Mr. Govett, I was thus enabled to place my theodolite on that summit. I found the scenery immediately around it very wild, consisting of stupendous, perpendicular cliffs, 3000 feet deep, at the foot of which, the silvery line of the Grose, meanders through a green valley, into which, neither the colonists nor their cattle have yet penetrated. Having looked into this valley from the summit of Tomah also in 1827, I was tempted, soon after, to endeavour to explore it by ascending the river from its junction with the Hawkesbury near Richmond; but I had not proceeded far in this attempt, accompanied by Major Lockyer and Mr. Dixon, when we were compelled to leave our horses, and, soon after, to scramble on our hands and feet, until, at length, even our quadrumanous progress was arrested in the bed of the river, by round boulders, which were as large as houses, and over, or between which, we found it impossible to proceed. The object, which I had then in view, with the concurrence of the Governor, was to carry the western road along the valley of the Grose, and by cutting a tunnel, of about a mile, through a ridge at the head of it, to reach the vale of Clywd, and so avoid the mountains
altogether. The ascent to them from Emu, and the descent from them at Mount York, were both then extremely bad; so much so indeed, at the latter pass especially, that a grant of land was publicly offered by the Government to whoever could point out a better. Both these obstacles have since been overcome. The pass of Mount Victoria, named by me after the youthful Princess, and opened by Governor Bourke in 1832, descends at an inclination of 1 in 15 (where steepest), and avoids the abrupt descent by Mount York.

The new road from Emu plains, which is still less inclined, has been made during the government of Sir Richard Bourke, and relieves the Bathurst teams from the difficulties of Lap-stone hill, the ascent of which cost them a whole day. The value of convict labour to a young colony, is apparent in these new passes, cut in many places out of the solid rock; and this advantage will be permanently recorded in these works and others now going forward in different parts of this mountain road, which must finally make it one of the best in the colony.

The difference between the lower country, on the Hawkesbury, and the region which I have endeavoured to describe, is very striking. The rocks are also different, for on the side of Cumberland they consist of trap, and on the other or that of the mountains, of sandstone. The course of the Hawkesbury above Emu plains, presents a singular feature, in forcing its way through a very steep-sided ravine, and thus cutting off a portion of the mountain mass, after its channel has previously bordered on the lower country of Cumberland, where no such obstruction is opposed to its waters, which might there pursue a more direct course to the sea. The river takes this remarkable turn near the junction of the Nepean, and there we find in the bed of the stream, (at “Cox’s Basin”), a dark coloured trap-rock, apparently containing steatitic matter, and doubtless connected with one of the disturbing operations, to which this fractured country has been exposed.

Beyond the ferry, the road crosses Emu plains, a level tract, here about a mile in width, and intervening between the river and the base of the mountains. This flat consists chiefly of gravel — composed of large pebbles, for the greater part quartzose; and in sinking a well, a bed of them was found, in which many were nearly spherical.

A township has been marked out at the ascent of the new road, the question as to the most eligible situation for a town on Emu plains, having led to the construction of the new pass. The growth of towns depends very much on the direction of great roads, and must be more certain, and the allotments consequently more valuable, when the most eligible line of thoroughfare is ascertained and opened, in the first instance. Such works of public convenience should precede, as much as possible, the progress of colonization. The plan at least should be well considered, before the capital, or the labour, which is the same thing, is applied. Buildings and other improvements can then be commenced with greater certainty of permanent value. “Les depenses utiles sont economie,” said Guibert, but in new countries, the economy will much depend on the permanent utility of works, for which, in most cases, the necessity should be foreseen. With the example of so many old countries for our guidance, obstructions to the spread of population in a new one, should be
removed, according to plans of general arrangement, keeping in view the best
distribution of towns, with respect to local advantages, and the best sites for all
public buildings requisite for the towns still in embryo. The most advantageous
general lines of direction should be ascertained for the roads — that the public
means may be applied with certainty to their substantial improvement, by removing
obstructions and building bridges. On good roads, there is greater inducement to
individuals to erect inns; and in well arranged streets to build good houses — than
where uncertainty as to the permanent direction of the one, or irregularity in the
plan or line of the other, discourage all such undertakings.

It has been my duty to keep these objects in view, as sole commissioner for the
division and appropriation of the territory of New South Wales; and as head also of
the department of roads and bridges, I have, as far as lay in my power, applied the
means at my disposal, only to works of a permanently useful character, guided as I
have been in my judgment respecting them, by a general survey of the country.

My ride along the mountain road, presented no object worth describing; but I
have frequently found, that the most dreary road ceases to appear monotonous or
long, after we have acquired a knowledge of the adjacent country. The ideas of
locality are no longer limited like our view, by the trees on each side. The least turn
reminds us, that we are passing some “ante vast,” or lateral ridge, occupying a
place in the map, which thus determines our position. In crossing these mountains
an extensive knowledge of the localities relieved the monotony of the road to me,
and being inseparable from it in my mind, the digressions in this part of my journal,
will, after this explanation, perhaps appear less objectionable.

Twilight overtook me, as I was giving directions to Sub-inspector Binning for the
completion of the pass at Mount Victoria; and I halted for the night at a small inn
at its foot.

April 2. — Although some heavy rain had fallen at Sydney, and yesterday during
my ride across the mountains, yet the grass in this valley, which at other times had
appeared green and abundant, was now parched and scanty. A swampy hollow,
across which a long bridge had been erected, was quite dry, and the whole surface
bore a brown and dusty aspect.

This lower country, to which we had descended from Mount Victoria, was named
by Governor Macquarie “the Vale of Clywd,” from its supposed resemblance to the
valley of that name in Wales. It is enclosed by other heights named Mount York
and Mount Clarence, and is watered by a small stream called the river Lett. A
wooden bridge has been erected across this stream, and the site of a village marked
out on the bank opposite to it. When such a spot, has once been determined on for
the establishment of a town or village, and divided into small allotments, available
to blacksmiths, wheelwrights, coopers, innkeepers, &c. the land is no longer liable
to be sold in a section of a square mile, according to the land regulations. Much
attention is necessary, during the progress of colonization, to prevent the monopoly
of the land, in thoroughfares where water is to be had. The convenience of the
public, and the encouragement of the mechanic, who is indeed the pioneer of
colonists, cannot be sufficiently studied, in affording facilities for the establishment
of inns, and the growth of population along great roads.

The aspect of this valley is very different from that of the mountain region, and equally so from that of the lower country, on the Hawkesbury. This change is obviously owing to the difference in the rock. Granite appears here, for the first time, on this road; and we accordingly find those bold undulations, and that thinly wooded surface, which usually distinguish the formation in Australia. It is at this point, in general finely grained, but the felspar partly decomposed, with distinct crystals of felspar unchanged.

From the pass of Mount Victoria, I travelled to Bathurst by an entirely new road, opened in a direction, first recommended by me in 1827.

At fourteen miles from Mount Victoria, is Farmer’s Creek, so named after a useful horse, which fell there and broke his neck, when I was surveying and marking out the line of road. The formation of the descent to this mountain stream was a work of considerable labour, and at that time several gangs of prisoners in irons, were employed upon it. Crossing Farmer’s creek near its junction with Cox’s river, the road is continued for one mile along the right bank, to the site chosen for throwing a bridge over this river. The ascent on the opposite side has been cut, with unnecessary labour, through a point of the hill, and upon this the gangs were then at work. The gangs of prisoners in irons, were lodged in a stockade, which had been erected here, and was guarded by a detachment of the 17th regiment. The river Cox is at this point 2172 feet above the level of the sea. It pursues its course, through a wild inaccessible mountain country, and joins the Warragamba, about twenty miles to the southward of Emu plains. This course of the Cox could be traced by the surveyors only by scrambling on foot, or by following out the several extremities of the mountain ranges, which abut upon its rocky channel.

Mount Walker overlooks that part of the Cox, which is crossed by the new line of road. The summit of this hill, consists of a dark grey felspar. At its base, and in the bed of the river, is trap, which appears to be the principal rock of the country, to some distance beyond the river. The road reaches at three miles from the Cox, a small brook, named Solitary Creek, which waters a valley where an inn was then building. This is the first rivulet falling towards the interior country, all the other streams, previously crossed by this road, flowing to the eastern coast; consequently the apparently low ridge, between Solitary creek and Cox’s river, is there part of what is termed the Coast Range, which extends from Cape Howe to Cape York, across 33 degrees of latitude.

The road, beyond Solitary creek, winds around the side of Honeysuckle-hill, a summit of considerable elevation, consisting of trap-rock. The country beyond that hill, is more open and favourable for road making. An inn has been built on a small flat, distant about twenty-three miles from Mount Victoria, and about half way between that pass and Bathurst. The only remarkable feature, on the remainder of this line, is Stony Range, distant from Bathurst fourteen miles. It is a ridge of high ground, which traverses the country from north to south, and terminates on the Fish river. The road crosses it at the very lowest part, and where the rock consists of a dark grey felspar, with grains of quartz. The soil is red and rich, and bears trees
of uncommon magnitude. The timber is found useful by the inhabitants of the Bathurst district, who keep the sawyers constantly at work there.

From Stony Range, the plains of Bathurst appear in the distance to great advantage; the eye of the traveller from Sydney having long sought, in vain, for some relief from the prospect of so much waste mountainous country.

We reach the open plains of Bathurst, six miles from the settlement. I arrived early at Mrs. Dillon’s inn, where I took up my quarters, in order that I might complete, with less interruption, a report which I was instructed to make to the Governor from this place, respecting the state of the works along the road.

April 3. — My friend Rankin called, and insisted on my accompanying him to his residence at Saltram, which I accordingly did. The houses of the inhabitants here are scattered over the extensive open country, and give a most cheerful appearance to the plains of Bathurst. These fine downs only a few years before, must have been as desolate as those of a similar character still are, on the banks of the Nam moy and Karaula. Peace and plenty now smile on the banks of “Wambool,” and British enterprise and industry may produce in time, a similar change on the desolate banks of the Nam moy, Gwydir, and Karaula, and throughout those extensive regions behind the Coast range, still further northward, — all as yet unpeopled, save by the wandering aborigines, who may then, as at Bathurst now, enjoy that security and protection, to which they have so just a claim.

The inconvenience of a want of plan for roads and streets, is strikingly obvious at Bathurst. A vast tract had indeed been reserved as a township, but then no streets having been laid out, allotments for building could neither be obtained by grant nor purchase. The site for the town was, therefore, only distinguished by a government house, jail, court house, post-office, and barracks; while the population had collected in 60 or 80 houses, built in an irregular manner on the Sydney side of the river, and at the distance of a mile from the intended site of the town. The consequence of a want of arrangement became equally apparent in the line of approach to the township, for the only road, in use, being very indirect, and passing through a muddy hollow, named “The Bay of Biscay,” could not be altered, because the adjacent land had been granted to individuals. Thus, when the good people of Bathurst, prayed in petitions for delivery from their “Bay of Biscay,” and a dry and more direct line for the road, had been easily found and marked out, the irregular buildings and private property lay in the way of the desired improvement. All these inconveniences might have been obviated, by due attention to such arrangements in the first instance, when any plan was practicable; whereas subsequently, it has been found possible to remedy them only in a limited degree. The streets having now been laid out, a church and many houses are in course of erection, and a new road, leading over firm ground, to the site of the intended bridge, has been opened with the consent of the owner of the property. Part of the reserved land of the township, has been given to small farmers — a class very essential to the increase of population, but by no means numerous in New South Wales — and least of all at Bathurst, where the land is laid out chiefly in large sheep farms.

A bridge across the Macquarie, has long been a desideratum. This river, although
in common seasons fordable, and in dry seasons scarcely fluent, is liable, after heavy
falls of rain in the mountains, to rise suddenly to a great height, and cut off the
communication between the public buildings on the one side, and the peopled
suburbs and great road from Sydney on the other. The country beyond the
Macquarie affords excellent sheep-pasturage, the hills consisting chiefly of granite.
A number of respectable colonists are domiciled on the surrounding plains, and the
society of their hospitable circle, presents a very pleasing picture of pastoral
happiness and independence.

April 4. — It was not until two o’clock that I could conclude my correspondence
with the road-making, land-measuring world, and join a very agreeable party,
assembled by my friend Rankin, to partake of an early dinner and witness my
departure.

Mr. Rankin accompanied me in my ride that afternoon, and we reached at a late
hour the house of Charley Booth, distant about 25 miles from Bathurst. Some years
had elapsed, since I first passed a night, at Charley’s hut or cattle station, then a
resting-place for whoever might occasionally pass; and inhabited by grim-looking
stockmen, of whom Charley, as my friend called him, seemed one. Now, the march
of improvement had told wonderfully on the place. The hut was converted into a
house, in which the curtained neatness and good arrangement were remarkable for
such an out-station. Mr. Booth himself looked younger by some years, and we at
length discovered the source of the increased comforts of his home, in a wife,
whom he had wisely selected from among the recently arrived emigrants.

April 5. — Here I at length took leave of my friend, to pursue a long and dreary
ride along the track which led to Buree. The wood consisted chiefly of those kinds
of eucalyptus, termed box and apple-tree — forming a very open kind of forest, the
hollows being in general quite clear of trees. The farther I proceeded westward, the
more the country exhibited the withering effects of long drought.

The mountain mass of the Canobolas, lay to the southward of my route; and on
crossing the lofty range which here divides the countries of Bathurst and
Wellington, the summit was distant only four miles. The country in the
neighbourhood of that mass, consists of trap and limestone, and is, upon the
whole, very favourable for sheep-farming. The region to the westward of the
Canobolas is still unsurveyed, being beyond the limits of the country divisions.
Before sunset, I joined my men “in the merry greene wood,” and in my tent, which
I found already pitched on the sweet-scented turf, I could at length indulge in
exploratory schemes, free from all the cares of office.

Chapter II.

Ascend the Canobolas — Choose the direction of my route — Ascend the hill north
of Buree — Encamp on the Mundadgery — Cross a granitic range — King’s Creek —
Cross Harvey’s range — First view of the interior — Parched state of the interior
country — The dogs kill a kangaroo — Steep descent to the westward — Search for
water by moonlight — Encamp without any — Follow a valley downwards and find
water — Lifeless appearance of the vallies — Luxury of possessing water after long privation — Ascend Mount Juson with Mr. Cunningham — Enter the valley of the Goobang — Meet the natives — Social encampment — Mount Laidley — Springs on the surface of the plains under Croker's range — Cross Goobang Creek — The dogs kill three large kangaroos — Wild honey brought by the natives — Arrive at “Tandogo” — Allan’s water of Oxley — Advantage of aboriginal names on maps — Excursion with Mr. Cunningham — Effects of a hurricane in the forest — Encamp without water — Natives leave the party — Cattle distressed for want of water — Mr. Cunningham missing — Desperate search for water — At length find water on reaching by night the river Bogan — Encamp on this river.

April 6. — ACCOMPANIED by two men carrying barometers and my theodolite, I ascended the mountain of the Canobolas, distant from Buree about twelve miles. I was desirous of connecting the map of our intended journey with that summit, because it is a prominent point in my general survey of the colony. It also commands an extensive view towards the country, we were about to explore; indeed the course of streams, and direction of ranges within thirty-five miles around this mass, seemed only subordinate features. The height of the mountain above the sea is, according to my observations, 4461.6 feet, which is much higher than any of the Blue Mountains. I sought in vain, on their azure horizon in the east, for the many summits which I had ascended there; but could distinguish none save Mount Lachlan, the position of which, having been well fixed, was, however, sufficient for my purpose. From this elevated group of the Canobolas, a chain of heights of primary rocks extended into the interior; and the base of the chain appeared to increase in width towards the west, as far as the rivers, on each side of it, had been explored. These were the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee on the south, and the Macquarie, Bogan, and Darling on the north. I considered this high ground would afford the safest line of route, in the winter season to the low interior country; while the heights would also enable me to extend my survey westward, with more accuracy, as far as they could be seen on this journey. From the summit, I carefully intersected every prominent point on the western horizon; and I chose for the direction of my future route, that part, which, while it appeared to be in continuation of the most elevated ground, yet had openings between summits, through which, I judged, the party might pass. To the southward, I already beheld Mr. Oxley’s various hills, rising like so many islands, from the otherwise level country on the Lachlan; and, far in the north-west, the level blue horizon, exactly resembled an open sea; while to the westward, the line of vision was broken by the summits of Croker’s and Harvey’s ranges. After a careful reconnaissance of these and other still more distant features, the country seemed to me most favourable for a passage, on the bearing of 60° west of north. In that direction, therefore, I resolved to proceed; trusting that He, who led Israel like a flock, would guide and direct our little party, through the Australian wilderness before us.

April 7. — Early this morning, I ascended the hill to the northward of the old station, and took some angles, for the purpose of determining the position of the
house at Buree, from which our measurement was to commence. The party moved forward along a road still for the first 5½ miles, when this convenience would serve our purpose no longer, and we struck into the pathless woods. After travelling over some connected hills, and marking the trees as we proceeded, we, at nine miles, reached the head of a chain of ponds, falling southward, which I named Dochendoras Ponds; and encamped beside them in the valley of Mundadgery, where the pasturage was good. The whole country traversed this day, consisted of grassy, open, forest-land. We measured at first with a perambulator from the house at Buree; but this got out of order, upon which Mr. Larmer, with the chain and circumferenter, continued the measurement. We took with us fifteen sheep from Buree, to try whether this kind of live stock was available on such expeditions.

April 8. — While the teams were yoking, I rode forward some miles to examine the country, and I found a very good line for the party to ascend, precisely in the desired direction. On returning, about nine o’clock, I put them in motion, and by eleven, we reached a granite formation, the whole country, previously passed, consisting of trap or limestone. The granite formed the crests of a range, and where it occurred, I observed a remarkable change in the vegetation, as well as in the scenery, which was much improved by “pine” trees (*callitris pyramidalis*), whose deep green contrasted beautifully with the red and grey tinges of the granite rocks, while their respective outlines were opposed to each other with equally good effect. At twelve, I rode to a bold summit of “herbless granite,” whence I observed the Canobolas, bearing north 122° east, and took angles on several hills.

Following the general bearing of 60° west of north, our route extended along beautiful levels and easy slopes, while bold granitic peaks, clothed with “pine,” rose on both sides. The grass was excellent, and, even in this remote region, we passed two flocks of sheep. At three o’clock we arrived at the foot of a small pass, the ascent to which was rather steep; and, while the cattle were toiling upwards, I went forward in search of water, but found none in the valley beyond the pass. Having ascended the next ridge, I again obtained a bearing on the Canobolas (121° east of north), and an angle with the Coutombals* (85° 45’). On returning, I rode down the valley towards the south-east, where I met Mr. Cunningham, who had found a good water hole, (apparently at a spring,) with a large rock in the centre. I accordingly conducted the party to it, and we encamped about four P.M. Here we were joined by Charles King, a man whose services I had taken some trouble to obtain, and who gave me now a proof of his strength and fitness for such an undertaking, by coming from Emu plains, distant 145 miles, in little more than two days. For this man, I was indebted to Sir John Jamieson. The above feat I thought deserved to be recorded, and I therefore gave his name to the water-course, on which we had encamped. The party was now complete, and I was glad to find that “Dr. Souter,” no longer “a new chum,” was the best of good fellows with the other men. He had brought a flute, on which he played tolerably well, either after the acquisition of a kangaroo, or when we had good water, or during any very serene evening.

April 9. — As usual, I proceeded some way in advance, marking the line of trees to be followed by the party, and I was fortunate in finding an easier ascent for our
wheel carriages, to the range before us, than I had expected. On descending the opposite side, we entered a fine valley, well watered; and which, had we known the country better, we might have reached on the previous evening. We next travelled over fine forest land, and by keeping some rocky hills, consisting of trap, on our right, we headed the deep ravines and bold ranges, which appeared to branch from them to the northward. Thus, we journeyed along very good ground, the slopes being easy, and unimpeded by timber. At one o’clock, I ascended a hill, and obtained, for the first time since I approached these ranges, an uninterrupted view of the country to the westward of them. From this point, I recognised several other hills, observed from the Canobolas, some of which did not appear very distant. A square-topped eminence, bearing west-south-west a great way off, I supposed might be Mount Granard; and a few other heights more to the westward, crowned what had hitherto appeared to be a flat horizon. I began to discover, however, that, although apparently flat, this horizon consisted of low ridges, intersected by valleys, and I hoped to find among the former, one or two rocky points which might be available to my survey.

It was now evident that no rain had fallen in these interior regions, since the summer heat had parched the earth. We had passed, to-day, no water except what we saw in the morning, although one green valley, which we noticed on our right soon after starting, probably contained some. A fine kangaroo was this day seen before us, and immediately killed by the dogs. Our journey was prolonged, for the purpose of arriving at a water-hole, but we could not find one. At four o’clock, a view of the country beyond the mountain range, opened before us; and, being anxious to gain the valley which lay at its foot, I hastily effected a descent, although the ground was steep and rocky, in hopes of finding water before it grew dark. Following the valley downwards, I succeeded, but not until sunset, in finding, in a crevice of a rock, enough for the men.

The carts were then three miles behind me, and although we sent by moonlight for water for the party, the poor cattle could not be watered, and were consequently kept in their yokes all night, to prevent their straying in search of it.

Having examined the bed of the dry creek, to some distance below the rock, where the water remained, I found its course so sinuous, and its banks so steep, the valley itself having no breadth, steep-sided hills closing on the deep dry channel, so that it must have been almost impossible to proceed that way with the party. I therefore, determined to explore the country, more to the right, early next morning, expecting to find, in that direction, a line of route by which we might be sooner extricated from these sinuous valleys and hilly extremities. I hoped also that we should thus reach some more united channel, deep enough to retain a portion of the waters of more favourable seasons.

April 10. — I went forward (prima luce), and soon gained a low ridge, the rocky points of which had obliged me to keep to the valley in seeking for water the preceding evening. From this ridge, I had the satisfaction of following with my eye into the far distant level country, a continuous valley, the apparent outlet or channel of all these mountain torrents, and which, I had no doubt, contained water. Having
marked out the best passage I could find, to this point for the bullock teams, I
descended to the valley before me, and, after following it about four miles, the
hollows in the dry bed of the rivulet appeared moist.

At two miles further, I found water in the crevices of a rock, and a little lower
still, abundance for the cattle in a large pond. After watering my thirsty horse, I
galloped back with the encouraging tidings to the party, and by eleven o’clock we
had encamped beside the water, with the agreeable certainty of obtaining breakfast,
and with excellent appetites for it.

We had passed through vallies, on first descending from the mountains, where
the yellow oat-grass (or anthistiria), resembled a ripe crop of grain. But this
resemblance to the emblem of plenty, made the desolation of these hopeless
solitudes only the more apparent, abandoned as they then were, alike by man, beast,
and bird. No living thing remained in these vallies, for water, that element, so
essential to life, was a want too obvious in the dismal silence, (for not an insect
hummed), and the yellow hues of withering vegetation.

We had, at length, emerged from these arid valleys, and entered upon an open
and more promising country. Our boats and heavily leaden carts had crossed all the
mountains in our way, without any accident, and we had water in abundance.

It is on occasions such as these, that the adventurer has intervals of enjoyment,
which amply reward him for laborious days of hardship and privation. The sense of
gratification and repose, is intense, in such extreme cases, and cannot be known to
him, whose life is counted out in a monotonous succession of hours of eating and
sleeping within a house; whose food is adulterated by spices, and sauces, intolerable
to real hunger — and whose drink, instead of the sweet refreshing distillation from
the heavens, consists of vile artificial extracts, loathed by the really thirsty man, with
whom the pure element resumes its true value, and establishes its real superiority
over every artificial beverage.

April 11. — At seven o’clock, I proceeded, with Mr. Cunningham, to the summit
of a cone, bare of timber, which I had observed from the Canobolas, and which
bore 138° E. of N. from our camp, distant about six miles. The ascent was easy,
and from the summit, (on which Mr. C. obligingly erected a pyramid), I obtained
many valuable angles with my theodolite, on the very distant hills, which broke the
western horizon. We found the variation of the needle to be 8° 40’ E. This hill I
named, at Mr. Cunningham’s request, Mount Juson. We returned to the camp at
half-past two, when we found the party ready to start; and, accordingly, we
proceeded forward. Our journey was through verdant vales, increasing in width as
we followed the channel of the stream, we had traced from the mountain, and
which now contained abundant pools of water. At length the sound of the native’s
hatchet was heard, and one came forward to meet me. We learned from him, that
we were upon “Burànbil” creek, and that its course was south-west towards the
“Calàre,” or Lachlan. The range, whence we came, they called “Warre” (Croker’s
range of Oxley), and that north of it, Goobang (Harvey’s range of the same), from
which, as I was also informed, a creek of similar name issued and flowed into the
Burànbil.
The evening was beautiful; the new grass springing in places where it had been burnt, presented a shining verdure in the rays of the descending sun; the songs of the birds acceded here with other joyous sounds, the very air seemed alive with the music of animated nature, so different was the scene in this well-watered valley, from that of the parched and silent region from which we had just descended. The natives, whom we met here, were fine looking men, enjoying contentment and happiness, within the precincts of their native woods. Their enjoyment seemed derived so directly from nature, that it almost excited a feeling of regret, that civilized men, enervated by luxury and all its concomitant diseases, should ever disturb the haunts of these rude but happy beings.

The first native who came up to me, was a fine specimen of man in an independent state of nature. He had nothing artificial about him, save the badge of mourning for the dead, a white band (his was very white), around his brow. His manner was grave, his eye keen and intelligent, and as our people were encamping, he seemed to watch the moment when they wanted fire, and presented a burning stick, which one of the natives had brought, in a manner expressive of welcome, and an unaffected wish to contribute to our wants. At a distance their gins sat at fires, and we heard the domestic sound of squalling children. The scene assumed a more romantic character when,

——“like a queen came forth the lovely moon
From the slow opening curtains of the clouds,
Walking in beauty to her midnight throne,”*

and the soft notes of the Doctor’s flute fell pleasingly on the ear, while the eye was equally gratified by the moon-beams as they shot from the trees, amid the curling smoke of our temporary encampment. The cattle were refreshing in green pastures. It was Saturday night, and next day the party was to rest. We had reached in one month, from Sydney, the plains leading to the Darling, having placed all the mountain ranges behind us, and these reflections heightened our enjoyment of the scene around us, and sweetened our repose.

April 12. — Accompanied by Mr. Cunningham and three men, carrying my theodolite, sextant, and barometer, I ascended a summit at the southern extremity of Harvey’s range, and which I had observed particularly from Mount Juson, as being the most eligible point to form, in connection with that range, a base for extending the survey westward. This hill was clear of timber, and, as it commanded an uninterrupted view in that direction, I intersected every point observed from Mount Juson. The highest summit of Canobolas was just visible over the intermediate ranges, and, what was also of equal importance, that of the Coutombals. These ranges, already mentioned in another place, consist of a group of lofty hills, situated about 12 miles to the S.S.W. of Wellington valley, and being connected with the general survey, enabled me here to fix this station correctly.

As we returned across the lower country towards our camp, we observed some places unusually green, and found that this verdure was nourished by springs, the water lying on the surface, so that in a season when the beds of almost all streams
were dry, we watered our horses on an extensive flat of forest land. Such springs
must be of very rare occurrence in this country, for in the course of my jourmies, I
had never before seen any. The hill, thus connected with the survey, I named
Mount Laidley.

April 13. — The party moved off at half-past eight o’clock, and at half-past nine it
crossed Goobang creek, or chain of ponds. This channel contained some deep
pools, apparently proof against the summer drought. The Goobang has its sources
in the ravines between Harvey’s and Croker’s ranges, the course being towards the
Lachlan. In this and other tributaries of the same river, I observed, that all the
permanent pools were surrounded by reeds.

As we proceeded beyond the Goobang, chiefly in a northwest direction, we
found the country tolerably level, and to consist of what in the colony is termed
“open forest land.” We crossed one or two eminences, but the carts met with no
impediment in a journey of fifteen miles.

The principal hill, consisted of trap-rock, and was so naked, that only one or two
trees of the stirculia heterophylla grew upon it. The native name for it was
“Pàkormungor,” and from its top, I recognized Mounts Juson and Laidley, and near
me various low features, which I had intersected from those stations. The rock, in
other places less elevated, consisted of schist or slate in laminae, dipping to the east
at an angle of 60°. Some very rich iron-stone also occurred on the surface. This day,
three large kangaroos were killed by our dogs, one of them having been speared
very adroitly during the chase, by a native, who accompanied us from our last
encampment.

From Pàkormungor the country began to decline to the northward, and, as we
descended into the basin of the Bogan, it improved in grass. The acacia pendula
occurring here, reminded me of the banks of the Nammoy; and Mr. Cunningham
had a busy day in examining many interesting plants, which he had not previously
seen on this journey.

We at length encamped on a lagoon, to which the natives led us, and which they
named “Cookopie.”

We were now in a “land flowing with honey,” for our friendly guides, with their
new tomahawks, extracted it in abundance, from the hollow branches of the trees,
and it seemed that, in the proper season, they could find it almost everywhere. To
such inexpert clowns, as they probably thought us, the honey and the bees were
inaccessible, and indeed invisible, save only when the natives cut the former out,
and brought it to us in little sheets of bark, thus displaying a degree of ingenuity and
skill in supplying wants, which we, with all our science, could not hope to attain.
Their plan was to catch a bee, and attach to it, with some resin or gum, the light
down of a swan or owl; thus laden, the bee would make for its nest in the branch of
some lofty tree, and so betray its store of sweets to its keen-eyed pursuers, whose
bee-chase presented, indeed, a laughable scene.

April 14. — We continued in a west or south-west direction, passing “Goonigal,”*
a large plain on our right, near which there was a fine tract of open forest land. The
ground afterwards rose in gentle undulations, and was covered with kangaroo grass;
the soil changing also, from clay to a red sandy loam.

We next arrived at a creek, or chain of deep ponds, called “Coogoorderoy,” which appeared to come from the south-south-west. Further on, we passed plains on our left, of the same name; and, at length, we crossed a fine one, the native name of which was “Turârăngenoo.” On the skirt of it, was a hill named “Boorr,” which we kept close on our left, crossing its lower extremities, which were covered with a forest of iron-bark *eucalyptus*, and forest oaks or *casuarinae*. At four o’clock we reached “Tândogo,” a fine creek of water descending from the south, and flowing to the Bogan.

A hill to the north-west, I was informed, was named the Bugamél.

April 15. — I halted to lay down my survey, and connect it with that of Mr. Dixon of the Bogan. At noon, I found our latitude to be 32° 45' 30" S. and on making allowance for the difference between Mr. Oxley’s base (as to longitude) and my own, I supposed we were then upon “Allan’s Water” of Oxley. In this instance, as in many others, the great convenience of using native names is obvious. For instance, so long as any of the aborigines can be found in the neighbourhood of “Tândogo,” future travellers may verify my map. Whereas, new names are of no use in this respect, especially when given to rivers or water-courses, by travellers who have merely crossed them, without ascertaining their course, or even their sources, or termination. He, alone, should be entitled to give a name to a river, who explored its course, or, at least, as much of it as may be a useful addition to geography; and when a traveller takes the trouble to determine the true place of hills or other features, he might perhaps be at liberty to name them also. The covering a map with names of rivers or hills, crossed or passed, merely in traversing an unknown country, amounts to little more than saying, that so many hills and rivers were seen there; and if nothing were ascertained further of the connections of the former, or the courses of the latter, we derive from such maps, little more information than we had before; for that hills and rivers are to be seen in any unknown part of a country, is generally understood to be the case, before a traveller commences his journey. A future explorer, determines, with much trouble the position of a river in the world’s map. “This is my river B———,” says the man who crossed it first, or who, by merely stumbling perhaps upon it, claims all the merit of its discovery, even when circumstances may have forced him to proceed in that direction, rather than that he was looking for what he found, under the guidance of any analogy, or series of observations.

In the afternoon I rode back to the hill of “Boorr” (seven miles) with the theodolite, and I obtained some useful angles to various points of Harvey’s range, and on such few eminences as could be distinguished in other directions.

April 16. — Mr. Larmer went forward with the carts in a north-west direction, while I proceeded westward, accompanied by Mr. Cunningham, towards a hill, which I had intersected from Mounts Juson and Laidley, and which I expected to find at about nine miles west by compass, from our camp. We continued along an undulating ridge for about five miles, crossing also a flat on which all the trees, for a considerable extent, had been laid prostrate by some violent hurricane, making a
very uncommon opening in the forest through which we were accustomed to travel. The trunks lay about due east, and all nearly parallel; thus recording a storm from the west, before which our tents must have gone “like chaff before the wind,” and where shelter from the trees, not under them, might have been sought for in vain.

At 7½ miles, we crossed a chain of small ponds falling to the north (probably Coysgaine’s ponds of Oxley) and about one mile further, we ascended the northern shoulder of the hill, I was in search of. From the summit, I obtained angles on one or two hills to the south, which lay a few miles off, but I could not recognize them, as having been previously intersected.

We descended and proceeded northward through the dense woods, in the midst of which, after estimating distances and time, I at length pulled my rein, and observed to Mr. Cunningham, that I hoped to fall in with Mr. Larmer, or the track of the carts thereabouts. Just then I heard the crack of a whip, and we soon met Mr. Larmer at the head of the party. I continued the route in the same direction until after sunset, when we were obliged to encamp without reaching water. Bulger however, with the assistance of the natives, found some, after the rising of the moon, but not until he had been nearly three miles to the northward in search of it. The cattle could not be watered there that night, as they had already travelled upwards of 15 miles.

I was aware, that I might have made the Bogan by proceeding more towards the north; but I preferred the direct line of route, even at the risk of encountering a scarcity of water. In the more northerly course, we should have entered a great bight of that river, whereas I was making for its most southern bend, which was not only in the most direct line towards Oxley’s Table-land, but was also nearer the hills, along which I was desirous of working my survey.

April 17. — We moved off at 8 o’clock, and at the distance of 3¼ miles we came upon some curious rocks of red sand-stone, forming the tops of a ridge which extended N. N. E.

It is called Bény by the natives, and in a deep crevice, there is a well, the water of which, although at times apparently deep, had the previous night, been drained nearly to the bottom by a party of some tribe, whose fires still were burning.

The natives who accompanied us, examined the traces of those who had fled, with considerable interest, and then fell behind our party and disappeared.

From the highest of these rocks, I obtained some good angles and bearings on the hills, I had seen on the day previous, and also on some of the loftiest summits of Harvey’s range.

Our cattle, having had no water during the night, began to be distressed, and I hurried forward, marking out the line, and we thus crossed, at five miles beyond the rocks of Bény, the dry bed of what appeared to be sometimes the channel of a considerable stream of water; its sides and bottom were, however, then grassy; its depth and breadth very uniform, while the general course appeared to be N.N.E. but very tortuous.

At four o’clock I had continued to mark the line. Being then six miles beyond this
channel, and anxious about finding water for the cattle, I galloped forward three miles, in search of the Bogan, but without reaching it.

The sun of this very hot day, was near setting by the time I met our party, to whom I had hastened back. They had travelled two miles beyond the dry creek, which it was my intention now to trace downwards as fast as possible, followed by all our animals, in hopes that it would lead to water. While the men were unyoking the teams, I was informed, that Mr. Cunningham was missing. The occasional absence of this gentleman was not uncommon, but, as he had left the party early in the day, in order to join me, it was evident, from his not having done so, that he had gone astray. At that moment, I felt less anxiety on the subject, little doubting that he would gain our camp, before I returned from the forlorn search, I was about to make for water. Leaving Mr. Larmer with the rest of the party to encamp there, I proceeded eastward towards the dry creek, whose course I soon intercepted, and I hurried the bullock-drivers along its bed downwards, until, after crossing many a hopeful but dry hole, they begged, that the cattle might be allowed to rest. Leaving them, therefore, I continued my search with the horses, still following the channel, until I had the happiness of seeing the stars of heaven reflected from a spacious pool. We had, in fact, reached the junction of the creek with the Bogan. Having filled our kettles and leathern bottles, we hastened back, to where we had left the bullocks. Leaving them to go forward, and refresh, I set off at a venture, on the bearing of south-west by south, in search of our camp. After an hour’s riding, the moon rose, and at length our cooy was answered. I had previously observed, by the moon’s light, the track left by my horse that morning in the long dry grass, and verified it by some of my marks on the trees. Would that Mr. Cunningham had been as fortunate! At that time I did not doubt, that I should find him at the camp; especially as we heard no guns, it being a practice in the bush to fire shots, when persons are missing, that they may hear the report, and so find the party. I then made sure of a pleasant night’s rest, as I was relieved from my anxiety respecting the cattle.

I had the pain to learn, however, on reaching the camp about eleven o’clock, that Mr. Cunningham was still absent; and, what was worse, in all probability suffering from want of water. I had repeatedly cautioned this gentleman, about the danger of losing sight of the party in such a country; yet his carelessness in this respect was quite surprising. The line of route, after being traversed by our carts, looked like a road that had been used for years, and it was almost impossible to doubt, then, that he would fall in with it next morning.

April 18. — We continued to fire shots and sound the bugle till eleven o’clock. Our cattle were then ready to drink again, and as Mr. Cunningham was probably ahead of us, to proceed on our route to the Bogan without further delay was indispensable, in order that we might, in case of need, make such extensive search for him, as was only possible from a camp where we could continue stationary.

We accordingly proceeded towards the Bogan, anxiously hoping, that Mr. Cunningham would fall in with our line, and rejoin the party in the course of the day. After proceeding due north eight miles, we came upon the bed of this river;
but, before I could find water in it, I had to trace its course some way up and down. We at length encamped near a pond, and night advanced, but poor Mr. Cunningham came not!

Chapter III.

Search for Mr. Cunningham — No traces to be seen — Supposed to have met with an accident — Souter and Murray sent back along the track — Search S. S. W. 40 miles — Interview with two natives — Range of porphyry — Mr. Cunningham’s track found — Mr. Larmer and a party sent to trace it — Mr. Cunningham’s track followed for 70 miles, his horse found dead — His own foot steps traced — Mr. Larmer meets a tribe — The footsteps traced into the channel of the Bogan — Death of the kangaroo — Reflections — Five natives brought to me with a silk handkerchief in their possession — Their names — The party halt at Cudduldury — Interview with the King of the Bogan — Muirhead and Whiting sent to examine the dry channel of the river — Search extended to the plains of the Lachlan — Camp of natives — Pass the night in a hollow without water — View towards Mount Granard — A second night without water — Awoke by the forest on fire — Interview with three natives — Roots of trees sucked by the natives — Horses reach the camp with great difficulty — Part of Mr. Cunningham’s coat found.

April 19. — AFTER an almost sleepless night, I rose early, and could relieve my anxiety only by organizing a search, to be made in different directions, and getting into movement as soon as possible. The darkness of a second night of dreary solitude, had passed over our fellow-traveller, under the accumulated horrors of thirst, hunger, and despair!

It was most mysterious, that he had not fallen in with our line of route, which was a plain, broad road, since the passage of the carts; and had a direction due north and south for ten miles. The last time, he had been seen, was twelve miles back, or about two miles from the dry bed of the creek, (since named Bullock creek,) where I changed the direction, from north-west by compass, to due north, that I might sooner reach the Bogan, for the sake of water. It was probable, that in following my marked trees without much attention, he had not observed the turn I took there, and that continuing in the same direction, beyond the creek, he had therefore lost them, and had proceeded too far to the westward. This was the more likely, as the dry creek was on the eastward of our line; where, had he gone that way, he must have found our cattle-tracks, or met with the cattle. I, therefore, determined to examine myself the whole country westward of our line for twelve miles back. I sent the Doctor and Murray, west by compass six miles, with orders to return in a south-east direction, till they intersected the route, and then return along it; and I sent two other men back along the route, in case our missing friend might have been coming on in a weakly state that way. All three parties carried water and provisions. I proceeded, myself, with two men on horseback, first, seven miles in a south-west direction, which brought me into the line, Mr. Cunningham might have
followed, supposing he had continued north-west. The country I traversed, consisted of small plains, and alternate patches of dense casuarina scrubs, and open forest land.

I seldom saw to less distance, about me, than from one to two miles, or at least as far as that in some one direction. We continued to cooy frequently, and the two men were ordered to look on the ground for a horse’s track.

In the centre of a small plain, where I changed my direction to the south-east, I set up a small stick with a piece of paper fixed in it, containing the following words,

“Dear Cunningham,

“These are my horse’s tracks, follow them backwards, they will lead you to our camp, which is N. E. of you.

“T. L. MITCHELL.”

Having proceeded in the same manner, seven miles to the south-east, I came upon our route where it crossed Bullock creek, and there I found the two men, who had been sent from the camp.

We then continued our search back along the west side of our route, the party, which now consisted of five, spreading so as to keep abreast at about 200 yards from each other, one being on the road. We thus ascertained that no track of Mr. Cunningham’s horse or of himself appeared on the soft parts of our road; and although we retraced our steps thus to where Murray, one of the men, said he saw Mr. Cunningham the last time with the party, no traces could be found of him or his horse. A kangaroo dog was also missing, and supposed to be with him.

Returning, we continued the search, and particularly to the westward of Bullock creek, where the direction of our route had been changed; but I was disappointed in all our endeavours to find any traces of him there, although I enjoyed, for some time, a gleam of hope, on seeing the track of a horse near the bed of the creek, but it returned to our line, and was afterwards ascertained to have been made by the horse of Mr. Larmer.

Although scarcely able to walk myself, from a sprain, (my horse having fallen in a hole that day, and rolled on my foot), I shall never forget with what anxiety, I limped along that track, which seemed to promise so well; yet we were so unsuccessful that evening, on the very ground where, afterwards, Mr. Cunningham’s true track was found, that I could no longer imagine, that our unfortunate fellow-traveller could be to the westward.

By what fatality, we failed to discover the tracks afterwards found there, I know not; but, as the sun descended, we returned once more to the camp, in the hope that Mr. Cunningham might have reached it. That hope was soon disappointed, and I became apprehensive that some accident had befallen him. Holes in the soft surface and yawning cracks, formed rather a peculiar feature in that part of the country; and as my horse had fallen both on this day and the preceding, when at a canter, and as Mr. Cunningham was often seen at that pace, it was probable, that he might have met with some severe fall, and lay helpless, not far, perhaps, from where he had last been seen. The nights were cold, and I was doubtful whether he could be still alive, so difficult was it to account, otherwise, for his continued absence
under all the circumstances.

April 20. — After another night of painful anxiety, the dawn of the third day of Mr. Cunningham’s absence, brought some relief, as daylight renewed the chance of finding him, or of his finding us by our line, as he might have endeavoured to retrace his steps on losing the party, or he might be on our route still farther back than we had looked; but I was desirous that the natives whom we had left at Bèny might be sent in search. I despatched the Doctor and Murray back along the line, the latter saying, that he knew where Mr. Cunningham had turned off the road. It was not unlikely that the horse, if he had got loose, might have returned to where he had last drank water (20 miles distant), therefore, they were directed, if traces were not found nearer, to go so far back, and to promise the natives, if they could meet with any, tomahawks, &c. if they found the “white man,” or “his horse.” No other course could be imagined. The line of route, as already stated, was a beaten road, and extended north and south. To the east of it, and nearly parallel, at two or three miles distance, was the dry channel (Bullock creek), which led to the Bogan; on the north was our camp and the Bogan, whose general course was west, as well as our intended route, circumstances both known to Mr. Cunningham. Southward was the marked route, and the country whence we had come. Still, however, I thought it so likely, that he must have gone to the north-west, when we changed our route to north, that I determined, although my sprained ankle was painful, to examine again, and still more extensively, the country into which such a deviation must have led him.

April 21. — I proceeded in a south-south-west direction, (or S. 17° W. by compass), or on an intermediate line between our route and the north-west line, by which I had explored that country on the nineteenth, the men cooying as before. We explored every open space; and we looked into many bushes, but in vain. I continued my journey far to the southward, in order to ascertain what water was nearest in that direction, as it was probable, were any found, that Mr. Cunningham, if alive, must have reached it, and I had in vain sought his track on the other side of the country. I soon came to undulating ground, or low hills of quartzose gravel without any grass, consisting of unabraded small angular fragments of quartz. I observed a few trees of the iron-bark eucalyptus, and pines or callitris, on the highest grounds. At twenty miles from our camp, we crossed a grassy flat, in which we at length found a chain of ponds, falling to the south-south-east, and also about them were recent marks of natives. At length I espied two at a distance, as I proceeded along the valley. In vain we cooyed, and beckoned to them to approach; it was clear they would not come to us; on seeing which, I left the men and horses and walked towards them, carrying a green bough before me. They seemed at once to understand this emblem of peace; for, as soon as I was near enough for them to see it, they laid down their spears and waddies, and sat down on the ground to receive me. Not a word, however, could they understand, being evidently quite strangers to the colonists. They were both rather old men, but very athletic, and of commanding air and stature, the body of one was painted with pipe-clay, that of the other with yellow ochre; and through these tints their well-defined muscles, firm as those of
some antique torso, stood out in bold relief in the beams of the setting sun. The
two made a fine group, on which dress would have been quite superfluous, and
absolutely a blot on the picture.

No gesture of mine could convey the idea, with which I wished so much to
impress them, of my search for another white man, and after using every kind of
gesture, in vain, I made a bow in despair, and departed. They rose at the same time,
apparently glad (from fear) to see me going, and motioned, as if to say, “you may
depart now, we are friends.” One of them who sat behind, and who appeared to be
the older of the two, had a bone-handled table-knife stuck in the band over his
forehead; one had also an iron tomahawk. The rest of the tribe were concealed
about, as we heard their cooys, but no others ventured to appear. I thought, I could
not give them further proof of no harm being intended to them, than by quietly
going on my way, and I hoped that this friendly demonstration might remove any
appréhensions respecting Cunningham, if he chanced to meet the tribe. The
greatest danger to be apprehended from natives, is on a stranger first approaching
them, when, chiefly from fear, they are apt to act on the offensive.

Continuing on the same line, I crossed another small water-course, falling north-
east; and beyond it were hills of micaschist and quartz, which sloped rather boldly to
the southward. We then entered one of the finest tracts of forest land I ever saw. It
was three miles in width, and bounded on the south by another low hill of
quartzose gravel, the soil of which was indifferent. We at last tied up our horses on
a little patch of forest land, and laid down under a few boughs, as it was quite dark
and began to rain.

April 22. — After a fruitless ride of twelve more miles, still further southward, in
pursuit of distant columns of smoke, we turned our horses’ heads towards the
camp, on a bearing of N. 56° E., in which direction some summits appeared. We
crossed much good whinstone land, and arrived at a small ridge, where I ascended a
hill, consisting of a reddish granite or porphyry. From this height I again saw
Harvey’s and Croker’s ranges, and various hills to the southward, but I was
disappointed in the view of the western horizon, which was confined to a very flat-
topped woody range. I took as many angles as I could, from a round pinnacle of
porphyry, which barely afforded standing room.

From this hill, we saw smoke near another eminence, which bore N. 36° E.,
distant about seven miles; and in that direction, we proceeded (as it led
homewards), but twilight overtook us, as we crossed its side, on which the bushes
appeared to have been recently burnt.

This hill consisted of a rock resembling felspar, and was connected with the
former, which was of granite, by low hills consisting of schistus and trap. The
former had good grass about it, and produced a chain of well-filled ponds, but here
we found no water, having arrived so late. The country in general was, (in point of
glass at least) much better than the rotten ground on the banks of the Bogan. The
water also, although scarce, was much better, and I heartily regretted, that it was not
in my power to proceed, according to my original plan, along this higher ground, in
my progress towards the Darling.
April 23. — Early this morning, I ascended the hill, although much incommmoded by my sprained ankle, which obliged me to ride my horse over rocks, to the very summit. I could perceive no more smoke. The Canobolas were just visible to the right of Mount Juson. The height on which I stood, seemed to be the furthest interior point of this chain, whence those hills could be seen. We left the summit at nine o’clock, and proceeded towards our route on a bearing of N. 17° E. At ten miles, we halted to allow the horses to pick some green grass in a casuarina scrub; and then, after riding two miles further, we reached our marked route, at about three miles back from Bullock creek. We saw no traces on it, of the men I had sent back, for which I was at a loss to account; but I readily turned every circumstance, even my own ill success, in favour of the expectation, that I should find Mr. Cunningham in the camp on my return: thus hope grew even out of disappointment. There, however, I learned, that the two men sent back, had at length found Mr. Cunningham’s track, exactly where we had at first so diligently sought for it, and that they had traced it into the country, which I had twice traversed in search of him in vain, and, more distressing than all, that they had been compelled to leave the track the preceding evening for want of rations! They had been, however, sent back to take it up, and we anxiously awaited the result.

April 24. — Late in the evening the two men, (the Doctor and Murray), returned, having lost all further trace of Mr. Cunningham, in a small oak scrub. They had distinctly seen the track of the dog with him, and that of his own steps beside those of the horse, as if he had been leading it.

April 25. — Early this morning, I despatched Mr. Larmer and the Doctor, Muirhead and Whiting, supplied with four days’ provisions and water. The party was directed to look well around the scrub, and on discovering the track to follow it, wherever it led, until they found Mr. Cunningham or his remains; for in such a country, I began to despair of discovering him alive, after so long an absence. They did not return until the evening of the 28th, when all they brought of Mr. Cunningham, was his saddle and bridle, whip, one glove, two straps, and a piece of paper folded like a letter, inside of which were cut (as with a penknife) the letters N. E. Mr. Larmer reported, that having easily found the track of the horse, beyond the scrub, they had followed it, until they came to where the horse lay dead, having still the saddle on, and the bridle in its mouth; the whip and straps had been previously found, and from these circumstances, the tortuous track of the horse, and the absence of Mr. Cunningham’s own footsteps for some way, from where the horse was found; it was considered that he had either left the animal in despair, or that it had got away from him. At all events, it had evidently died for want of water; but the fate of its unfortunate rider was still a mystery.

It appeared from Mr. Larmer’s map of Mr. Cunningham’s track, that he had deviated from our line after crossing Bullock creek, and had proceeded about fourteen miles to the north-west, where marks of his having tied up his horse and lain down, induced the party to believe, that he had there passed the first dreary night of his wandering.

From that point, he appeared to have intended to return, and by the zig-zag
course he took, that he had either been travelling in the dark, or looking for his own track, that he might retrace it. In this manner, his steps actually approached within a mile of our route, but in such a manner, that he appeared to have been going south, while we were travelling north, (on the 18th). Thus, he had continued to travel southward, or south-south-west, full 14 miles, crossing his own track not far from where he first quitted our route. On his left, he had the dry channel (Bullock creek), with the water-gum-trees (eucalypti), full in view, though without ever looking into it for water. * Had he observed this channel, and followed it downwards, he must have found our route; and had he traced it upwards, he must have come upon the water-holes, where I had an interview with the two natives, and thus, perhaps, have fallen in with me. From the marks of his horse having been tied to four different trees, at the extreme southern point which he reached, it appeared, that he had halted there some time, or passed there the second night. That point was not much more than half a mile to the westward of my track out on the 21st. From it, he had returned, keeping still more to the westward, so that he actually fell in with my track of the 19th, and appeared to have followed it backwards for upwards of a mile, when he struck off at a right angle to the north-west.

It was impossible to account for this fatal deviation, even had night, as most of the party supposed, overtaken him there. It seemed, that he had found my paper directing him to trace my steps backwards, and that he had been doing this, where the paper marked “N. E.” had been found, and which I, therefore, considered a sort of reply to my note. If we were right, as to the nights, this must have taken place on the very day, on which I had passed that way, and when my eye eagerly caught at every dark coloured distant object, in hopes of finding him! After the deviation to the north-west, it appears, that Mr. Cunningham made some detours about a clear plain, at one side of which his horse had been tied for a considerable time, and where it is probable he had passed his third night, as there were marks, where he had lain down in the long dry grass. From this point, only his horse’s tracks had been traced, not his own steps, which had hitherto accompanied them; and from the twisting and turning of the course to where it lay dead, we supposed he had not been with the horse after it left this place. The whip and straps seemed to have been trod off from the bridle-reins to which Mr. Cunningham was in the habit of tying his whip, and to which also the straps had been probably attached, to afford the animal more room to feed, when fastened to trees.

To the place, therefore, where Mr. Cunningham’s own steps had last been seen, I hastened on the morning of the 29th April, with the same men, Muirhead and Whiting, who had so ably and humanely traced all the tracks of the horse, through a distance of 70 miles.

The spot seemed well chosen, as a halting place, being at a few trees which advanced beyond the rest of the wood into a rather extensive plain: a horse, tied there, could have been seen from almost any part around, and it is not improbable, that Mr. Cunningham left the animal there fastened, and that it had afterwards got loose, and had finally perished for want of water.

We soon found the print of Mr. Cunningham’s footsteps in two places: in one,
coming towards the trees where the horse had been tied, from a thick scrub east of them; in the other, leading from these trees in a direction straight northward. Pursuing the latter steps, we found them continuous in that direction, and, indeed, remarkably long and firm, the direction being preserved even through thick brushes.

This course was direct for the Bogan; and it was evident, that, urged by intense thirst, he had at length set off, with desperate speed for the river, having parted from his horse, where the party had supposed. That he had killed and eaten the dog in the scrub, whence his footsteps had been seen to emerge was probable, as no trace of the animal was visible beyond it; and as it was difficult, otherwise, to account for his own vigorous step, after an abstinence of three days and three nights. I then regretted, that I had not, at the time, examined the scrub, but, when we were at his last camp (the trees on the plain), we were most interested in Mr. Cunningham’s further course.

This we traced more than two miles, during which he had never stopped, even to look behind towards the spot where, had he left his horse, he might still have seen him. Having at length lost the track on some very hard ground, we exhausted the day in a vain search for it. On returning to the camp, I found that Mr. Larmer, whom I had sent with two armed men down the Bogan, had nearly been surrounded, at only three miles from our camp, by a tribe of natives carrying spears. Amongst these, were two, who had been with us on the previous day, and who called to the others to keep back. They told Mr. Larmer, that they had seen Mr. Cunningham’s track in several parts of the bed of the Bogan; that he had not been killed, but had gone to the westward, (pointing down the Bogan,) with the “Myall (i.e. wild) Blackfellows.” Thus, we had reason to hope that our friend had, at least, escaped the fate of his unfortunate horse, by reaching the Bogan. This was what we wished; but no one could have supposed, that he would have followed the river downwards, into the jaws of the wild natives, rather than upwards. His movements show, that he believed he had deviated to the eastward of our route, rather than to the westward; and this mistake accounts for his having gone down the Bogan.

Had he not pursued that fatal course, or had he killed the horse rather than the dog, and remained stationary, his life would have been saved. The result of our twelve days’ delay and search was only the discovery, that had we pursued our journey down the Bogan, Mr. Cunningham would have fallen in with our track and rejoined us; and that, while we halted for him, he had gone a-head of us, and out of reach.

April 30. — I put the party in movement, along the left bank of the Bogan, its general course being north-west, and about five miles from our camp we crossed the same solitary line of shoe-marks, seen the day before, and still going due north! With sanguine hopes we traced it to a pond in the bed of the river, and the two steps by which Mr. Cunningham first reached water, and in which he must have stood while allaying his burning thirst, were very plain in the mud! The scales of some large fish lay upon them, and I could not but hope, that even the most savage natives would have fed a white man, circumstanced as Mr. Cunningham must then
have been. Overseer Burnett, Whiting and the Doctor, proceeded in search of him
down the river, while the party continued, as well as the dense scrubs of casuarinæ
permitted, in a direction parallel to its course. Just as we found Mr. Cunningham’s
footsteps, a column of smoke arose from the woods to the southward, and I went
in search of the natives, Bulger accompanying me with his musket. After we had
advanced in the direction of the smoke two miles, it entirely disappeared, and we
could neither hear, nor see, any other traces of human beings in these dismal
solitudes. The density of the scrubs had obliged me to make some detours to the
left, so that I did not reach the Bogan, till long after it was quite dark. Those who
had gone in search of Mr. Cunningham, did not arrive at our camp that night,
although we sent up several sky-rockets, and fired some shots.

May 1. — The party came in from tracing Mr. Cunningham’s steps, along the dry
bed of the Bogan, and we were glad to find that the impressions continued. There
appeared to be the print of a small naked foot of some one, either accompanying or
tracking Mr. Cunningham. At one place, were the remains of a small fire, and the
shells of a few muscles, as if he had eaten them. It was now most desirable to get a-
head of this track, and I lost no time in proceeding, to the extent of another day’s
journey parallel to the Bogan, or, rather, so as to cut off a great bend of it.

We crossed some good, undulating ground, open and grassy, the scenery being
finer, from the picturesque grouping and character of the trees, than any we had
hitherto seen. On one of these open tracts, I wounded a female kangaroo at a far
shot of my rifle, and the wretched animal was finally killed after a desperate fight
with the dogs.

There is something so affecting in the silent and deadly struggle between the
harmless kangaroo and its pursuers, that I have sometimes found it difficult to
reconcile the sympathy such a death excites, with our possession of canine teeth, or
our necessities, however urgent they might be.

“The huntsman’s pleasure is no more,” indeed, when such an animal dies thus
before him, persecuted alike by the civilized and the savage. In this instance, a
young one, warm from the pouch of its mother, frisked about at a distance, as if
unwilling to leave her, although it finally escaped. The nights were cold, and I
confess that thoughts of the young kangaroo did obtrude at dinner, and were
mingled with my kangaroo-steak.

As we turned to our right, in the afternoon, in search of the Bogan, we
encountered some casuarina scrub, to avoid which, we had to wind a little, so that
we only made the river at dusk, and at a part of the bed which was dry. Water, as
we afterwards found, was near enough upwards, but the two parties sent in the
evening having by mistake both sought for it in the other direction, we had none till
early in the morning.

May 2. — Five natives were brought to me by Whiting and Tom Jones, on
suspicion; one of them having a silk pocket-handkerchief, which they thought
might have belonged to Mr. Cunningham.

The native wore it fastened over his shoulders, and seemed so careless about our
scrutiny, that I could not think he had obtained the handkerchief by any violence;
and still less from Mr. Cunningham, as it was engrained with a smoky tinge, apparently derived from having been long in his possession. No mark was upon it, and the only information, we could obtain, as to where they got it, was the answer "old fellow," and pointing to the north-east. As these men had been at some out-station of ours, and could speak a little English, and as they had a young kangaroo dog, called by them "olony" (Maloney), I did not think at the time that the handkerchief had belonged to Mr. Cunningham; and the men appointed to attend him, declared, they had never seen that handkerchief in his hands.

These five natives were overtaken suddenly, at a waterhole two miles lower down the Bogan. The name of him, with the handkerchief, was "Werrajouit," those of the other four "Yarree Buckenba," and "Tackijally Buckenba," (brothers) "Youimoòba," and "Werrayoy," (youths). The most intelligent was "Tackijally," and even he understood but little, not enough to comprehend any thing I said, about the white man lost in the bush.

To secure their good will and best services, however, I immediately gave them three tomahawks; and when Yarree Buckenba took a new handkerchief from my pocket, I presented him with it. They accompanied us, when we moved forward to encamp nearer water. We passed a small pond, the name of which was Burdenda, and afterwards came to Cudduldury, where we encamped, with the intention of making what further search we could for Mr. Cunningham.

While the men were pitching the tents, at this place, I rode with the natives, at their request, towards some ponds lower down. There, by their cooys and their looks, they seemed to be very anxious about somebody in the bush, beyond the Bogan. I expected to see their chief; at all events, from these silent woods something was to emerge, in which my guides were evidently much interested, as they kept me waiting nearly an hour for

"Th’ unseen genius of the wood."

At length a man of mild but pensive countenance, athletic form, and apparently about fifty years of age, came forth, leading a very fine boy, so dressed with green boughs, that only his head and legs remained uncovered; a few emu-feathers being mixed with the wild locks of his hair. I received him in this appropriate costume, as a personification of the green bough, or emblem of peace.*

One large feather decked the brow of the chief; which with his nose, was tinged with yellow ochre. Having presented the boy to me, he next advanced with much formality towards the camp, having "Tackijally" on his right, the boy walking between, and rather in advance of both, each having a hand on his shoulder.

The boy’s face had a holiday look of gladness, but the chief remained so silent and serious, without, however, any symptoms of alarm, that my recollections of him then, and as he appeared next day, when better acquainted, are as of two distinct persons.

To this personage, all the others paid the greatest deference, and it is worthy of remark, that they always refused to tell his name, or that of several others, while those of some of the tribe were “familiar in our mouths as household words.” The
boy, who was called Talâmbe Nadóo, was not his son; but he took particular care of him. This tribe gloried in the name of “Myall,” which the natives nearer to the colony apply in terror and abhorrence to the “wild blackfellows,” to whom they usually attribute the most savage propensities.

Not a word could this chief of the Myalls speak, besides his own language; and his slow and formal approach indicated that it was, undoubtedly, the first occasion, on which he had seen white men. It was evident, at once, that he was not the man to wander to stock-stations; and that, whatever others of his race might do, he preferred an undisputed sway,

“Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds.”

Numbers of the tribe came about us, but they retired at the chief’s bidding. Not one, however, except those first met with in the Bogan, could speak any of the jargon, by which the natives usually communicate with the stockmen. We could not make them understand, that we were in search of one of our party, who was lost; neither could Muirhead and Whiting, who were returning to follow up Mr. Cunningham’s track, prevail on any of these natives to accompany them.

May 3. — The two men having departed, to take up Mr. Cunningham’s track, I must here observe, that the footsteps had not been discovered in the Bogan, either at our last camp, or at this, although Whiting and Tom Jones had been in search of them, when they found the man with a handkerchief; it was, therefore, most important to ascertain, if possible, where, and under what circumstances, the footsteps disappeared. The skill, with which these men had followed the slightest impressions, was remarkable; and I fixed my hopes on the result of their further exertions.

I cannot say, that I then expected, they would find Mr. Cunningham, conceiving it was more probable, that he had left the Bogan, and gone northward towards our stations on the Macquarie, a river distant only a short day’s journey from the Bogan. My anxiety about him was embittered with regret at the inauspicious delay of our journey, which his disappearance had occasioned; and I was too impatient on both subjects, to be able to remain inactive at the camp. I, therefore, set out, followed by two men on horseback, with the intention of reconnoitring the country to the southward, taking with us provisions for two days. After riding 17 miles, the first eight through thick scrub, we came into a more open and elevated country, where we saw pigeons, a sign that water was not distant, on some side of us. The hills were covered with a quartzose soil, containing angular fragments. The callitris pyramidalis, and the stirculia heterophylla were among the trees. At 19 miles we crossed some dry ponds, in open forest ground, and we then continued along fine flats for five miles more, when we again intersected the dry bed of the creek. Still pursuing the same direction, and having the water-course near us on the left, we passed (at the distance of 26 miles) some native fires; but I was too anxious to examine the country before me, to stop, although I saw some of the natives seated by them. We soon after ascended a low ridge of mica-slate; beyond which we came again on the dry creek, and after crossing it several times, we finally lay down, for
the night, in its bed (which afforded the best grass), 33 miles from the party at Cudduldury. Although this water-course was perfectly dry throughout, yet it was an interesting feature, in a valley enclosed on each side by undulating hills of mica-slate; and I thought of continuing in its course next morning, in hopes, it might, at last, lead to some chain of ponds falling westward.

May 4. — Our horses had fared but indifferently as to grass, and they had no water until this morning, when we spared to each about half a gallon, of what we carried; but this supply seemed only to make them more thirsty. As soon as it was clear day-light, we continued in the direction of the creek; but, although its bed deepened, and at one place (much trodden by the natives), we discovered a hole, which had only recently dried up, still we found no water. Further on, the recent marks of the natives and their huts also were numerous; but how they existed, in this parched country, was the question! We saw, that around many trees, the roots had been taken up, and we found them without the bark, and cut into short clubs or billets, but for what purpose we could not then discover. At eleven o’clock, I changed my course to 300° from north, and, after travelling about three miles in that direction, I descried a goodly hill on my left, and soon after several others, one of which was bare of trees on the summit. After so long a journey, over unvarying flats, we had at length come rather unawares, as it seemed, into a hilly country, the heights of which were bold, rocky, and of considerable elevation. I should estimate the summit of that which we ascended, was 730 feet above the lower country at its base. The dry creek, which had led us towards these hills, from such a distance northward, had vanished through them somewhere to our left; and, bold as the range was, still we could see no better promise of water, than what this seemed to afford.

The summit, up which we forced our horses over very sharp rocks, commanded a most extensive and magnificent view of hills, both eastward and westward. The country in the north, whence we had come, was, nevertheless, higher, although the horizon there was unbroken. Southward, the general line of horizon was a low level, on which the hills terminated, as if it had been the sea. There, I had no doubt, flowed the river Lachlan, and, probably, one of the highest of the hills, was Mount Granard of Oxley. Towards the east, the most elevated hill bore 142° 30’ from N., and was at a distance of about 12 miles. It was a remarkable mass of yellow rock, naked and herbless, as if nature there had not yet finished her work. That hill had an isolated appearance; others to the westward were pointed, and smoke arose from almost every summit, even from the highest part of the mass on which we stood. Some sharp-edged rocks prevented us from riding to where the smoke appeared, and I was too lame to go on foot. No natives were visible, and I could not comprehend, what they could be all about on the various rugged summits whence smoke arose; as these people rather frequent vallies, and the vicinity of ponds of water. The region I now overlooked, was beautifully diversified with hill and dale, still I could not discover much promise of water; but as smoke ascended from one flat to the westward, I conjectured that we might there find a pool, but it was too far distant to be then of use to us. The general direction of hills appeared to be 318°
from north; that of the continuation westward of the flat higher land, N. 343°. A broad and extensive smoke was rising from the country where we had slept, and towards which I was about to return by a direct course from this hill (N. 56° E.). Accordingly, we travelled until night overtook us in an extensive, casuarina scrub, where we tied our horses, and made our fire, after a ride of at least 40 miles. During the night, we were made aware, by the crackling of falling timber, that a conflagration was approaching, and one of us by turns watched, while the others slept with their arms at hand. The state of our horses, from want of water, was by no means promising for the long journey, which was necessary to enable us to reach home next day; a circumstance on which the lives of these animals in all probability depended, especially as the grass here was very indifferent. We had also little more than a pint of water for each horse; and it was difficult to give that scanty allowance to any one of the animals, in sight of the others, so furious were they on seeing it.

May 5. — Proceeding in search of our first day’s track, we entered almost immediately the burning forest. We perceived, that much pains had been taken by the natives to spread the fire, from its burning in separate places.

Huge trees fell now and then with a crashing sound, loud as thunder, while others hung just ready to fall, and as the country was chiefly open forest, the smoke, at times, added much sublimity to the scenery. We travelled five miles through this fire and smoke, all the while in expectation of coming unawares upon the natives, who had been so busy in annoying us. At length, we saw the huts, which we had passed the day before, and soon after, three natives, who immediately got behind trees as we advanced; but although one ran off, yet the others answered my cooy, and I went towards them on foot, with a green branch. They seemed busy, digging at the root of a large tree; but on seeing me advance, they came forward with a fire-stick and sat down; I followed their example, but the cordiality of our meeting, could be expressed only by mutual laughing.

They were young men, yet one was nearly blind from ophthalmia or filth. I called up one of my men, and gave a tomahawk to the tallest of these youths, making what signs I could, to express my thirst and want of water. Looking as if they understood me, they hastened to resume their work, and I discovered, that they dug up the roots for the sake of drinking the sap. It appeared, that they first cut these roots into billets, and then stripped off the bark or rind, which they sometimes chew, after which, holding up the billet and applying one end to the mouth, they let the juice drop into it. We now understood, for what purpose the short clubs, which we had seen the day before, had been cut. The youths resumed their work the moment they had received the tomahawk, without looking more at us or at the tool.

I thought this nonchalance rather singular, and attributed their assiduity either to a desire to obtain for us some of the juice, which would have been creditable to their feelings; or, to the necessity for serving some more powerful native, who had set them to that work. One had gone, apparently to call the tribe, so I continued my journey without further delay. We soon regained our track of the first day, and I followed it with some impatience back to the camp. My horse had been ill on the
second day, and as this was the third, on which it, as well as the others, had gone without water, they were so weak, that, had we been retarded by any accident another night in the bush, we must have lost them all. They could be driven on only with difficulty, nevertheless, we reached the camp before sunset.

The tidings brought by the men sent after Mr. Cunningham’s footsteps, were still most unsatisfactory. They had followed the river bed back for the first twelve miles from our camp, without finding in it a single pond. They had traced the continuation of his track to where it disappeared near some recent fires, where many natives had been encamped. Near one of these fires, they found a portion of the skirt or selvage of Mr. Cunningham’s coat; numerous small fragments of his map of the colony; and, in the hollow of a tree, some yellow printed paper, in which he used to carry the map. The men examined the ground for half a mile all around without finding more of his footsteps, or any traces of him, besides those mentioned. It was possible, and indeed, as I then thought, probable, that having been deprived by the natives of his coat, he might have escaped from them by going northward, towards some of the various cattle stations on the Macquarie. I learnt that when the men returned with these vestiges of poor Cunningham, there was great alarm amongst the natives, and movements by night, when the greater part of the tribe decamped, and amongst them the fellow with the handkerchief, who never again appeared. The chief, or king (as our people called him), continued with us, and seemed quite unconscious of anything wrong. This tribe seemed too far from the place, where the native camp had been, to be suspected of any participation in the ill treatment with which we had too much reason to fear, Mr. Cunningham had met. As we had no language to explain, even that one of our party was missing, I could only hope, that, by treating these savages kindly, they might be more disposed, should they ever see or hear of Mr. Cunningham, to assist him to rejoin us. To delay the party longer was obviously unnecessary; and, indeed, the loss of more time must have defeated the object of the expedition, considering our limited stock of provisions.

I, therefore, determined on proceeding by short journeys along the Bogan, accompanied by these natives, not altogether without the hope, that Mr. Cunningham might still be brought to us, by some of them.

Chapter IV.

Continue along the Bogan, guided by the natives — Their caution in approaching the haunts of others — Their accurate knowledge of localities — Introduced to the Bungàn tribe — Superiority of the king how displayed — Dangerous mistake — A true savage — The king of the Bogan takes his leave — Kangaroos numerous — Beauty of the shrubs — Dangerous consequence of surprising a native — Wounded native led to our camp — His confidence gained by kind treatment — Oxley’s Table-land — Mr. Larmer’s excursion to it — Narrow escape from the loss of the cattle — The party followed by a clamorous tribe — A parley — Their various complexions — Decorous behaviour — Naked plains — A native visitor — Soft earth of the plains — Ride to the
Darling — The water sweet — The party encamps on a favourable position on the river.

May 6. — GUIDED by Tackijally we proceeded, crossing the Bogan for the first time, and travelling along its right bank to Bugubadá, a distance of eight miles.

May 7. — Proceeded, again accompanied by Tackijally, under the orders of the king, who compelled him to go, although he seemed very unwilling or lazy. The advantage of having such guides was, that being now uncertain as to the further course of the Bogan, which had taken a great bend northward, we could thus make straight for each proposed water-hole, without following the bends of the river. The knowledge of the people was so exact as to localities, that I could ascertain in setting out, the true bearing of those places by the direction in which they pointed; and in travelling on such a bearing, any obstacle in the way, was sure to be avoided by following the suggestions of the natives. In this manner, we now travelled. Another great advantage gained in the company of the natives was, our being perfectly safe from the danger of sudden collision with a tribe. Their caution, in approaching water-holes was most remarkable; for they always cooyed from a great distance, and even on coming near a thick scrub, they would sometimes request me to halt, until they could examine it. This day, we passed, in the channel of the Bogan, a long and deep reach or lagoon, called Mudà, of which the natives had made much mention; but to have remained at this water, would have made the day’s journey too short; so we proceeded to a smaller hole named Walwàdyer, having crossed and recrossed the dry channel of the Bogan.

May 8. — Tackijally, who had of late steadily conducted us to water, came up, when we were ready to start, and shewed me the direction in which I was to find water, at the end of the day’s journey, which appeared to be, as he pointed, 343°. He then held up the opossum skins of his cloak, making signs in that manner, that he went to seek opossums, but should rejoin us afterwards.

We twice crossed the Bogan in the first half mile, and then traversed an open plain, the surface of which was flat, firm, and nearly bare. As we reached the northern skirts, the king, with Talambé Nadoo, and Tackijally rejoined us.

At four miles we passed a good pond called Däumbwan. We encamped further on, at a place called Murrebouga, where there was a large pond, the direct distance from Walwàdyer being 5¼ miles; and it was a curious test of the accuracy of the native’s local knowledge, that although he recommended this pond of Murrebouga, by merely pointing in its direction, I had, by following with compass the course indicated, hit the very pond to which he meant us to go.

May 9. — Again guided by Tackijally, we travelled towards Darôbal, the distance being 7¼ miles. We several times crossed the bed of the Bogan, and in this day’s journey, we were joined by Dalumbé Tugànda, and others of the Bungàn tribe, to whom the chief was anxious to introduce us. We had this day, an opportunity of witnessing his superiority in those qualifications by which, he was, no doubt, distinguished among the savage tribes. We had overtaken a strong man with a bad countenance, prowling along through the bush; and being, as it appeared, a friend
of the king’s, he continued with us. An opossum in a tree had baffled all the
devour of himself and some young men to get at it, when they cooyed for the
king. Our royal friend came, climbed the tree in an instant, and after a cursory
examination, dropped some small sticks down the hollow of the trunk; then
listening, he pointed, as by instinct, to a part of the tree much lower down, where,
by making a small incision, the others immediately got the animal out.

May 10. — We moved (on 345°) for Nyingan, which we reached at half-past
twelve. We passed on our left, Borribilu, and there I was introduced by the king to a
new tribe. On first espying these people seated under a tree, at a great distance, near
the river-bank, he directed my attention that way by using the same gestures, which
he was accustomed to make in giving me notice of a kangaroo or emu. I
accordingly left my horse, going cautiously forward with my rifle. The chief,
however, kept by me, anxiously calling out with a pathetic voice, “Myen,” “Myen,”
which words, as I afterwards learnt, meant Men! Men! But it was not until a thought
had passed in my mind of firing among the group, that I had the good fortune to
discover my mistake. The figures seated, and covered with grey clay, had very much
the resemblance of a grey species of kangaroo, which we had often seen on the
Bogan. I then went forward with him, and was received with the most demure
inattention; that is to say, by the natives sitting cross-legged, with their eyes fixed on
the ground, which it appeared was their formal mode of expressing respect or
consideration for strangers, when first received.

Nyingan was a long pond of water, on which were many ducks, and those birds
called in the colony, native companions. The blacks sat down at a fire nearer to us
than usual, and the strong man with a bad countenance, particularly attracted my
attention.

I prevailed on him to sit, until I sketched his face; for which piece of civility I
gave him a tomahawk. Late at night, when I was about to go to sleep, he came
softly up to my tent, demanding something in a whisper. I shewed him my rifle, and
gave the man on watch strict orders to look sharp. This savage was, twice
afterwards, caught about the carts during the night, and in the morning, he was seen
pointing out to other natives the cart on which the flour was placed. I never saw a
worse countenance on any native; and I was deprived even of the slight comfort of
a doubt as to poor Cunningham’s fate, on looking at it.

May 11. — The king, who had most kindly accompanied us on every day’s
journey from Cuddûldury, carefully pointing out the open parts of the country, and
the water-holes, on which to encamp, this morning took leave of us, having
previously been at some pains, to introduce us to the Bungän tribe. These last
natives did not, however, so well understand our wants; and I was then rather
inclined to be rid of them, and push on at a faster rate than they would allow me. I,
therefore, refused to halt, as they wished, at Condûrgo, and proceeded. Our new
acquaintance followed, until the dogs started after some kangaroos, and having
been long absent, I sent in search of them, when some of the natives were caught
carrying off a kangaroo, which the dogs had killed, and others were decoying our
animals away with them. On the kangaroo being brought to me, I gave it to the
tribe, in hopes that they would remain to eat it, and thus leave us, to pursue our journey.

They followed us, however, carrying the kangaroo, until they came to a bend of the Bogan, where they suddenly disappeared. We finally encamped on an open plain, with tolerable pasture, and near a water-hole in the river bed.

The evening was cloudy, for the first time since I had been with the party, from the commencement of the expedition; and a smart shower fell during the night.

May 12. — We set off early, travelling over rather open ground, so that we were able to pursue the river course without difficulty; and we encamped near it on a plain, after a journey of fourteen miles. Just as we reached the spot, which I had chosen for the camp, several kangaroos appeared, although we had seen none previously during the day. I hunted them with the dogs while the people were pitching the tents; and the largest was killed some way from our camp, in a scrub; so that it was necessary to bring two men to carry it home — no bad prize after the party had been living, for some time, on salt provisions.

May 13. — We started early, and the morning was beautifully serene and clear. The shrubs which gracefully fringed the plains were very picturesque in their outline, and the delicate tints of their green foliage contrasted beautifully with the more prevailing light grey tinge, and with white stems and branches; while the warmer green of one or two trees of Australian “rose-wood,” relieved the sober greyish green of the pendent acacia. At 5½ miles the river took a westerly bend, the ground on its banks being higher than usual. From a tree at this point, two small hills (supposed to be the “Twins”) bore west-north-west, distant about twelve miles. At 9 miles 35 chains, the south of the Twins bore 258°, distant about four miles; at 10 miles 28 chains, the southern of the Twins bore 249°, the northern 252°; and we encamped on reaching the creek, after a journey of fifteen miles. We had a fine view of the supposed Twins as we proceeded; and I found water, on making the river, where I wished to encamp.

May 15. — At daylight we set off for the hills (which I judged to be the Twins of Sturt), distant 8¼ miles. I found a group of small hills, composed of quartz rock, the strata of which were highly inclined, and the strike extended north-west and south-east. From the highest, which is the southern hill, I looked in vain for New-Year’s range; the horizon, in that direction, being quite unbroken; hence I concluded that this could not be the “Twins,” and I named it Mount Hopeless. Several remarkable hills appeared, however, to the west and south-west, on all of which I took bearings with the theodolite. Their surface was naked and rocky, only a few trees consisting of pine (or callitris), and some dwarf gum-trees appearing on them; but the country within two miles of their base, was more densely wooded than that nearer the Bogan. There were callitris pyramidalis, acacia longifolia, and eucalyptus, amongst the trees, and the soil contained fragments of quartz, mixed with red earth. I heard from the summit, the mogo of a native at work on some tree close by, but saw neither himself, nor the smoke of his fire. I returned in time to put the party in motion by twelve o’clock; and after a journey of 8¾ miles, we encamped, as usual, near the left bank of the Bogan. Water seemed more abundant
in this part of the river, for, on the three last occasions, we had found some, as soon as we approached the bank. The pond near our present encampment was large and deep, and there were others above and below it. As the party were pitching the tents, I was, according to my usual custom, in the bed of the Bogan with the barometer, when I heard, as from a pond lower down, some hideous yells, then a shot, and immediately afterward our overseer shouting “hold him”! I hurried up the bank and saw a native running, bleeding, and screaming most piteously. He was between me and our tents, which were beyond some trees, and quite out of sight from the Bogan; but one or two men, on their way for water, soon drew near. The overseer came to me limping, and stated, that, on approaching the pond with his gun, looking for ducks, this native was there alone, sitting with his dog beside a small fire; that, as soon as he saw Burnett, he yelled hideously, and running at him in a furious manner up the bank, he immediately threw a firestick and one of his bommerengs, the latter of which struck Burnett on the leg, the other having passed close over his shoulder. The native still advancing upon him with a bommereng, he discharged his piece in his own defence, alarmed, as any man must have been, under such circumstances. The native kept calling out loudly and pathetically, but he had now ceased running, perhaps from seeing the cattle a-head of him. Notwithstanding the entreaties of the men, that I should not go within reach of his missiles, I advanced with a green branch in my hand, towards his bleeding and helpless child of nature. Upon seeing this, he immediately ceased calling out, seemed to ask some question, and then at once threw aside the weapons which he held, and sat down on the ground. On my going up to him, I found he had received the shot on various parts of his body, but chiefly on his left hand and wrist, which were covered with blood. I with difficulty prevailed on him to go with me to the tents, making signs, that I wished to dress his wounds. This the Doctor immediately did, applying lint and Friars balsam to them. During the operation he stared wildly around him, at the sheep and bullocks, horses, tents, &c. It was evident, he had never seen, perhaps, scarcely even ever heard of, such animals as he now saw, and certainly had never before seen a white man. I gave him a piece of bread, which he did not taste, saying he should take it to “Einer” (his gin or wife). He knew not a word of the low jargon usually taught the natives by our people; but he spoke incessantly in his own purer language, scarcely a word of which we understood, beyond “you,” “two gins,” “fire,” “doctor” (coradje), and “to sleep.” One circumstance, very trifling, certainly, to mention here, may serve, however, to shew the characteristic quickness of these people. He had asked for a bit of fire to be placed beside him, (the constant habit of the naked aborigines,) and, on seeing a few sparks of burning grass running towards my feet, he called out to me “we, we,” (i.e. fire, fire!) that I might avoid having my clothes burnt. This consideration, in a savage, amid so many strange objects, and while suffering from so many new and raw wounds, received from one of us, was, at least, an instance of that natural attentiveness, if I may so call it, which sometimes distinguishes the aborigines of Australia. This man of the woods, at length, by gestures, asked my permission to depart, and, also, that he might take a fire-stick; and, in going, he said much, which,
from his looks and gestures, I understood as expressive of goodwill or thanks, in
his way. He further asked me to accompany him, till he was clear of the bullocks,
and thus he left us. This unfortunate affair arose solely from our too suddenly
approaching the water-holes, where the tribes usually resort. We had observed the
cautious, with which those natives, who guided us, always went near such places, by
preceding us a good way, and calling out; I determined, therefore, in future to
sound my bugle, where I meant to encamp, that the natives might not be surprised
by our too sudden approach, but have time to retire, if they thought proper to do
so.

May 15. — We moved off early, and travelled sixteen miles, when we reached
some good ponds on the Bogan; having passed a remarkable bend in that river, to
the westward.

May 16. — After proceeding a few miles on our route this morning, we saw from
a tree, in the skirt of a plain, a range bearing N. 331°. The bends of the creek sent
me much to the westward of that direction: and we crossed some rotten or hollow
ground, which delayed the carts. On proceeding beyond this, we came to a fire
where we heard natives shouting, and we then saw them running abreast of us, but
I did not court a closer acquaintance. Soon after, seeing an extensive tract of soft,
broken, or rotten ground before me, I took to the left, in order to gain a plain,
where the surface was firm. On reaching this plain, the dogs killed two kangaroos,
and a little further the soil changing, became red and firm, with some dry ponds,
and though there was little timber, yet I had never before seen several of the kinds
of trees. A little before sunset, we reached a slight eminence, consisting of a
compound of quartz and felspar, and from it, I had a view of New-Year’s Range of
Hume, bearing N. 97°, and of a higher range to the west of it. We finally encamped,
without water, on a fine, open, forest flat, about two miles southward of the former
range.

May 17. — At two miles from our bivouac, we crossed a small rill descending to
the south-east, from hills which might be New-Year’s range. At 5¼ miles we
encamped on the Bogan, the most northern but one of five hills, supposed to be
the New-Year’s range, bearing 240°. From this point the northern extremity of the
ridge extending from the hills, bore 25°. At twelve o’clock, I went to these heights,
and on the first I ascended, I found several stumps of pine (or *callitris pyramidalis*),
which had been cut down with an axe, the remains of them being still visible
amongst the ashes of a fire. I was thus satisfied that this was the hill on which
Captain Sturt’s party burnt the trees, when a man was missing. Still, however, a
better range to the westward was unaccounted for; but, on ascending a hill which
was still higher, and whose rocky crest was clear of trees, I was able to identify the
whole, by the bearings of the high land, as given in Captain Sturt’s book, and by the
strip of plain visible in the south, which had appeared to that traveller, to resemble
the bed of a rapid river. This plain happened to be the one we had crossed the day
before, and I had then observed the water-holes, also mentioned, and that they had
been long dry. No traces besides those already noticed, remained of the visit of the
first discoverers of New-Year’s range.
During my absence, three natives had been near the camp, two old men and one very strong and tall young one. They appeared very much afraid, and barely remained to receive the flag of truce (a green branch), sitting with their eyes fixed on the ground, and retiring soon after. I do not think, any water could be found nearer than the Bogan at this time, although I observed hollows between the hills, where it would probably remain some time after rain, and where, I suppose, Captain Sturt’s party found it. I made the latitude of the camp to be 30° 26' 24", and that of the hill 30° 27' 45" S.

May 18. — We moved off to the northward, and at seven miles, came upon the river, where there was a reach for about a mile of deep water; and soon after we attained that part of it where the bed was of granite, but quite dry. The bank was here unusually even, like that of a canal, having also little wood; no polygonum or rhagodia appeared there. Soon after, we traversed a soil composed of gravel, about the size of stones broken for roads; the fragments were a good deal rounded, and all of granite. We finally encamped on the river, after crossing its usual belt of soft, hollow ground, which was rather distressing to the bullocks. The roads of the natives frequenting this part of the Bogan, were well beaten, but none of the inhabitants made their appearance.

May 19. — We started at the usual hour, keeping first to the south of west, in order to clear the ground near the Bogan, and then on 300°. I obtained from several parts of the route, bearings on the hills west by south of New-Year’s range, and which were higher and more conspicuous than the latter.

We came upon a bend of the river with good water-holes, at 11¾ miles, and encamped as usual, on the clearest ground near it.

May 20. — We moved forwards on the bearing of west-north-west, until, at 5½ miles, we reached the top of the Pink Hills, where, for the first time, I saw Oxley’s Table-land, bearing 5° south of west, and distant apparently about thirteen or fourteen miles, also Druid’s Mount, bearing 10½° west of north. Seeing the first mentioned hill so near, I should have made for it, had I felt certain, that water remained in the swamp, mentioned by Captain Sturt, and that the bullocks could reach the hill before night. But they were now proceeding slowly and half tired; and I considered it, upon due reflection, to be more advisable, to go in a north-west direction towards the Bogan. On the western slope of these hills, we found some of the pinks in flower, from which probably they have been named. There was also an unusual verdure about the grass, and a fragrance and softness in the western breeze, which seemed to welcome us to that interior region, and imparted a mildness to the air, while picturesque clouds in the western sky, led “active fancy” into still finer regions under them.

We finally encamped on a plain about a mile from the Bogan, where the highest of Oxley’s Table-land bore 250° from north, being distant eighteen miles. We had now reached a better country for grass, than we had seen since we left Buree; and there was still a verdure in the blade and stalk, as well as a fulness in the tufts, which looked well for our poor cattle, after a continuous journey of sixteen days.

May 21. — The party halted in this plain, while Mr. Larmer went to Oxley’s
Table-land, to ascertain if the swamp there contained water. Having to take some observations, and bring up an arrear of various other matters, I could not then visit that hill, though I wished much to do so. I found its latitude to be 30° 11' 15" S., and the longitude 146° 16' 9" E. The extreme lowness of the country, and of the bed of the Bogan, which was now, according to the barometer, near the level of the sea, left little room to doubt, that the Darling could be much above that level. Mr. Larmer’s report, on returning in the evening, after a ride of forty miles, was by no means in favour of Oxley’s Table-land, as a place even of temporary encampment, there being no longer any swamp containing water; on the contrary, the only water that he could discover about the hill, after much search on and around it, was a small spring in a hollow on the northern side. His account of the surrounding country was equally unfavourable, for he stated, that it was very brushy, and without good grass. Now, it was obvious, that had we, according to a suggestion sent to the government by Captain Sturt, proceeded on the 20th of May to Oxley’s Table-land, trusting to find abundance of water, the loss of our cattle would have been inevitable. To have reached that point we must have made one long day’s journey, and the distance thence to the nearest part of the Bogan, could not have been accomplished in another. On the third day, the two preceding having been passed without water, the animals would have been unable to go further.

The specimen brought from the hill by Mr. Larmer, appeared to be a quartzose conglomerate.

May 22. — I continued my journey along the Bogan, and in crossing and recrossing it once, we passed several reaches of water. The country was generally open, and we encamped on another fine grassy plain, after travelling about twelve miles. This day, in chasing an emu, I dropped a telescope, which had been in my possession twenty-four years, having used it in the survey of many a field of battle.

May 23. — We proceeded as usual. The calls of the natives, first heard at a distance in the woods, having become more loud, and at length incessant, I answered them in a similar tone; and having halted the carts, I galloped over a bit of clear rising-ground, towards the place whence the voices came, followed by five men. A tribe of eighteen or twenty natives were coming forward, but the sight of my horse galloping, made those in the rear turn back, when I immediately alighted, and walked towards them with a green tuft. The two foremost and strongest of the party came forward, and when I sat down, they advanced with bommerengs in hand. Seeing, that they retained these weapons, I arose, upon which they, understanding me immediately, threw the bommerengs aside. I then went up to the two in advance, the tribe following behind. The leader had lost an eye, and the three principal men seemed very strong fellows. I invited them to come forward, but they hesitated, until my escort, which was still some way back, sat down. I mounted my horse to shew the animal’s docility, and thus remove their dread of it; but they immediately turned to run, whereupon I alighted, and led their chief a little nearer, but they were very unwilling to approach my party. At length I presented the one-eyed leader with a tomahawk, and they all sat down. This native seemed a manly intelligent fellow. To all which he appeared to comprehend of what I said, his
answer was, “Awoy,” accompanied by a nod, as if he had said, “O yes.” On my
mentioning “Goindura Gally,” and making the signs of paddling a canoe, he
pointed immediately to the westward. This term, I understood from the Bungàn
tribe to mean salt-water; water being kally, gally, or gallo. So “bungàn gallo,” was
the name of the lower Bogan, and Bògan gallo that of the upper Bogan.
“Goindùra” I understood to mean salt, in consequence of that word having been
used by the chief of the Bogan, when I shewed him some salt. Among the tribe we
now communicated with, there appeared a greater variety of feature and
complexion, than I had ever seen in aboriginal natives elsewhere; most of them had
straight brown hair, but others had Asiatic features, much resembling Hindoos,
with a sort of woolly hair. There were two old men with grey beards, who sat silent;
and one who maintained a very ceremonious face, seemed intent on preserving
decorum, for he silenced a boy with a slight blow, who had eagerly spoken, while I
was endeavouring to remind them of the former exploring party. After they had sat
a very short time, and I had pointed out the direction in which I was proceeding,
they arose and went away, and we continued our journey. After we had advanced a
mile or two, a deep reach of the Bogan appeared on our right, or northward; and
one of the natives, followed by others, who remained at some distance behind,
came up to tell us there was water. We accordingly gave the cattle some, and then
went on, finally encamping on a bit of plain near the Bogan, where Oxley’s Table-
land bore about south-south-east, and having travelled nearly twelve miles.
Observed latitude 33° 3' 29" S.

May 24. — The party moved this morning about seven miles towards the west,
until Oxley’s Table-land bore 125°. We travelled chiefly across plains, destitute of
grass; and from which we had good views of that strangely named hill, never seen
by Oxley, and in fact, not a table-land. A native came after us, bearing a small piece
of canvass, which had been thrown away at the former camp. He accompanied us
during the rest of the day’s journey, and I gave him a tomahawk, and a seventh part
of my old sword blade. He continued at the camp, and asked for every thing he
saw, but we took care not to understand him. All over these plains the ground was
so soft, being quite clear of roots or sward, that the cart wheels sunk very deep in it.
The soil, nevertheless, appeared to be excellent, although it was naked like fallow
land, for the roots of the umbelliferous plants which grew there, had so little hold,
that they were easily set loose by the winds, and lay about the surface. At dark, five
natives advanced along our track, shouting, but remaining at a distance. I sent two
men to them (one with a fire-stick), in order to tell them we were going to sleep.
Two of the party were old men, one having hoary hair, and all five carried spears,
which they stuck in the ground, and sat down, as soon as our people went up to
them. After that interview, they decamped towards the Bogan.

May 25. — Early this morning, the same men came to a tree, at some distance
from the tents. I went to them and shewed them my watch, compass, &c.; when
they pointed to the northward, making motions by which I supposed, they meant to
represent three courses of the sun; and I therefore concluded, that they had seen
me on the Karaula three years before. I then gave them a piece of my broken
sword, and set off with a party on horseback, to see the river Darling. By half-past ten, I made this river, at a distance of eight miles from our camp, by riding first, three miles west, and then five in the direction of 20° north of west by compass. The people with me immediately declared, it was our old acquaintance the Karaula, unaltered in a single feature. Here, we saw the same description of broken earthy banks; the same kind of lofty trees, and the long, deep, and still reaches, so characteristic of a lengthened and slumbering course. But the great question to be determined was, the quality of the water, which, appearing to me, from the top of the bank, very transparent, and of a greenish tinge, and without any indication of a current, I did not doubt was salt, as when first discovered, in nearly the same latitude, by Sturt. I was, however, so agreeably surprised, on descending the steep bank, to find the taste perfectly sweet, that I began to doubt, if this river could be “The Darling,” thinking, from the difference in the longitude especially, that it might still be the lower part of the Bogan, the course of which continued westward, and on my right, as I rode from the camp. I proceeded some distance down the river, and found the reaches to extend first west-north-west, next north-north-east (half a mile), then south-west by south (1½ miles); I was at length satisfied that this was indeed the river Darling, and I was no less gratified in perceiving a slight current in it, with no obstruction for our boats as far as I had yet examined. The paths of the natives were fresh trodden, but we saw none of them, and I returned towards the camp, where I arrived by two P. M. The bed of the Darling, at the place where we reached it, could not be elevated more, according to the state of the barometrical column, (as compared at the time with that of my barometer, as it had stood at Paramatta bridge), than 250 feet above the level of the sea. I found, that the natives whom I had left at the camp, no longer remained there, having quitted it soon after my departure, apparently afraid of the sheep!

May 26. — A party of our friends the natives again made their appearance; and five of them, including the three who had visited us yesterday, took their stations under the same tree, while a number of gins and children remained on the border of the scrub, half a mile off. Just before the camp broke up, I went to them, and gave a tomahawk to an old grey-haired man. The chief spokesman was a ferocious forward sort of savage, to whom, I would rather have given anything than a tomahawk, from the manner in which he handled my pockets. My horse awaited me, and I by signs explained to them, that I was going. I suspect that “Watta” is their familiar name for the Darling, from their use of this word, on any sign being made in reference to the river. We proceeded on a bearing of 251°, until at 15 miles and 45 chains, we reached the bank of the Darling. The cattle had been, at some places, rather distressed from the heaviness of the ground, having had scarcely any food for the last two days, except a hard, dry, composite plant, which usurped the place of grass. The camp I had left, which was in other respects a fine position, could not possibly have served as a dépôt for the cattle. We were extremely fortunate, however, in the place to which the bounteous hand of providence had led us. Abundance of pasture; indeed such excellent grass as we had not seen in the whole journey, covered the fine open forest ground on the bank of the river!
were four kinds, but the cattle appeared to relish most a strong species of anthistiria, or kangaroo grass. But the position to which we had come, on so straight a line, reaching it, however, only at sunset, surpassed anything I had expected to find on this river. It consisted of the highest ground in the neighbourhood, rising gradually from the lower levels, by which we had approached the river, to an elevated and extensive plateau, overlooking a deep and broad reach. This was covered or protected on the north by a green swamp, which was again shut in by an extensive bend of the Darling. On the west and north-west there was little timber in the way; and the whole place seemed extremely favourable for the object, about which I was then most anxious — namely, the establishment of a secure depot, and place of defence.

Chapter V.

Rain at last — Stockade erected — Named Fort Bourke — Visited by the natives — Mortality among them from small-pox — Results of the journey — Friendly disposition of a native — Boats launched — Presents to natives — They become importunate — We leave the depot and embark in the boats — Slow progress down the river — Return to the depot — Natives in canoes — Excursion with a party on horseback — A perfumed vegetable — Interview with natives — Present them with tomahawks — Unsuccessful search for Mr. Hume’s marked tree — Ascend D’Urban’s group — Promising view to the southward — A burnt scrub full of spinous dead boughs — A night without water — Return to the camp — The party proceeds down the Darling — Surprise a party of natives — New acacia — Mr. Hume’s tree found — Fall in the Darling — Surprised by a party of natives — Emu killed by the dogs — Dunlop’s range — Meet the Puppy tribe — Ascend Dunlop’s range — High land discovered to the westward — Grass pulled and piled in ricks by the natives — Hills beyond the Darling — Convenient refraction — Native huts — Interview with the Red tribe — The Puppy tribe — How to avoid the sandy hills and soft plains — Macculloch’s range — Visit a hill beyond the Darling — View from its summit.

May 27. — DURING the night the wind blew, and rain fell, for the first time, since the party left the colony. As we had been travelling for the last month on ground, which must have become impassable after two days of wet weather, it may be imagined what satisfaction our high position gave me, when I heard the rain patter. The morning being fair, I reconnoitred the course of the river, and the environs of our camp, and at once selected the spot, on which our tents then stood, for a place of defence, and a station in which the party should be left with the cattle. The boats were immediately lowered from the carriage, and although they had been brought 500 miles across mountain ranges, and through trackless forests, we found them in as perfect a state as when they left the dock-yard at Sydney.

Our first care was to erect a strong stockade of rough logs, that we might be secure under any circumstances; for we had not asked permission to come there from the inhabitants, who had been reported to be numerous, and who would of
course soon make their appearance. All hands were set to fell trees and cut branches, and in a very short time, a stockade was in progress, capable of a stout resistance against any number of natives. As the position was, in every respect, a good one, either for its present purpose, or, hereafter perhaps, for a township, and consequently was one important point gained by this expedition, I named it Fort Bourke, after His Excellency the present Governor, the better to mark the epoch in the progress of interior discovery.

May 28. — This morning some natives appeared on the opposite bank of the river, shouting and calling, but keeping at a respectful distance from the bullocks, some of which had already crossed. At length they ventured over, and, on my going to meet them, they sat down, about 200 yards from the tents. The party consisted of four men and a boy, followed by seven women and children, who sat at a little distance behind. The men carried no spears, and looked diminutive and simple; most of them had had the small-pox, but the marks were not larger than pin heads. I found, they had either seen or heard of Captain Sturt's party, for pointing to the sun, they shewed me that six revolutions of that source of heat, had elapsed since the visit of others like us. Other gestures, such as a reference to covering, and expressions of countenance, made their indications of the lapse of time, plain enough. It seemed to me, that the disease which it was understood had raged among them, (probably from the bad water,) had almost depopulated the Darling, and that these people were but the remains of a tribe. The females were numerous in proportion to the males, and they were not at all secluded by the men, as in places where the numerical proportions were different. All these natives (with the exception of the boy), had lost the right front tooth. They had a very singular mode of expressing surprise, making a curious short whistle by joining the tongue and lips. The gins were hideous, notwithstanding they were rouged with red ochre, by way, no doubt, of setting off their charms. I gave to one man, a piece of my sword blade, and to another, a tomahawk, which he carefully wrapt in the paper in which I had kept it, and he seemed much pleased with his present. They pointed to the west, as the general course of the river.

The results of our journey thus far, were, first, the survey of the Bogan, nearly from its sources to its junction with the Darling. This, I considered no trifling addition to Australian geography; for the knowledge of the actual course of a long river, however diminutive the channel, may often determine to a great extent, the character of the country, through which it passes. In the present instance, it may be remarked, that had Captain Sturt considered the course of this river, when he named the lower part of it “New-Year’s Creek,” the idea, that the plains, which he saw to the southward of New-Year’s range, formed the “channel of a broad and rapid river,” never could have occurred to him; for the basin of the Bogan being bounded on the west, by a succession of low hills, no other river could have been reasonably looked for, in such a direction. Again, the connexion of that chain of low hills, with the higher lands of the colony, being thus indicated by the course of the Bogan; it is not probable, that this traveller, had he been aware of the fact, would have described New-Year’s range, which is about the last of these hills, as
“the first elevation in the interior of Eastern Australia, to the westward of Mount Harris.” On the contrary, the divergent lines of the Bogan and the Lachlan, might rather have been supposed to include a hilly country, which, increasing in height, in proportion as its breadth thus became greater, would naturally form that high ground so likely to separate the Upper Darling from the valley of the Murray.

2ndly. The continuous course of the Bogan into the Darling being thus at length determined, Duck creek, a deeper chain of ponds in the level country nearer to the Macquarie, could only be considered the final channel for the waters of that river, in their course towards the Darling; and it only remained to be ascertained on our return, at what point, these waters of the Macquarie separated during its floods from the main stream.

3rdly. The non-existence of any swamp under Oxley’s Table-land, furnished another proof of the extreme vicissitudes of climate, to which that part of Australia is subject. This spot had been specially recommended to government by Captain Sturt, as the best place for my depot, on account of the water to be found there, whereas we had found that vicinity so dry, that had I relied too implicitly on the suggestion, I must, as already observed, in all probability, have lost the cattle.

4thly. The water of the Darling, which when discovered had been salt, was now fresh, thus proving, that there was on this last occasion, a greater abundance of water in the river; while the swamp dried up, proved that less remained upon the surface than when this country had been previously visited.

The geological character of the country was obvious enough, the hills consisting of quartz rock, and that fine grained red sandstone which characterises the most barren regions of New South Wales. Below this rock granite appeared in the bed of the Bogan, precisely at the place where this river, after a long course nearly parallel to the Macquarie, at length takes a remarkable turn westward towards the Darling.

May 29. — We this day completed the stockade, and had felled most of the timber near it; and I was glad to find, that the blacks had already resumed their usual occupations. One of those, whom I saw yesterday, while passing down the river to-day on a piece of bark, perceived Mr. Larmer fishing, upon which he approached the river bank, and after throwing to him a fish which he had caught, continued in his frail bark to float down the stream. This was a most prepossessing act of kindness, and I begged Mr. Larmer to endeavour to recognise the man again, and shew our sense of it, by suitable presents.

May 30. — This morning we launched the boats, and one of them, which had never floated before, was called by the men “The Discovery.” I therefore named the other “The Resolution,” telling them that they had now the names of Captain Cook’s two ships for our river navigating vessels. Most of the loads were also arranged to-day for embarkation, including three months’ rations: three months supplies were also left for the garrison, besides a store of one month for the whole party, to serve for the journey home. This day our Vulcan presented me with a good blade, forged on the Darling and tempered in its waters. We were fortunate in our blacksmith, for he also made some good pikes or spear-heads, which he mounted on long poles, to be carried in the boats.
May 31. — The same natives with an old man, and a very wild looking young one, covered with red ochre, “total gules,” came to their tree, and I went to them. I gave the old man a spike-nail sharpened, but he asked for a tomahawk, and I then gave him one. This last gift only made our visitors more importunate; but I at length left them, to attend to more important matters. Soon after, the man to whom I first gave a tomahawk, beckoned me to come to him again, and I went up with my rifle, demanding what more he wanted; whereupon he only laughed, and soon after pulled my handkerchief from my pocket. I restored it to its place in a manner that showed I disliked the freedom taken with it. I then sent a ball into a tree a good way off, which seemed to surprise them; and having made them understand that such a ball would easily pierce through six black fellows, I snapped my fingers at one of their spears, and hastened to the camp. I considered these hints the more necessary, as the natives seemed to think us very simple fools, who were ready to part with everything. Thus enlightened as to the effect of our fire-arms, these thankless beggars disappeared; although several gins and some men still sat on the opposite bank, observing our boats.

June 1. — Everything being ready, I embarked with Mr. Larmer and 14 men, leaving the depot in charge of Joseph Jones (assistant overseer), and six other men, armed with four muskets and as many pistols. We proceeded well enough, some way down the river, but at length a shallow reach, first occasioned much delay, and afterwards, rocks so dammed up the channel, that it was necessary to unload and draw the boats over them. Our progress was thus extremely slow, notwithstanding the activity and exertions of the men, who were almost constantly in the water, although a bitter cold wind blew all day. By sunset we had got over a bad place, where there was a considerable fall, when, on looking round the point, we found that the bed of the river was full of rocks, to the extent of nearly a mile. I, therefore, encamped only a few miles from the depot, the latitude being 30° 9' 59" S. These unexpected impediments to our progress down the river, determined me to return to the depot with the boats, and afterwards to explore its course on horse-back, until I could discover more of its character and ultimate course. No time had yet been lost, for the horses and cattle had required some rest; and the depot was still desirable as a place of defence, while I proceeded down with the horses. We had, however, acquired such a knowledge of the bed, banks, and turnings of the river at this part, as could not have been otherwise obtained. The water being beautifully transparent, the bottom was visible at great depths, showing large fishes in shoals, floating like birds in mid-air. What I have termed rocks, are only patches of ferruginous clay which fill the lowest part of the basin of this river. The bed is composed either of that clay, or of a ferruginous sandstone — exactly similar to that on the coast near Sydney — and which resembles what was formerly called the iron-sand of England, where it occurs, as before stated, both as a fresh and salt water formation. At the narrows the quantity of running water was very inconsiderable, but, perhaps, as much as might have turned a mill. It made some noise among the stones, however, although at the very low level of this river, compared to its distance from the known coasts, it could not fall much. I was,
nevertheless, unwilling to risk the boats among the rocks, or clay banks, and accordingly decided on returning to the camp.

**June 2.** — We proceeded up the river with the boats, *re infectâ*, and reached the dépôt about two o’clock, where we found all things going on, as I had directed. As we pulled up the river, two natives appeared at a distance in one of the long reaches, fishing in two small canoes. On observing our boats they dashed the water up, paddling with their spears, and thus scudding with great rapidity to the right bank, where they left their canoes, and instantly disappeared. These vessels were of the simplest construction; so slight indeed, that it seemed to us singular how a man could float in one, for it was merely a sheet of bark, with a little clay at each end; yet there was a fire besides in each, the weather being very cold. A native, when he wishes to proceed, stands erect, and propels the canoe with the short spear he uses in fishing; striking the water with each end alternately, on each side of the canoe, and he thus glides very rapidly along.

**June 3.** — I set off with four men on horseback to examine the river downwards, proceeding first two miles on a bearing of 151°, and then south-west. At about 20 miles, we made an angle of the river, where the left bank was 50 feet high. None of the usual indications of the neighbourhood of the Darling, appeared here. No flats of *polygonum junceum*, nor falls in the ground. The river was evidently encroaching on this high bank, which consisted of red sandy earth to the depth of ten feet. Below this stratum was clay mixed with calcareous concretions. The opposite bank was lower and very grassy; and the water in the river was brackish; but a small spring oozing from the rocks abovementioned, at about two feet above the water of the river, was perfectly sweet. From this bend, the highest point of D’Urban’s group, bore 151° (from north.) About one half of the way, which we had come to-day, lay across plains, the last portion we crossed containing several hollows, thickly overgrown with the *polygonum junceum*. Between these low parts the ground was rather more elevated than usual, especially where D’Urban’s group bore 163° (from north.) The undulations were probably connected with that range, and their position afforded some clue to the western bends of the river. We passed in a scrub, a young gin and a boy. They did not begin to run until we stood still, and had called to them for some time. As there was still light to spare, I proceeded onward, travelling west-south-west, and with difficulty regained sight of the river at dusk. Here, the water was still more brackish, but quite good enough for use; and we passed the night in a hollow by the river side.

**June 4.** — At an angle of the river, below the gully in which we had slept, a rocky dyke crossed the stream in a north-north-west direction. It consisted of a very hard ferruginous sandstone, resembling that on the eastern coast. This must have been another of the many impediments to our boat navigation, had we proceeded by water, and from the general appearance of the river, I was satisfied that a passage with boats could not have been attempted in its present state, with any prospect of getting soon down. We travelled on, without seeing the river, from seven until twelve, following a south-west course, then due west, and in this direction, we crossed the broad dry bed of a water-course coming from the south-east, having
previously observed high ground on the left. The bed of this water-course was covered with a plant resembling clover or trefoil, but it had a yellow flower, and a perfume like that of woodroffe.* A fragrant breeze played over this richest of clover fields, and reminded me of new mown hay. The verdure and the perfume were new to my delighted senses, and my passion for discovering “something rich and strange” was fully gratified, while my horse, defying the rein, seemed no less pleased in the midst of so delicious a feast, as this verdure must have appeared to him. The ground seemed to rise before me, and I was proceeding with the intention of ascending the nearest elevation, to look for the Darling, when I suddenly came upon its banks, which were higher, and its bed was broader and deeper than ever! We had also arrived on it at a point occupied by a numerous tribe of blacks, judging by the number of fires, which we saw through the trees. Their roads appeared in all directions, and their gins were fishing in the river at a distance. In short, the buzz of population gave to the banks, at this place, the cheerful character of a village in a populous country. Conscious of the alarm, our first appearance was likely to produce, although I could not suppose, that all the inhabitants would run off, I hastened to the water edge with our horses (for they had not drank that morning), in order that we might, after refreshing them, recover a position favourable for a parley, with whoever might approach us. I was much pleased, though surprised, to find the water again quite fresh, and its current still sustained.* Our appearance caused less alarm, than I had even expected. A sturdy man hailed me from a distance, and came boldly up, followed by another very athletic, though old individual, and six younger men with an old woman. I alighted and met them, after sending, at their request, the horses out of sight. With difficulty, I persuaded them at length to go near the horses; but I endeavoured in vain to gain any information, as to the further course of the river. The Calle-watta was still their name for it, as it was higher up. I observed here that the old woman was a loquacious and most influential personage, scarcely allowing the older of the men to say a word. The curiosity of these people was too intense to admit of much attention on their part, at that time, either to our words or gestures, so, after giving them a tomahawk and two large nails, and refusing to let them have my pocket-handkerchief (no unusual request, for such natives always found it out), I mounted, and we galloped off to the eastward, their very singular mode of expressing surprise, being audible until we were at some distance. On reaching that point in my track, where I had in the morning changed the direction of my ride, I took off to the north-north-east, in search of the river, and at six miles we reached a branch of it, where it formed an island. We did not arrive here until long after sunset, and were, consequently, in an unpleasant state of ignorance as to the locality, but we made our fire in a hollow, as on the preceding night, and could only rely on the surrounding silence for security. The result of the excursion thus far was, that I ascertained that angle of the river which I first made on this tour, to be the part nearest of all to D'Urban’s group; that its general course thence to the lowest position at which I had seen it (the direct distance being 21 miles), is nearly two points more to the westward than the course from the depot; and that, even at such a distance from Oxley’s Table-land
and D’Urban’s group, the line of the river is evidently influenced by these heights,
thus rendering it probable that it might be found to turn still more towards the west
or north-west, on its approaching any other hills situated on the left bank.

June 5. — I awoke, thankful that we had been again guided to a solitary and secure
place of rest. That no tribe was near, admitted of little doubt, after we had seen the
morning dawn and found ourselves awake, for, had our fire been discovered by any
natives, it was very unlikely that any of us had been permitted to wake again. Being
within a mile and a half of where Captain Sturt and Mr. Hume had turned (as
indicated by the bearing given by the former of D’Urban’s group, viz. 58° E. of S.),
I looked along the river bank for the tree described by the former as having Mr.
Hume’s initials cut upon it, but without success, and at ten o’clock I left the river
and rode, on the same bearing, to D’Urban’s group. The thick scrub, having been
previously burnt, presented spikes like bayonets, which reduced our hurried ride to
a walking pace, our horses winding a course through it as the skeleton trees
permitted. In an unburnt open place, I found one solitary specimen of a tree with
light bluish green leaves, and a taste and smell resembling mustard. It was no less
remarkable for its rare occurrence and solitary character, than for the flavour of its
wood and remarkable foliage. I could obtain no seeds of it.* I ascended the highest
and most southern summit, anxiously hoping to obtain a view of Dunlop’s range.
The view was most satisfactory. I beheld a range, the first I had seen, since I lost
sight of Harvey’s. It was extensive, and descended towards the river from the
south-east, being a different kind of feature from the various detached hills, which
cannot form basins for rivers, on these dead levels, nor even supply springs.
Dunlop’s range certainly was not high, but its undulating crest, vanishing far in the
south-east, shewed its connexion with the high ground south of the Bogan; and a
long line of smoke skirting its northern base, afforded fair promise of some river or
chain of ponds, near which a native population could live. The course of the
Darling was clearly marked out by its extensive plains, and the darker line of large
trees, vanishing far in the west. Beyond, or westward of the river, no high ground
appeared, no Berkley’s range as shewn on the map, unless it might be a slight
elevation, so very low and near, as to be visible above the horizon, only from the
foot of the hill, on which I then stood. A few detached hills were scattered over the
country, between me and the Bogan; and of these Oxley’s Table-land was the most
remarkable, being a finer mass by far than Mount Helvelyn. This ridge, the features
of which are rather tame, consists of two hills (a and b), the principal, or southern
summit (a), being 910 feet, the other 660 feet, above the plain at their base. These
heights are 2½ miles from each other, which distance comprises the whole extent
of D’Urban’s group, in the line of its summits between north-east and south-west.
The steep and rocky face of the ridge thus formed, is towards the river, or
westward. Eastward, lower features branch off, and are connected by slight
undulations, with some of the otherwise isolated hills in that quarter. Towards the
base, is a very fine-grained sandstone, and at the summit, I found a quartzose rock,
possessing a tendency to break into irregular polygons, some of the faces being
curved. There are a few stunted “pines” on the higher crest, but the other parts are
nearly bare. The highest point of Helvelyn (which I take to be the southern summit), is distant from the nearest bend of the Darling 17 2/6 miles, on a line bearing 151° from N., and from the highest part of Oxley’s Table-land, which bears 43° from N. (variation 6° 30' E.); it is distant 39 miles. At this summit, the western extremity of Dunlop’s range, forms with Oxley’s Table-land, an angle coinciding with the general course of the Darling, which flows through the adjacent plains at an average distance of about 16 miles from each of these points.

It was nearly sunset, when I mounted my horse at the foot of Helvelyn, intending to return to the Darling, for there being no other water in the whole country at that time, my intention was to travel back to this river by moonlight. I had found, however, during my ride to this hill, that the intervening country was covered by a half-burnt scrub, presenting sharp points, between which we could scarcely hope to pass in safety by moonlight with our horses, since even in daylight, we could not proceed, except at a very slow pace. The half-burnt branches were armed with points so sharp, as to penetrate, in one instance, the upper part of my horse’s hoof, and, in another, a horse’s fetlock, from which a portion was drawn measuring more than an inch. I, therefore, determined to pass the night at a short distance from the foot of this hill, on a spot where I found some good grass.

June 6. — We proceeded to the Darling, where we could, at length, have breakfast and water the horses. Returning from the river along our track to the camp, I arrived there at seven in the evening, with two of the men, the others having fallen behind on account of their horses. The latter, however, came in not long after, although it had been found necessary to leave one poor horse tied in the bush near the camp, until sent for early next morning. On our way back, we discovered that a native having a very large foot, had followed our track for fifteen miles, from where we had first alarmed the gin; it was, therefore, probable that he had not been far from where we slept in the hollow, on the first evening.

June 8. — We broke up our encampment on the position which I had selected for a depot, (and which had served as such during our short absence down the river), and after proceeding two miles on the bearing of 151°, in order to clear the river, we followed my previous track to the southwest. The ground crossed by the party this day, consisted chiefly of plains with little scrub; and when we had travelled 12½ miles, it appearing open towards a bend in the river, we made for the tall trees (our never failing guides to water), on a bearing of 248°. We reached the Darling at 14½ miles, and encamped near it. As we approached this spot, and while I was reconnoitring the bank for the purpose of marking out the camp, I came suddenly upon a party of natives, one of whom giving a short cooy, first made me aware of the circumstance. Burnett went towards them with a branch; but they hastily gathered up their things and fled. The party appeared to consist of two men and five women, and it doubtless belonged to the same tribe as the gins we had previously seen; and the men were probably those who had traced us so far. The river water was brackish; and in the bank was a bed of calcareous concretions, which some of the men supposed to be bones.

June 9. — Striking again into the original south-west track, by leaving the river on
a bearing of 202°; we arrived on the eastern bend of it, where we had before breakfasted, and where we now heard natives, as if hastily making their escape. Continuing the journey to the next bend, lower down, we encamped at the head of the same gully in which I slept on the night between the 4th and 5th of June. On passing through the bush this day, we fell in with a tree that was new to me. It appeared to be very near *Acacia eglandulosa* (De C.), but the branches had so graceful a character, that I was tempted to draw it, while I awaited the arrival of the carts, whose progress through the spinous scrub already mentioned, was very slow. The wood of this acacia was hard and of a dark brown colour. We gathered some stones of the fruit: and we brought away its stem also.

*June* 10. — The knowledge which I had acquired in my ride down the Darling, now enabled me to follow the most desirable route, in order to avoid the scrub, and travel along the plains near its banks. At five miles and twelve chains, we approached a bend of the river, and found there the remains of a large hut, in the construction of which an axe had been used. It, therefore, occurred to me, that we might be near the tree, where Captain Sturt had turned from the Darling, and I found that the northern head of D'Urban's group bore nearly 58° E. of S., the bearing given by him of this group. I, therefore, looked along the river bank for the tree in question, but without success. In crossing a dry water-course some miles further on, it occurred to me that this might be the one, at the mouth of which, Mr. Hume had cut his name. I, therefore, sent overseer Burnett and the Doctor to trace the channel down, and to look for a tree so marked. They found at the mouth of the creek a very large and remarkable gum-tree, and on the side next the river, the letters H. H. appeared, although the cross-line of one H had grown out. The letters seemed to have been cut with a tomahawk, and were about five inches in length. The men cut my initials also on that tree, which to my regret I was prevented from seeing, by a desire to attain a certain point with the party, which I was consequently obliged to lead. We travelled for this purpose until after sunset, and then encamped at a distance of about a mile and a half to the southward of a bend of the Darling. Here, the river formed a cataract of about two feet, falling over some argillaceous iron-stone: and as the waters glittered in the moonlight, I listened with awe to the unwonted murmur of this mysterious stream; which poured through the heart of a desert, by its single channel, that element so essential to the existence of all animals. One of the men (Robert Whiting) had examined the river a mile and a half above the fall, and found the water there so very salt that he could not drink it, and he, therefore, proceeded downwards to this fall, where it proved to be good.

*June* 11. — In the morning, while examining the river below the fall, some natives hailed me, from the opposite side, and soon afterwards, having slyly swam the river, they stole suddenly upon us, while I sat drawing the cataract. One of our men heard them creeping along the bank above us, whereupon the whole party stood up and laughed. Among them I recognized the old man, whom I had seen a few days previously on my excursion lower down the river. There was another old man, who was more intelligent and less covetous than the rest. I gave him a claspknife, with which he appeared much pleased, making the most expressive gestures of
friendship and kindness, by clasping me around the neck, and patting my back. The number of this tribe, amounted to about twenty. I remarked among them an old woman, having under her especial care, a very fine looking young one. They had swam across the river with as little inconvenience as if they had only stepped over it. The teeth and shape of the mouth of the young female, were really beautiful, and indeed her person and modest air presented a good specimen of Australian womanhood. On leaving us, they loudly pronounced a particular word, which I as often repeated in reply; and they pointed to the earth and the water, giving us to understand in every way they could, that we were welcome to the water, which they probably considered their own. As we crossed a plain, the dogs set off after three emus, the pursued and the pursuers disappearing in the woods. Some time after, while passing through a scrub, we came upon the dogs standing quietly beside a dead emu. If not the first killed by them, it was at least the first that fell into our hands; and if this were the only one they had killed, it was singular enough, that the capture should have happened exactly in the line of our route. This acquisition we considered a favourable omen on our approaching the hills, for we had begun to despair of obtaining any of these swift though gigantic birds, inhabitants of the plains. At length we reached rising ground, rather a novelty to us; and I continued my course across a ridge, which appeared to be connected, on the south, with Dunlop's range. It consisted of a very hard conglomerate composed of irregular concretions of milk-white quartz, in a ferruginous basis, with apparently compact felspar weathering white. It seemed the same kind of rock which I found nearest to the Karaula, in latitude 29°.* On this hill, we encamped for the night, the bend of the river nearest to us, bearing north-north-east, and being distant about two miles. It was almost sunset, before we took up our ground, and we had still to seek the nearest way to the river, through woods. Such occasions tried the mettle of my men; but he who, at the close of such days, was the first to set out for the river, with his bucket in hand, and musket on shoulder, was the man for me. Such men were Whiting, Muirhead, and "the Doctor;" and although I insisted on several going together, on such an errand, I had some trouble to prevent these from setting out alone. The river made a sharp turn northward, and at the bend the water was deeper and broader, than we had seen it elsewhere. The taste was perfectly sweet.

June 12. — We travelled for several miles, over stony ground, which gradually rose to a hill on our right, and then declined rapidly to the river. Descending, at length, to the level ground, we passed through much scrub, which terminated on a plain, bounded on the side, opposite to us, by the large gum-trees or eucalypti, the never failing indicators of the river. The stream there ran in a rather contracted channel, and over a sandy bed. Its course was to the southward, in which direction extensive plains appeared to stretch along its bank. As I approached the river, a tribe of natives, who were seated very near me at their fires, under a large tree, called out. We communicated in the usual manner, but I could learn nothing from them, about the general course of the Darling lower down. I gave them a clasp-knife, and two young pups of a good breed for killing kangaroos. They expressed astonishment at every thing (no common trait in the aborigines), and I was obliged to sit cross-
legged before a very old chief nearly blind, while he examined my dress, shirt, pockets, &c. This tribe, like the others, was not at all numerous.

We proceeded until we arrived under the north-western extremity of Dunlop’s range, when we encamped on the margin of a small lagoon, evidently the remains of some flood, which had been produced by the overflowing of the river, only half a mile distant to the north-west. The lagoon was more convenient to us, for watering our cattle, than the river, the left bank of which, adjacent to our camp, was broken to a much greater distance back than I had observed it to be any where higher up.

June 13. — The wheels of the two carts requiring some repairs, and it being also necessary to shoe several horses, I thought it advisable to rest the party this day: I wished also to ascend Dunlop’s range. On climbing to the top, I found that it consisted of a chain of hills, composed of a very hard sandstone, or quartz rock, similar to that of D’Urban’s group. The summit was bare, not only of trees, but even of grass, or any vegetation. This nakedness was, however, the more favourable for my chief object, which was to obtain a view of the distant country. The weather was not very auspicious, the sky being cloudy, and slight showers fell occasionally. The height of these hills is not considerable, the summit of that which I ascended was about 528 feet above the plains. It was seven miles to the south-east of the camp; and at the north-west extremity of the range, or the most western part visible from D’Urban’s group. I never ascended a hill with feelings of keener interest in the views it commanded. Eastward, I beheld that hilly country, which I had always considered to lie in the best line of exploration; and from this point it looked well. I could easily trace the further course of the Darling for about 20 miles westward; but the most remarkable feature discoverable from the hill, was the undulating character of the country to the north-west beyond the river. That region no longer presented a dead flat like the ocean, but had upon it various eminences, some resembling low portions of table-land, others being only undulations raised a little above the common level; but the whole country was much variegated with wood and plain.

June 14. — We moved forward along the plains, keeping the river in sight, on the right; and after travelling 13½ miles, we encamped close to it. The banks were so steep at this part, that the cattle could not be got down without considerable difficulty. The water was quite sweet.

June 15. — We continued our journey in a south-west direction, and thus crossed various slight eminences, connected with a range, which lay nearly parallel to our route, on the left, and was named by me, Rankin’s Range. Some natives followed us, during a part of this day, shouting, and at length came boldly up to the head of the column. They were very greedy, coveting every thing they saw; and holding out their hands, uttering constantly, in an authoritative tone, the word “Occa!” which undoubtedly means “give”! I had not been in their presence one minute, before their chief, a very stout fellow, drew forth my pocket-handkerchief, while a boy took my Kater’s compass from the other pocket, and was on the point of running off with it. I gave a clasp-knife to the chief, when another of the party most
importunately demanded a tomahawk. Observing that he carried a curious stone hatchet, I offered to exchange the tomahawk for it, to which he reluctantly agreed. I left them at last disgusted with their greediness; and I determined henceforward to admit no more such specimens of wild men to any familiarity with my clothes, pockets, or accoutrements. They paid no attention to my questions about the river. When the party moved on, they followed, and when I halted or rode back they ran off; thus alternately retiring and returning, and calling to the men. At last I galloped my horse at them, whereupon they disappeared altogether in the bush. At 10½ miles, we came upon the river, and encamped where it was very deep and broad, the banks and also the flood marks being much lower than further up the Darling.

June 16. — We were compelled to turn east for half a mile, to clear a bend in the river to our left, which, impinging upon some rather high ground, left us no very good passage. The course of the river, lower down, was such, that after travelling many miles to the south-west, and two to the west and north-west, I was obliged to encamp, without being able to find it. By following a hollow, however, which descended in a north-east direction from our camp, the river was discovered by our watering party, in the evening, at the distance of about three miles. The country, which we had crossed this day, was of a somewhat different character from any yet passed, consisting of low, bare eminences, bounding extensive, open plains, on which were hollows on a clay bottom surrounded by Polygonum junceum, and evidently the receptacles of water at other times. The hills, if the bare eminences might be so called, were composed of a red sandy soil, producing only salsoles and composite plants, but no grass. This red sand was so loose, that the wheels of the carts sank in it, at some places, to the axles. There were bold undulations where we encamped; all declining towards the hollow connected with the river. There was also a little hill, overlooking plains to the north and west. We passed a solitary tree of a remarkable character, related to Banisteria, the wood being white and close grained, much resembling beech. As it pleased the carpenters, I gathered some of the seeds. This evening by observation of the star α Crucis, I ascertained the variation to be 7° 52' 15" E.

June 17. — We descried, from a tree not far from the camp, hills to the westward, and the interest with which we now daily watched the horizon, may easily be imagined, for on the occurrence and direction of ridges of high land, depended the course of the Darling, and its union with other rivers, or discharge into the sea on the nearest line of coast. A range extending from west to north-west was in sight, also a lower ridge, but apparently on the other side of the river. The cattle having separated on its banks during the night, they were not brought up so early as usual; and in the interim I endeavoured to repair the barometer, which was out of order. This accident had occurred in consequence of the man having carried it, contrary to my orders, slung round his body, instead of holding it in his hand. Much of the quicksilver had shaken out of the bag, and lodged in the lower part of the cylinder; but by filing the brass, and letting off this mercury, the instrument was rendered once more serviceable. We travelled this day due west, and at the end of 7½ miles we encamped on a bend of the river where the water was deep, and the banks
rather low, but very steep. The sky became overcast, almost for the first time, since we had advanced into these interior regions, and at sunset it began to rain. The position of the hills, and the direction of the river, were here particularly interesting, as likely soon to decide the question respecting the ultimate course of this solitary stream, on which our lives depended, in this dry and naked wilderness!

June 18. — The morning was fine as usual, the rain which fell during the night, had only laid the dust. We proceeded south-west, until the bends of the river obliged me to move still more to the southward. The hills on the opposite bank at length receded, and we saw before us only a wide desert plain, where nothing seemed to move, and the only indication of life throughout this melancholy waste, was a distant column of dark smoke ascending in remarkable density to the sky. In the afternoon, the wind blowing keenly from the west-south-west, we encamped amongst some polygonum bushes near the river, after travelling 10¾ miles.

June 19. — A thick haze came on, with an extremely cold wind from the south-west; and, as it was necessary to look well before me, in this part of our journey, I gave the men and cattle the benefit of a day’s rest. The river was so shallow, that it seemed almost possible to step across it; and no deep reaches appeared in its bed. This probably was the reason, why no natives were in the vicinity, as in such deep parts only can they find fish. The quantity of water continued the same as when we first came on the river 120 miles higher up. In the neighbourhood of our camp the grass had been pulled, to a very great extent, and piled in hay-ricks, so that the aspect of the desert was softened into the agreeable semblance of a hay-field. The grass had evidently been thus laid up by the natives, but for what purpose we could not imagine. At first, I thought the heaps were only the remains of encampments, as the aborigines sometimes sleep on a little dry grass; but when we found the ricks, or haycocks, extending for miles, we were quite at a loss to understand why they had been made. All the grass was of one kind, a new species of Panicum related to *P. effusum* R. Br.* and not a spike of it was left in the soil, over the whole of the ground. A cucurbitaceous plant had also been pulled up, and accumulated in smaller heaps; and from some of the roots the little yam had been taken, but on others it remained. The surface, naturally soft, thus appeared as bare as a fallow field. I found a pole about 20 feet long, with a forked end, set upright, by having one end planted in the ground, and fixed by many sticks and pieces of old stumps from the river. As the natives erect similar poles on the banks of the Darling, to stretch their nets on for taking ducks, it is probable that the heaps of grass had been pulled here, for some purpose connected with the allurement of birds or animals.

June 20. — The morning was fine, but a heavy dew had fallen during the night. We proceeded across ground quite open, herbless, and so very soft, that even my horse waded through it with difficulty. At length, we gained some gentle rises, at the base of which, the soil was a clay, so tenacious as to have hollows in its surface, which, during wet seasons, had evidently retained water for a considerable time. A fine hill, apparently connected with a range extending northward, at length became visible beyond the right bank of the river, and, as I had previously observed in one or two similar cases, the Darling took a westerly turn towards the hill, so that this
day’s journey was not much to the south of west. On one of the low eminences which we crossed, a new species of parrot was shot, having scarlet feathers on the breast, those on the head and wings being tinged a beautiful blue, and on the back, &c. a dark brownish green.† The round knolls consist of a red earth, which is different from the soil of the plains; its basis appearing to be iron-stone. We encamped on good firm ground, and there was abundance of good grass on the river bank. We were not very far from the heights on the opposite side; a branch from them extending nearly to the river.

June 21. — The ground was much better this day for travelling over. We passed through a scrub of limited extent, and for the first time, in these parts, we discovered a new species of casuarina. On ascending a small hill to the left of our route, I perceived two summits of a distant range, bearing 169° 20' (from N.); and I was not sorry to see that the intervening country was better wooded and undulated more than that we had lately traversed, for wherever trees or bushes grew, we generally found the ground to be hardest. We were compelled to travel much further than I intended in order to reach the river, which took a great sweep to the west, a change in its direction which I had previously observed to take place in the course of this river on approaching a similar feature on the right bank. The river was narrower, and its channel more contracted at this part than at any other I had seen; indeed, so great was the change in the dimensions, that I doubted whether this was more than an arm of it. The current, however, ran at about the same rate, and the general course for some miles to the southward, was marked out, as usual, by large trees. At the camp, the head of the range on the right bank, bore N. 16° W.

June 22. — The distant range which I observed during the journey of yesterday, appeared high above the horizon of our camp this morning, and the refracted image was so perfect, that with my glass I could distinguish the trees, and other objects. Thus I obtained bearings on the range, from a spot whence it could be but seldom visible. The small eminences to the eastward, from which I first saw that range, were also refracted, and appeared like cliffs on a sea coast. To the astonishment of the men, all the hills, however, soon disappeared. The Darling took some bends eastward of south; and we were much troubled during this day’s journey, by the soft ground through which we were obliged to travel, in order to keep clear of the river. At length, I could proceed south-west, and on reaching, at 12½ miles, a bend in the channel, I saw one of the low ridges extending westward. On ascending it I discovered a range to the south-west, apparently connected with that already seen to the south, and from the many beaten paths of the natives, it seemed probable that this angle was the nearest to the hilly country which lay to the south-east. There were also permanent huts on both banks, the first of the kind I had seen, large enough certainly to contain a family of 15 persons; and in one there had recently been a fire. They were semi-circular, and constructed of branches of trees, well thatched with straw, forming altogether a covering of about a foot in thickness, and they were well able to afford a ready and dry shelter in bad weather. In this respect the inhabitants of that part of the Darling, may be considered somewhat before their brethren further eastward, as rational beings. These
permanent huts seemed also to indicate a race of more peaceful and settled habits, for where the natives are often at war, such habitations could neither be permanent nor safe. The river was here itself again, and not contracted, as at the last encampment.

June 23. — Early this morning, the natives were heard hailing us from the woods, and as soon as I had breakfasted, I advanced to them with Burnett. They were seventeen in number, and five or six of the foremost held out green boughs. I also pulled one, but they called to me, and beckoned me to lay aside my sword, which I accordingly did, and then they all sat down. They had good, expressive countenances, but they were not strong looking men. One, whose physiognomy I thought very prepossessing, and much improved by the cheeks and other features being coloured red, appeared to be their chief. He sat in the middle of the front row, and though he said but little, yet he was addressed by the more forward and talkative. This rough, manly, rosy-faced fellow, was such a figure as Neptune or Jupiter are usually represented; he had also a flowing beard. The group were almost all marked with the small-pox. I could not gain any certain information from them, about the course of the river, or the bearing of the nearest sea; but they all pointed to the north-north-west, when I made signs of rowing in water, or of large waves, &c. On quitting them, I presented the king with a greyhound pup and a tomahawk. A total ignorance of the nature of the latter, was a proof, that we were indeed strangers to them; for, although the tool had a handle, they knew not what use to make of it, until I shewed them. We left them quite delighted with both gifts, which were doubtless as important to them, as the discovery of a sea would then have been to me. The journey of this day, opened prospects the most promising for such a discovery, for the river from that bend pursued a more westerly course. Ranges beyond ranges arose also in the south-west, while vast plains, without any indication of the Darling among them, extended before us to the west-south-west. I had some trouble indeed to get as near to the river, as was indispensable for encampment; but at length we halted on a firm bit of ground, close to a very sharp bend in its course.

June 24. — We proceeded nearly west, over open ground, skirted on the south by gentle eminences of red earth. There plains of soft naked soil, were most distressing to the bullocks, and even to horses, and men on foot; in the general direction of the river, these plains extended to the horizon, but the southern boundary of small hills was a peculiar feature, not observed higher up. Though the base of these eminences consisted of fine blue clay, yet their tops were so sandy and soft, that the carts sank deeper than on the plains. It was my study to keep along the side of these hills, as much as my route would permit; for, in general, the best line for travelling through the valley of the Darling, is along the edging of stiff clay, always to be found near the base of the red sand hills, which form the limits of those softer plains that usually extend for several miles back from the river. On ascending the highest of the hills on my left, I discovered, that the ground to the southward was much more broken, and the appearance of a valley between me and a range, which I named after Dr. Macculloch, raised my hopes of finding some change in the country. On ascending, however, another eminence to the right, I perceived the summit of a hill,
which bore west-north-west, and rather discouraged my hopes respecting the river, for I had assumed that its new direction towards the westward would continue. We crossed the hill, and encamped about two miles to the southward of a bend of the river. Here, there was a fall of about four feet over masses of ferruginous clay, with selenites embedded. The banks were lower at this point than usual, and the quantity of running water was rather increased, probably from the springs, which we had latterly observed in great abundance in the banks, generally about two feet above the surface of the stream. On the plains, this day, we found much selenite.

June 25. — There was again a considerable mirage or refraction this morning, on the rising of the frost; and I hastened to a small hill, near our camp, that I might behold the transient vision of a distant horizon. The view was most interesting, for the high lands on all sides, appeared raised as if by magic; and I thus discovered, that the hill, previously seen in the west, was connected with a chain, which extended round to the north, and that there was higher land to the southward of Macculloch’s range; the highest point being to the east, or east-north-east, beyond the hill discovered on the 21st instant. The horizon was lowest towards the west-south-west, for even in the south-west, I could perceive a rise, sufficient to confine the course of the river to the west-south-west. We proceeded nearly west by south, over a soft bed of naked earth, across which, at one place, a well-beaten road of the natives led to the valley on the south, and to some water-course, if not to water itself. After 10¼ miles of weary travelling, we encamped on a bend of the Darling, in latitude 31° 31' 20" S.

The soil of the plains being extremely soft, uneven, and full of holes, the cattle were, at length, almost unable to get through their allotted journeys; I, therefore, determined to let them rest during the three following days, while I proceeded to the hills beyond the Darling, in a west-north-west direction nearly, and distant from our camp 11 2/3 miles.

June 26. — I forded the Darling, where the bottom was a hard clay; and I proceeded in a direction bearing 27° north of west, to the hill. There was much less of the soft soil on this bank, and at a mile from the ford, we travelled on very firm clay, quite clear of vegetation, white, shining, and level as ice. At about seven miles from the river, we reached the first rise of firm red earth. The vegetation upon it, consisted of the two species of atriplex so very common on that soil, and more of the salsolea, than I had before seen. This rise seemed to mark the extent of the bed of clay, through which the Darling flows, at least as far as we had hitherto traced it. The country was open to about three miles from the summit, where we passed through a scrub of stunted casuarina, interspersed with a few of the acacia with spotted bark. Here we crossed some beds of conglomerate, consisting of grains and pebbles of quartz, cemented by a hard ferruginous matrix, probably decomposed felspar; and we saw soon after a few blocks of the same hard sandstone, which occurs at Dunlop’s range, and other high points. The summit, consisting of the same rock, was very broad, and strewed with small stones, and partly covered with a dwarf acacia bush, which gave an uniform tinge, like heath, to the whole country, as far as my view extended to the westward. The horizon to the west and south-west,
was finely broken by hills resembling Oxley’s Table-land and D’Urban’s group, but
the day was hazy, and I looked in vain for any indication of water. The heights
towards the south-west appeared too detached also to promise any; more
resembling islands in a sea, or pinnacles, only half emerged from a deluge, so level
was the general surface. Towards the north-west, however, the heights did seem
connected, and had the appearance of being the loftier summits of very distant
ranges; especially an eminence bearing 21° north of west, which I named Mount
Lyell. There was also an isolated and remarkable summit, which bore 50½° north
of west, to which I gave the name of my friend, Dr. Daubeny. The lower ground
seemed to undulate, but no part of it was intersected by open plains, or any lines of
large river trees, indicating the permanent existence of water. On the contrary, as
far as I could judge from colour and outline, the same thick dwarf scrub appeared
to be the universal covering of the land; neither could I distinguish any smoke or
other trace of human inhabitants, nor even the track of a single emu or kangaroo in
that trans-Darling region. Still, it was impossible to ascertain from the hill, whether
any streams did flow through the country beyond, although appearances were by no
means in favour of such a conclusion. Neither could I distinguish from that
summit, as I hoped to do, the ultimate course of the Darling, as the line of large
trees upon its banks continued, as far as I could distinguish, in the same direction.
Another low but extensive range, exactly resembling that to the eastward of our
camp, was visible on the horizon beyond it, and seemed to be the limit of its bed or
basin, on the eastern or left bank, and the range certainly did differ most essentially
in its outline from the hills on the right bank, being the last and lowest termination
of the higher ranges in the east. As we descended, I named the first hill beyond the
Darling, ever ascended by any European, after my friend Mr. Murchison, a
gentleman who has so greatly advanced the science of geology. We re-crossed the
river at the ford, just as the sun was going down, and I had the satisfaction to find,
that no natives had visited the camp during my absence.

Chapter VI.

Natives of the Spitting tribe — Singular behaviour on the discharge of a pistol —
Conjectures — Second interview with the Spitting tribe — Strange ceremonial —
Amusing attempts to steal, or diamond cut diamond — Dry channel of a stream —
Tombs on the sand hills — White balls on tombs — Australian shamrock — Old
canoe — Dry state of the country — Danger and difficulty of watching the cattle on
the river banks — Uniform character of the Darling — The Grenadier bird — The
“Doctor” and the natives — A range discovered by refraction — Dance of natives — A
lake — Tombs of a tribe — Plan of natives’ huts — Method of making cordage — The
tall native’s first visit — Channel of a small stream — The carts beset on the journey
by very covetous natives — Mischievous signals — Cattle worn out — The tall man
again — Approach of the Fishing tribe — Covetous old man — Conduct on
witnessing the effect of a shot — The party obliged to halt from the weak state of the
cattle — The natives very troublesome — Singular ceremonies — Ichthyophagi —
Their manner of fishing — The burning brand — A tribe from the south-east — The
old man appears again with a tribe from the south-west — Small streams from the
west — The Darling turns southward — Resolve to return — Description of the
country on the banks of the river — The men at the river obliged to fire upon the
natives — Steady conduct of the party — Origin of the dispute — Narrow escape of
Muirhead — Treacherous conduct of the aborigines — Melancholy reflections.

June 27. — ABOUT nine o’clock this morning, Joseph Jones came in to report,
that a native had pointed a spear at him when he was on the river bank with the
sheep; and that this native, accompanied by a boy, kept his ground in a position
which placed the sheep entirely in his power, and prevented Jones from driving
them back. He added, that on his holding out a green bough, the man had also
taken a bough, spit upon it, and then thrust it into the fire. On hastening to the spot
with three men, I found the native still there, no way daunted, and on my advancing
towards him with a twig, he shook another twig at me, quite in a new style, waving
it over his head, and at the same time intimating with it, that we must go back. He
and the boy then threw up dust at us, in a clever way, with their toes.* These
various expressions of hostility and defiance, were too intelligible to be mistaken.
The expressive pantomime of the man plainly shewed the identity of the human
mind, however distinct the races, or different the language — but his loud words
were, of course, lost upon us. Overseer Burnett very incautiously stole up, and sat
unarmed and defenceless within five yards of him. All Burnett’s endeavours to
conciliate and inspire confidence, had but little effect upon the savage, who merely
lowered his tone a little, and then advancing a few steps, addressed himself no
longer to me, but to him. I felt some apprehension for the safety of Burnett, but it
was too late to call him back. We were seated in the usual form, at the distance of at
least one hundred yards from him, and the savage held a spear, raised in his hand.
At length, however, he retired slowly along the river bank, making it evident, by his
gestures, that he was going for his tribe; and singing a war-song as he went. The
boy in particular seemed to glory in throwing up the dust at us, and I had not the
least doubt, but certainly not the slightest wish, that we should see this man again.

About half-past four in the afternoon, a party of the tribe made their appearance
in the same quarter; holding out boughs, but according to a very different
ceremonial from any hitherto observed towards us by the aborigines. They used the
most violent and expressive gestures, apparently to induce us to go back, whence
we had come; and as I felt, that we were rather unceremonious invaders of their
country, it was certainly my duty to conciliate them by every possible means.
Accordingly I again advanced, bearing a green branch on high, but the repulsive
gestures then becoming much more violent than before, I stopped at some distance
from the party. Honest Vulcan, our blacksmith, (two or three men being near him)
was at work with his bellows and anvil, near the river bank. This man’s labour
seemed to excite very much their curiosity; and again the overseer and Bulger
advanced quietly towards those natives, who had approached nearest to the
blacksmith. Hearing at length much laughter, I concluded that a truce had been
effected as usual, and I too walked forward with my branch. But on going to the
spot, I found that all the laughter came from our party, the natives having refused
to sit down, and continuing to wave the branches in our people's faces, having also
repeatedly spit at them; the whole of which conduct was good-naturedly borne in
hopes of establishing a more amicable intercourse. As a peace-offering, I then
presented the man who appeared to be the leader, with a tomahawk, the use of
which he immediately guessed by turning round to a log and chopping at it. Two
other stout fellows, (our morning visitor being one of them) then rudely demanded
my pistols from my belt; whereupon I drew one, and, curious to see the effect, I
fired it at a tree. The scene which followed, I cannot satisfactorily describe, or
represent, although I shall never forget it. As if they had previously suspected we
were evil demons, and had at length a clear proof of it, they repeated their
gesticulations of defiance with tenfold fury, and accompanied the action with
demoniac looks, hideous shouts and a war-song — crouching, jumping, spitting,
springing with the spear, and throwing dust at us, as they slowly retired. In short,
their hideous crouching postures, measured gestures, and low jumps, all to the tune
of a wild song, with the fiendish glare of their countenances, at times all black, but
now all eyes and teeth, seemed a fitter spectacle for Pandemonium, than the light of
the bounteous sun. Thus these savages slowly retired along the river bank, all the
while dancing in a circle like the witches in Macbeth, and leaving us in expectation
of their return, and perhaps an attack in the morning. Any further attempt to
appease them was out of the question. Whether they were by nature implacable, or
whether their inveterate hostility proceeded from some cause of disquiet or
apprehension unimaginable by us; it was too probable, they might ere long force
upon us the painful necessity of making them acquainted with the superiority of our
arms. The manner and disposition of these people, were so unlike those of the
aborigines in general, that I hoped they might be an exception to the general
character of the natives we were to meet with: an evil disposed tribe perhaps, at war
with all around them. The difference in disposition between tribes not very remote
from each other was often striking. We had left, at only three days' journey behind
us, natives as kind and civil as any I had met with; and I was rather at a loss now to
understand, how they could exist so near fiends like these. I believe the peculiar
character of different tribes, is not to be easily changed by circumstances. I could
certainly mention more instances of well than evil disposed natives on the Darling;
where indeed, until now, all had met us with the branch of peace. We had not yet
accomplished one half of our journey to the Murray, from the junction of the
Bogan and Darling; and it was no very pleasing prospect, to have to travel such a
distance, through a country which might be occupied by inhabitants like these. In
the present case I hoped, that our patient forbearance and the gift of the tomahawk,
would deter our late visitors, if any thing human were in their feelings, from
annoying us more: and if not, that their great dread of the pistol, would at least keep
them at a distance.

June 28. — The natives did not appear in the morning, as we had expected, but at
three in the afternoon, their voices were again heard in the woods. I ordered all the
men to be on the look out, and when the natives came near, I sent Burnett towards them, once more with a branch, but with orders to retire upon any indication of defiance. It turned out, as I had supposed, that their curiosity and desire to get something more, had brought them forward again. An old man was at length prevailed on to join Burnett, and to sit down by him. This was effected, however, but very slowly, the others standing at a great distance, and some who remained in the rear, still making signs of defiance. Others of the tribe at length joined the old man, but they prepared to return on my approach, recognising me perhaps as the owner of the pistol. On seeing this, I directed Burnett to give a clasp-knife to the old man, who seemed much pleased with the present. They next made a move towards the spot where the blacksmith was at work, commencing at the same time a kind of professional chant, and slowly waving their green boughs. The appearance of one of these men, in particular, was very odd. There was evidently some superstition in the ceremony, this personage being probably a corajde or priest. He was an old man with a large beard and bushy hair, and the lower part of his nose was wanting, so that the apex of that feature formed more than a right angle, giving him an extraordinary appearance. None, except himself and other ancients, wore any kind of dress; and this consisted of a small cloak of skins fastened over the left shoulder. While the man from the woods waved his bough aloft, and chanted that monotonous hymn, an idea of the ancient druids arose in my mind. It was obvious the ceremony belonged to some strange superstition. He occasionally turned his back towards each of us, like “the grisly priest with murmuring prayer;” he touched his eye-brows, nose, and breast, as if crossing himself, then pointed his arm to the sky; afterwards laid his hand on his breast, chanting with an air of remarkable solemnity, and abstracted looks, while at times his branch

“he held on high,
With wasted hand and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke.”* — Scott.

All this contrasted strangely with the useful occupation of honest Vulcan, whom I had positively enjoined not to laugh, or stop working. At length, I prevailed on an old man to sit down by me, and gave him a clasp-knife in order to check the search, he was disposed to make through my pockets. Meanwhile, the others came around the forge, and immediately began to pilfer, whatever they could lay either hand or foot upon. While one was detected making off with a file, another seized something else, until the poor blacksmith could no longer proceed with his work. One set his foot on an axe, and thus, all the while staring the overseer (who eyed him) in the face, he quickly receded several yards, jumping backwards, to another, who stood ready behind him to take the tool. Some jogged their neighbours at the moments most opportune for plundering; and an old man made amusing attempts to fish up a horse-shoe into the hollow of a tree. The best of this part of the scene was, that they did not mind being observed by any one, except the blacksmith, supposing that they were robbing him only. Vulcan was at last tempted to give one of them a
push, when a scene of chaunting, spitting, and throwing dust, commenced on the part of the thief, who was a stout fellow and carried a spear, which he seemed inclined to use. Notwithstanding all the vigilance of several men appointed to watch the articles about the forge, an excellent rasp or file was carried off. The natives left our party, however, in a perfectly civil way, and we were right glad to feel at peace with them, on any terms.

June 29. — At length we were ready to quit this spot, and gladly continued our journey, in hopes of leaving our troublesome neighbours also. After proceeding some way, however, Mr. Larmer’s horse pitched him over its head, and galloped back to the place, which we had so willingly quitted. Just then the natives emerged from their woods in greater numbers than ever, being painted white, many carrying spears, and shouting. This startled the horse and made him again gallop away, and we halted on the edge of a plain until Mr. Larmer recovered the animal; which was the more easily accomplished, as the attention of the natives was fortunately fixed chiefly on us. They repeated all their menaces and expressions of defiance, and as we again proceeded, the whole of their woods appeared in flames. I never saw such unfavourable specimens of the aborigines as these children of the smoke, they were so barbarously and implacably hostile and shamelessly dishonest, and so little influenced by reason, that the more they saw of our superior weapons and means of defence, the more they shewed their hatred and tokens of defiance. The day’s journey was over a firmer surface than usual, and we encamped on a bend of the river in latitude 31° 36' 48" S.

June 30. — The party moved off early. The ground we travelled over, or rather through, was very soft and exceedingly heavy for the draught animals. At about five miles, we approached a line of trees, extending from the hollow, which for some days past, had appeared between us and the hills on our left. On examining it, I found that it was the dry bed of what had been a considerable stream, preserving a uniform breadth of about 50 yards; and having lines of flood-marks upon the bank, similar to those of the Darling, and rising to the height of eight or nine feet. Trees, such as characterized the banks of the Darling, but of smaller size, grew on its banks, which had also their flats of polygonum, and small gullies, similar to those on that river, but on a lesser scale. Upon the whole, it was evident that this channel, at some seasons, was filled with a body of water, the sources of which were in the high ground, between the Lachlan and the Bogan. We had observed so many paths of the natives leading from the Darling towards the country whence this river bed ranged, that for several days we were of opinion, water was still to be found there. The utter dryness of the bed, was not surprising at a season when large dead freshwater muscles, weighing 3½ ounces, projected, amid the roots of the grass of two summers — and from ground, which was the firmest we could find for travelling upon with carts. Crossing to the left bank of this river bed, we continued our course towards an angle of the Darling, until we came again on this tributary, as I supposed it to be. I, therefore, again continued along its left bank, because it afforded firmer ground than the cracked plains — and in expectation that it would lead to some near turn of the main river. When we were rapidly approaching the
larger trees by which the latter was known, the dry channel of the minor stream suddenly turned to the southward, and we finally encamped two miles east of the nearest part of the Darling; in latitude 31° 44' 28". This newly discovered channel seemed to turn from that river, so as to embrace the extremities of the low ranges coming from the east, and which successively terminate on the plains of the Darling. One of these was about a mile to the east of our camp, and consisted of hardish sandstone, composed of grains of quartz, without any apparent cement, but containing a small quantity of decomposed felspar. At the base of those hills I found, as elsewhere, pebbles consisting chiefly of a splintery quartz rock, in which the grains of sand or quartz were firmly embedded in a siliceous cement. On the northern side of that ridge, I observed at some distance an isolated clump of trees resembling pines or cypresses, growing very thick, and the foliage was of a brighter green than that of the callitris trees which they most resemble; unlike them, however, they had no dead lower branches, but were thick and green to the ground. I regretted much that I had not an opportunity of examining them closely. In the Darling, westward of this camp, was a bed of round concretions — all about an inch in diameter. They were dark coloured, and when first taken out, had a fetid smell.

July 1. — Pursuing the left bank of the newly discovered channel, we found that it embraced some low rising grounds, which, ever since we had made Macculloch’s range, had been the limits of the polygonum flats, along the left bank also of the Darling. On the tops of some of those hills, I observed what appeared to be the tombs of the natives. They consisted of a circular trench of about 30 feet in diameter, the grave being covered by a low mound in the centre; and they were always dug in the highest parts of hills. On observing this preference of heights as burying places, I remembered, that it was on the summit of the hill, where I fixed our depot on the Darling, that we saw the numerous white balls and so many graves.* The balls were shaped as in the accompanying wood-cut, and were made of lime.

Beside them were, in some cases, casts also in lime or gypsum, which had evidently been taken from a head, the hair of which had been confined by a net, as the impression of it, and some hairs, remained inside. A native explained one day to Mr. Larmer, in a very simple manner, the meaning of the white balls, by taking a small piece of wood, laying it in the ground, and covering it with earth; then laying his head on one side and closing his eyes, he showed that a dead body was laid in that position in the earth, where these balls were placed above.* On crossing the channel of the tributary, which we had followed, I found its bed broad, extensive, and moist, and in it two small ponds containing the first water, besides that of the Darling, seen by the party, in tracing the course of this river nearly 200 miles. The rich soil in the dry bed was here beautifully verdant with the same fragrant trefoil, which I saw on the 4th of June in crossing a lagoon, the bed of which was of the same description of soil. The perfume of this herb, its freshness and flavour, induced me to try it as a vegetable, and we found it to be delicious, tender as spinach, and to preserve a very green colour when boiled. This was certainly the
most interesting plant hitherto discovered by us; for independently of its culinary utility, it is quite a new form of Australian vegetation, resembling, in a striking manner, that of the south of Europe. I endeavoured to preserve some of its roots, by taking them up in the soil, as the seed (a very small pea) was not ripe.

Finding that the minor river-course which had been, at one time, within half a mile of the Darling, was again receding from that river, so that when I wished to encamp, I saw no appearance of it within six miles; and that no more water could be seen in the dry channel, I crossed over and made for the Darling in a west-south-west direction. Exactly where the carts passed the dry channel, a native’s fishing canoe, complete, with the small oar or spear and two little cords, lay in the dry and grassy bed of this quondam river; where now we were likely to pass the night without finding water. The intervening plain became very soft and distressing to the draught animals, and we were compelled to encamp on the edge of a scrub which bounded it, and at a distance of about four miles from the Darling. This was a long way to send our cattle, but the observance of our usual custom, seemed preferable upon the whole, even in this extreme case, to passing the night without water. The sun was just setting when oxen and horses were driven towards the west in quest of the Darling, our only and never-failing resource at that time. Magnetic var. 7° 8' 15" E.

July 2. — The men who returned with water for the camp, last evening, had obtained it at a lagoon short of the river, and where a large tribes of natives were seated by their fires. Another party of our men had driven the cattle to the river itself, for on its banks alone could any tolerable grass be found. I was, therefore, apprehensive, that the natives would molest the cattle, when so far from our camp, and I accordingly sent six men armed to watch them. They returned about eleven o’clock this morning, with all the cattle except one bullock; and as the drivers had been closely followed by the natives from day-break, it was then supposed that the animal had been speared. One of our wheels requiring new spokes, I proceeded only four miles this day, towards an angle of the river, in order to encamp in a good position, and recover the missing animal alive or dead. The death of a bullock by the hands of the natives, would have been a most unfortunate circumstance at that time, not so much because this was one of our best working animals, as because the dread with which these animals inspired the natives, was one of our best defences. If they once learned to face and kill them, it would be difficult for us, under present circumstances, to prevent the loss of many, and still more serious evils might follow. As soon as we took up our ground, therefore, I sent six men in search of the lost bullock; and before night, they had followed his track to within a mile and a half of our camp near the river. Meanwhile we had found, long before their return, that he had fortunately joined the others early in the morning.

The river and its vicinity presented much the same appearance here that they did 200 miles higher up. Similar lofty banks (in this neighbourhood 60 feet in altitude), with marks of great floods traced in parallel lines on the clayey sides; calcareous concretions — transparent water, with aquatic plants — a slow current, with an equal volume of water — fine gum-trees, and abundance of luxuriant grass. Slight
varieties in the feathered tribe were certainly observed; besides the crested pigeon there was one much smaller, and of handsome but sober plumage; and excellent flavour when dressed. Cockatoos, with scarlet and yellow top-knot, and about six kinds of parrots which were new to us; also, some curious small birds. But of all the birds of the air, the great object of Burnett's search, was one wholly scarlet, of which kind only two had been seen at different places, far apart. Being wholly new, this bird might have been named the Grenadier, as a companion to the Rifle-bird. The junction of even the dry bed of a tributary was certainly a novelty; and the effect of this on the course of the river remained to be seen. From the station beyond the Darling, I took the bearing of the furthest visible trees in the line of that river, and on my map it exactly intersected the bend, now the nearest to our camp. Beyond it nothing could be seen from hills or lofty trees, and all I could know then was that the river turned nearly westward, and that a tributary was about to fall into it from the east. We were near the place, where it might reasonably be ascertained, from the direction of its further course, whether the Darling finally joined the Murray.

July 3. — The repair of the wheel could not be effected before one o'clock. Meanwhile, the Doctor having been to the river for two buckets of water, was surprised on ascending the bank, by a numerous tribe, armed with spears and bommerengs. One of the natives, however, stepped forward unarmed, between his fellows and the Doctor, and with the aid of two others made the tribe fall back. Souter had fortunately bethought him of holding out a twig, as soon as he saw them. These three men accompanied him to the camp, and as they seemed well-disposed, and showed confidence, I gave the foremost a tomahawk. Two of them were deeply marked with small-pox. On mentioning the "Calâre," they immediately pointed towards the Lachlan, this being the well-known native name of that river; but their curiosity was too strongly excited by the novelties before them, to admit of much attention being given to my questions. They remained about half an hour, and then departed; and we soon after proceeded. Having passed through some scrub, we reached a firm bit of plain, on which we encamped; the day's journey being about six miles. Near our camp, there was a long lagoon in the bed of a water-course, which seemed to be a channel from the back country. We heard the many voices of our black friends, in the woods.

July 4. — The same tribe came up to our tents in the morning with the men, who had been in charge of the cattle, and who reported, that these natives had assisted in finding them. I was so much pleased with this kindness, and the quiet, orderly behaviour of the tribe, that I presented two of them with clasp-knives. They approached fearlessly, gins and all, and quite unarmed, to a short distance from our camp; and they were all curiosity to see our party. The difference between the conduct of these harmless people, and that of those whom we had last seen, was very striking. All the men retained both front teeth, an uncommon circumstance; for these were the first natives, whom I had seen in Australia possessing both. Their women were rather good-looking. After travelling six miles, we crossed the dry bed of a water-course, which I supposed was the same as that from which we turned a
day or two before, but the line of bearing of this was southward, and we were following the river which flowed in the contrary direction. After travelling about eleven miles, we encamped a mile east of two bends of the stream, beside a patch of scrub which afforded us fuel. The banks of the Darling near this camp, were unusually low, being not more than thirty feet high; the channel also was contracted, and containing many dead trees, had altogether a diminished appearance.

July 5. — Penetrating the scrub in a southerly direction, we soon came upon open ground, the surface of which consisted of firm clay. The river was close on our right, until, at about six miles forward, it turned off to the westward. We pursued our journey over plains and through scrubs, first south-west, then west, and finally north-west, encamping at last, after a journey of fourteen miles, where the bend of the river was still 1½ miles to the north of us. We had crossed at 12 miles the dry bed of a river, which was five chains wide, and whose course was to the north. In it were several natives’ canoes, and on its banks grew large river gum-trees, or *eucalypti*. The course of this tributary (which probably included that which we had seen previously), and the change in the direction of the main stream, which trended now so much towards the west, made it still possible, that a range separated it from the Murray. There was now less of the extensive plains of bare soft earth, and more of the firm clay, with small rough gum-trees. Few bushes of the genus *acacia* were now to be seen, but the minor vegetation appeared to be much the same as on the upper parts. As great a paucity of grass also prevailed here, except on the river bank, and as great an abundance of the same *atriplex* and *cucurbitaceous* plants as I had noticed elsewhere.

July 6. — From a tree at our camp, a range was observed in the south-west, having become visible from refraction, and this rendered it still more probable, that the river would continue its westerly course. I soon found it necessary, however, to travel south-west in order to avoid it, and having yesterday exceeded our usual distance, I halted at the end of 8¼ miles; the river being then distant about two miles to the north. From a bare hill beyond this camp, I could see nothing southward, except a perfectly level horizon of low bushes, the country being nevertheless full of hollows, in which grew trees of large dimensions. The river line was so sunk among these hollows, that I could trace it for only a short distance, and there it bore about west-north-west. The banks of the river, opposite to our camp of yesterday, were of rather different character from those which we had seen above. The slopes towards the stream commenced some hundred yards from it, and they were grassy, and gently inclined on each side, so that our carts might have passed easily. We saw enormous trees by the river side, and the scenery was altogether fine. The stream glided along at the rate of two miles per hour, over a rock of erruginous sandstone, containing nodules of ironstone. Nine natives approached the party, while on the march this day; and they appeared very well disposed, frank and without fear. They carried no weapons. While we halted, I perceived, through my glass, a party of about seventeen on a small eminence near the river bank, and nine others, whom I supposed to be those who had been with
us, joined them; upon which a large fire was made under some trees. Around this fire, I distinctly saw them dance for nearly half an hour, their bodies being hideously painted white, so as to resemble skeletons. The weather was very cold, and it seemed as if this dance amongst the burning grass was partly for the purpose of warming themselves. I am rather inclined to suppose, however, considering the circumstances under which the tribe higher up danced, that it was connected with some dark superstition, resorted to perhaps, in the present instance, either to allay fear, or to inspire courage. I saw several gins carrying children in cloaks on their backs, some of whom and several of the children also danced. Our watering party was directed towards another portion of the river, to avoid collision, if possible; and these natives at last decamped along its bank, in an opposite direction, or downwards.

_July 7._ — As the people were packing up their tents, the fire of the natives appeared again in the wood, about a mile off, and near the edge of the plain. They soon after advanced towards our camp, and came up more frankly than any whom we had yet seen. Gins with children on their backs, and little boys, came also. The party sat down close to our tents, and soon began to soliciyt by signs, for a tomahawk. It was evident that they had heard of us, and of our customs in that respect. One man older than the rest, as appeared by his grey beard, was most importunate; and an old woman explained that it was very cold, and asked me for some warm clothing, much in the manner of a beggar. I was very sorry that we could not spare her anything save a sack and a ragged shirt. To the old man, I gave a tomahawk, and to two others a spike-nail each; I presented also a tin jug to one, who took a great fancy to it. They seemed by their gestures and looks to inquire how we had got safely past all the other tribes; and they were very attentive to our men when yoking the bullocks, of which animals they did not appear to be much afraid. These natives retained all their front teeth, and had no scarifications on their bodies, two most unfashionable peculiarities amongst the aborigines, and in which these differed from most others. They sent the gins and boys away, saying they went to drink at the river. We soon moved off, upon which they followed the others. The old man wore a band, consisting of cord of about four-tenths of an inch in diameter, wound four or five times round his head. On examination, we perceived that it was made of human hair. They had no weapons with them. These natives, as well as most others seen by us on the river, bore strong marks of the small-pox, or some such disease, which appeared to have been very destructive among them. The marks appeared chiefly on the nose, and did not exactly resemble those of the small-pox with us, inasmuch as the deep scars and grooves left the original surface and skin in isolated specks on these people, whereas the effects of small-pox with us appear in little isolated hollows, no parts of the higher surface being detached like islands, as they appeared on the noses of these natives. This was what is termed, according to Souter, the “confluent” small-pox. We crossed some soft red sand hills, and at 7½ miles passed the bank of a beautiful piece of water, on which were various kinds of waterfowl. This lake was brimful, a novel sight to us; the shining waters being spread into a horse-shoe shape, and reflecting the images
of enormous gum-trees on the banks. It extended also into several bays or sinuosities, which gave the scenery a most refreshing aquatic character. The greatest breadth of this lake was about 200 yards. It seemed full of fishes, and it was probably of considerable depth, being free from weeds, and continuing so full and clear throughout summers which had drank up all the minor streams. After crossing some soft ground, the Darling having been in sight on our right, we encamped on its banks, near a smallhill, overlooking the river, and a little beyond the camp, in the direction of our line of route. On this hill, were three large tombs of the natives, of an oval shape, and about twelve feet in the greater axis. Each stood in the centre of an artificial hollow, the mound, or tomb in the middle, being about five feet high; and on each of them were piled numerous withered branches and limbs of trees, no inappropriate emblem of mortality. I could scarcely doubt, that these tombs covered the remains of that portion of the tribe, swept off, by the fell disease, which had left such marks on all who survived. There were no trees on this hill, save one quite dead, which seemed to point, with its hoary arms, like a spectre to the tombs. A melancholy waste, where a level country and boundless woods, extended beyond the reach of vision, was in perfect harmony with the dreary foreground of the scene. (See plate 16.) At the base of this hill, on the west, the river took a very sharp turn, forming there a triangular basin, much wider and deeper than any of the reaches. Near it, we found a native village, in which the huts were of a very strong and permanent construction. One group was in ruins, but the more modern had been recently thatched with dry grass. Each formed a semi-circle, the huts facing inwards, or to the centre, and the open side of the curve being towards the east. On the side of the hill of tombs, there was one unusually capacious hut, capable of containing twelve or fifteen persons, and of a very substantial construction, as well as commodious plan, especially in the situation for the fire, which, without any of the smoke being enclosed, was accessible from every part of the hut.

It was evidently some time, since this dwelling had been inhabited; and I was uncertain, whether such a large solitary hut had not been made during the illness of those, who must have died in great numbers, to give occasion for the large tombs on the hill.

In this hut were many small bundles of wild flax, evidently in a state of preparation, for making cord or line nets and other purposes. Each bundle consisted of a handful of stems twisted and doubled once, but their decayed state shewed that the place had been long deserted. A great quantity of the flax, in that state, lay about the floor, and on the roof of the hut. The view from the hill of tombs was dreary enough, as already observed. Southward a country as level, and then much bluer than the ocean, extended to the horizon. North-westward, some parts of the range beyond the river, appeared between the large gum-trees. On all other sides the horizon was unbroken.

July 8. — The cattle were not brought up so soon as usual this morning; and six or seven of the natives whom we saw yesterday, came to us, with a stranger, a very strong tall and good-looking native. They were also accompanied by a female, who
had lost a relative, as appeared by her whitened hair, and who carried on her back a very large net. I soon bade them adieu, and moved forward, crossing some sandy plains, which reminded me of descriptions of deserts in Asia or Africa: and then a small range of red sand, on which grew three or four cypress trees, of a species we had not previously seen. We descended to a very extensive and level plain; the surface of which being clay, was firm and good for travelling upon. We afterwards entered a small wood of rough gum (eucalyptus), in which, while proceeding westward, and looking in vain for the Darling, we came upon a fine lagoon of water, resembling a river. It had flood marks on its banks, with white gum-trees, and extended to the north-west and north-east, as far as we could see, for the woods. There we encamped for the night. On our way, I had observed, from the hill, a column of smoke rising far in the south-east, as from a similar ridge to that on which I stood. The country to the west and south-west declined so much as to be invisible, beyond a horizon not more than three or four miles distant.

July 9. — On further examination of the lagoon, it appeared to be a creek extending to the north-east, but at three miles from where we crossed it, in travelling on 256° (from N.), it had a very diminished appearance. We continued over a firm clay surface, on the same bearing, until we came on the Darling. The same natives, whom we had seen, but accompanied by another tribe, as it seemed, overtook the carts on the road, and now accompanied us. They were so covetous, that the progress of the carts was impeded for some time, by the care necessary on the part of the drivers, to prevent these people from stealing. Every thing, no matter what, they were equally disposed to carry off. Although watched sharply they contrived to filch out articles, and hand them from one to another. Even the little sticks in the horns, which carried grease for the wheels, did not escape their hands; and the iron pins of the men, who were measuring with the chain, were repeatedly seized in their toes and nearly carried off.

When we reached the stream, they set fire to an old hut, which stood where they saw our carts were likely to pass; this being intended, no doubt, as a signal to others still before us on the river. Seeing that they were bent on mischief, I proceeded three miles further, and selected the position for the camp with more care than usual. It was not good, but the best I could find; a slightly rising ground nearly free from trees, surrounded by low soft polygonum flats, and only half a mile from the river.

It was evident, that the draught cattle could not continue this work, until after they had had some repose. This day’s journey did not much exceed eight miles, and yet some of the best of the bullocks had lain down on the road. On the other hand, the natives were likely to become formidable; for the tribes increased in numbers while we were taking up our ground. They advanced towards us without ceremony, led on by the old man and the tall athletic savage, we had seen before, and who had both been noticed as the most persevering thieves of all. These two men had hung about our party several days, and their intention of assembling the tribes around us, for the worst of purposes, was no longer to be doubted. I felt no occasion to be ceremonious with them, for I had frequently given them to understand, that we did
not wish their company. I immediately took several men forward with muskets to
keep the tribes off while our party were encamping, but to no purpose. The natives
carried a quantity of large fishes, and introduced me particularly to a very good
humoured looking black, who seemed to be chief of the new tribe, and who took
some pains to explain to me, that the spears they carried were only for killing fishes
or kangaroos, (boondari.) This chief appeared to have great authority, although not
old. He wore tightly round his left arm, between the shoulder and the elbow, a
bracelet of corded hair. This distinction, if such it was, I also noticed in one of the
old men.* The afternoon was a most harassing time, from the repeated attempts to
pilfer the carts and tents.

The old man, whose cunning and dexterity in this way, were wonderful, had
nearly carried off the leathern socket for the tent-poles; another extracted the iron
bow of a bullock-yoke. The most striking instance, however, of their propensity for
clutching, occurred, when Burnett, by my order, shot a crow, in hopes that its
sudden death might scare them; but instead of any terror being exhibited at the
report or effect of the gun, the bird had not reached the ground, when the chief
was at the top of his speed to seize it!

The strong tall man was by far the most covetous, it was almost impossible to
keep him from our carts; even after all the others had been rather roughly pushed
off, and had sat down. About sunset the tribe retired, but with demonstrations of
their intention to visit us in the morning. Meanwhile, I was thinking to explore the
further course of the river, with a few men and pack animals only, leaving the
bullocks and other men to refresh here, for our long homeward journey. Rest,
indeed, was most essential to enable them to do this; and as the natives were now
gathering around us, circumstances were not likely to mend in either respect, by our
travelling at a slow rate. The necessity for separation, however, was obvious, if the
survey was to be continued farther; but I determined to halt for two days,
preparatory to our setting out, during which time I hoped by patient vigilance and
firmness, to disappoint the cupidity, and yet gratify the curiosity, of the natives, so
as to induce them to draw off, and leave us.

July 10. — Early this morning, the blacks came up in increased numbers, and we
were forced to shove the tall fellow, by the shoulders, from our stores. The old
man, however, managed to cut (with a knife which he had received from us as a
present) one of the tent ropes; and because it was taken from him, when he was
making off with it, he threw a fire-stick at the tent. One strange native arrived, after
many cooys, from a distance; whereupon the chief of the fishing-tribe (whom we
styled king Peter), led him to us, and introduced him to my particular attention. The
tribe also took great interest in this introduction, and I, on our part, met the
stranger as favourably as I could, by sitting down opposite to him in the midst of
the tribe, to which king Peter had led me. While I sat thus, under a dense group of
bawling savages, I perceived that the most loquacious and apparently influential of
all, was the female who came up to us on the morning of the 8th, carrying a net.
She was now all animation, and her finely shaped mouth, beautiful teeth, and well-
formed person, appeared to great advantage, as she hung over us both, addressing
me vehemently about something relative to the stranger. He, all the while, sat mute before me, while I continued not only silent, but quite ignorant of the purport of what was said. My handkerchief was at length taken out, and many hands being at length laid upon me, I retired as ceremoniously as circumstances permitted, but not until I had been so manipulated by fishy paws, that the peculiar odour of the savage adhered to my clothes long after.

I next allowed Peter to approach my tent, upon looking into which, he set up a loud but feigned laugh, instead of evincing any surprise on seeing many objects to him so very strange. He afterwards came up with the old man and the stranger, proposing that the three should go in and examine it; but I positively refused to let them enter the tent together, for “a bull in a china-shop” were no hyperbole, compared to pilfering savages, in a tent among barometers, sextants and books.

At length I found, to my regret, king Peter’s hand in my pocket, pulling at my handkerchief several times, although I had given him a tomahawk and breastplate. They began to see (as I hoped), that they could not easily get more from us. I perceived a messenger despatched across the river, and asked this chief by gestures and looks, the object of the mission, when he made signs, that others would come to dance. It was clear, the man was sent for another tribe, as

“The messenger of blood and brand.”

Still their numbers did not exceed sixty, though gathered along the river bank for many miles back; and my men, with twelve muskets, were strong enough, when kept together; but this could not be, and it was a time of considerable anxiety with us all. About noon, the whole tribe took to the river, with the exception of the two old men, the tall man, and their two gins. These persons had followed us far, gathering the tribes and leading them forward to pilfer; but the ceremony they went through, when the others were gone, was most incomprehensible, and seemed to express no good intentions. The two old men moving slowly, in opposite directions, made an extensive circuit of our camp; the one waving a green branch over his head, and occasionally shaking it violently at us, and throwing dust towards us, now and then sitting down and rubbing himself over with dust. The other took the band from his head, and waved it in gestures equally furious, occasionally throwing dust also. When they met, after each had paced half round our position, they turned their backs on each other, waving their branches as they faced about, then shaking them at us, and afterwards again rubbing themselves with dust. On completing their circumambulation, they coolly resumed their seats, at a fire some little way from our camp. An hour or two after this ceremony, I observed them seated at a fire made close to our tents, and on going out of mine, they called to me, upon which I went and sat down with them as usual, rather curious to know the meaning of the extraordinary ceremony we had witnessed. I could not, however, discover any change in their demeanour; they merely examined my boots and clothes, as if they thought them already their own. Meanwhile king Peter and his tribe were much more sensibly occupied in the river, catching fishes.

These tribes inhabiting the banks of the Darling may be considered Ichthyophagi,
in the strictest sense, and their mode of fishing was really an interesting sight. There was an unusually deep and broad reach of the river opposite to our camp, and it appeared that they fished daily in different portions of it, in the following manner. The king stood erect in his bark canoe, while nine young men, with short spears, went up the river, and as many down, until, at a signal from him, all dived into it, and returned towards him, alternately swimming and diving; transfixing the fish under water, and throwing them on the bank. Others on the river brink speared the fish when thus enclosed, as they appeared among the weeds, in which small openings were purposely made that they might see them. In this manner, they killed with astonishing despatch, some enormous cod-perch; but the largest were struck by the chief from his canoe, with a long barbed spear. After a short time, the young men in the water were relieved by an equal number; and those which came out, shivering, the weather being very cold, warmed themselves in the centre of a circular fire, kept up by the gins on the bank. The death of the fish, in their practised hands, was almost instantaneous, and seemed caused by merely holding them by the tail, with the gills immersed. The old men at our camp sat watching us until sunset, when they went off quietly towards the river; the afternoon also passed without a second visit from the fishing tribe.

July 11. — Soon after sunrise this morning, some natives, I think twelve or thirteen in number, were seen approaching our tents at a kind of run, carrying spears and green boughs. As soon as they arrived within a short distance, three came forward, stuck their spears in the ground, and seemed to beckon me to approach; but as I was advancing towards them, they violently shook their boughs at me, and having set them on fire, dashed them to the ground, calling out “Nangry,” (sit down.) I accordingly obeyed the mandate; but seeing that they stood, and continued their unfriendly gestures, I arose and called to my party, on which the natives immediately turned, and ran away.*

I took forward some men, huzzaing after them for a short distance, and we fired one shot over their heads, as they ran stumbling to the other side of an intervening clear flat, towards the tribe, who were assembling, as lookers-on. There they made a fire, and seeming disposed to stop, I ordered four men with muskets to advance and make them quit that spot; but the men had scarcely left the camp when the natives withdrew, and joined the tribe beyond, amid much laughter and noise. These were some natives who had, the day before, arrived from the south-east, having joined the fishing tribe, while they were at our present camp. These men of the south-east, had a remarkable peculiarity of countenance, occasioned by high cheek-bones, and compressed noses. We imagined we had met their bravado very successfully, for soon after they had been chased from our camp, part of them crossed the country to the eastward, as if returning whence they came. They passed us at no great distance, but did not venture to make further demonstrations with burning boughs. At one o’clock, the tribe, for which the messenger had been sent, as I concluded, the day before, appeared on a small clear hill to the south-west of our camp, coming apparently from the very quarter where I wished to go. They soon came up to our tents without ceremony, led on by the same old thief, who
had followed us down the river, and who seemed to have been the instigator of all this mischief. As he had been already detected by us, and was aware, that he was a marked man, it appeared that he had coloured his head and beard black, by way of disguise. This was a very remarkable personage, his features decidedly Jewish, having a thin aquiline nose, and a very piercing eye, as intent on mischief, as if it had belonged to Satan himself. I received the strangers, who appeared to be a stupid harmless-looking set, as civilly as I could, giving to one, who appeared to be their chief, a nail. I soon afterwards entered my tent, and they went northward towards the river, motioning that they were going for food, but that they would return and sleep near us. I became now apprehensive, that the party could not be safely separated under such circumstances, and when I ascertained, as I did just then, that a small stream joined the Darling from the west, and that a range was visible in the same direction beyond it, I discontinued the preparations I had been making for exploring the river further with pack animals, and determined to return. The identity of this river with that which had been seen to enter the Murray, now admitted of little doubt, and the continuation of the survey to that point, was scarcely an object worth the peril likely to attend it. I had traced its course upwards of 300 miles, through a country which did not supply a single stream, all the torrents which might descend from the sharp and naked hills, being absorbed by the thirsty earth. Over the whole of this extensive region, there grew but little grass, and few trees available for any useful purpose, except varieties of acacia, a tree so peculiar to these desert interior regions, and which there seemed to be nourished only by the dews of night.

Scarce an hour had elapsed, after I had communicated my determination to the party, when a shot was heard on the river. This was soon followed by several others, which were more plainly audible, because the wind was fortunately from the north-west; and as five of the bullock-drivers and two men, sent for water, were at that time there, and also the tribe of king Peter, it was evident that a collision had taken place between them. The arrival of the other tribe, who still lingered on our right front, made this appear like a preconcerted attack; and two of the tribe again came forward, just as the shots were echoing along the river, to ask for fire and something to eat. Their apparent indifference to the sound of musquetry was curious, and as they had not yet communicated with those to whom they were visitors, I believed they were really ignorant then of what was going on. The river extended along our front from west to north-east, at an average distance of three-quarters of a mile; and this tribe was now about that distance to the eastward of the scene of action: soft and hollow ground, thickly set with polygonum, intervened. I had previously sent a man to amuse and turn back their messenger, when I saw him going towards the fishing tribe; and now this strange tribe having arrived, as I concluded, hungry and expecting the fish, seemed disappointed, and came to ask food from us. I was most anxious to know, what was going on at the river, where all our horses and cattle were seen running about, but the defence of our camp required all my attention. As soon as the firing was heard, several men rushed forward as volunteers to support the party on the river, and take them more
ammunition. Those, whose services I accepted, were William Woods, Charles King, and John Johnston (the blacksmith), who all ran through the polygonum bushes with a speed, that seemed to astonish, even the two natives, still sitting before our camp. In the mean time we made every possible preparation for defence. Robert Whiting, who was very ill and weak, crawled to a wheel; and he said that though unable to stand, he had yet strength enough to load and fire. The shots at the river seemed renewed almost as soon as the reinforcement left us, but we were obliged to remain in ignorance of the nature and result of the attack, for at least an hour, after the firing had ceased. At length a man was seen emerging from the scrub near the river bank, whose slow progress almost exhausted our patience, until, as he drew near, we saw that he was wounded and bleeding. This was Joseph Jones, who had been sent for water, and who, although much hurt, brought a pot and a tea-kettle full, driving the sheep before him, according to custom. It now turned out, that the tea-kettle which Jones carried, had been the sole cause of the quarrel. As he was ascending the river bank with the water, Thomas Jones (the sailor) being stationed on the bank, covering the other with his pistol, as was usual and necessary on this journey; king Peter, who had come along the bank with several other natives, met him when half way up, and smilingly took hold of the pot, as if meaning to assist him in carrying it up; but on reaching the top of the bank, he, in the same jocose way, held it fast, until a gin said something to him, upon which he relinquished the pot and seized the kettle with his left hand, and at the same time grasping his waddy or club in his right, he immediately struck Joseph Jones senseless to the ground, by a violent blow on the forehead. On seeing this, the sailor Jones fired, and wounded, in the thigh or groin, king Peter, who thereupon dropped his club, reeled over the bank, swam across the river, and scrambled up the opposite side. This delay gave Jones time to reload for defence against the tribe, who were now advancing towards him. One man who stood covered by a tree, quivered his spear ready to throw, and Jones on firing at him, missed him. His next shot was discharged amongst the mob, and most unfortunately wounded the gin already mentioned; who, with a child fastened to her back, slid down the bank, and lay, apparently dying, with her legs in the water. Just at this time the supports arrived, which the fellow behind the tree observing, passed from it to the river, and was swimming across, when Charles King shot him in the breast, and he immediately went down. These people swim differently from Europeans; generally back foremost, and nearly upright, as if treading the water. On the arrival of our three men from the camp, the rest of the tribe took to the river, and were fired at in crossing, but without much or any effect. The party next proceeded along the river bank towards the bullock-drivers, who were then at work stript and defenceless, endeavouring to raise a bullock bogged in the muddy bank. The tribe, on the other side, appeared to know this, as they were seen hastening also in that direction, so that the timely aid, afforded by the three men from the camp, probably saved the lives of several of the party. When the men returned up the river, they perceived, that the body of the gin had been taken across and dragged up the opposite bank. The whole party had then to proceed to the higher part of the river in order to
collect the cattle, and thus they approached the place, where the newly-arrived tribe were crossing to join the others. Near this spot, the men next endeavoured to raise a bullock, which had got fixed in the bank, and while Robert Muirhead accidentally stooped to lift the animal, two spears were thrown at him from an adjoining scrub with such force, that one was broken in two, and the other entered three inches deep in a tree beside him. He escaped both, only by accidentally stooping at the moment. Such were the particulars, collected from the men after their return, from this affray.

The spears appeared to have been thrown by some members of the fishing tribe, who had been seen with those newly arrived natives from my camp, and who had probably by this time, heard of what had taken place lower down the river. Thus the covetous disposition of these people drew us at length (notwithstanding all my gifts and endeavours to be on friendly terms), into a state of warfare.

We met frequently with instances of natives, receiving from us all they could want on one day, yet approaching us on the next, with the most unequivocal demonstrations of enmity and hostility. Indeed, it seemed impossible, in any manner, to conciliate these people, when united in a body. We wanted nothing, asked for nothing; on the contrary, we gave them presents of articles the most desirable to them; and yet they beset us as keenly and with as little remorse as wild beasts seek their prey. It was a consolation, however, under such unpleasant circumstances, to have men on whose courage, at least, I could depend, for numbers might now be expected to come against us; and it was necessary that we should be prepared to meet them in whatever force they appeared. On the return of the men in the evening, they reported, that, notwithstanding all their exertions, the bullock could not be got up from the mud.

Seven men were accordingly sent to the spot that afternoon, and as they did not succeed, it became necessary to send a party to the river in the morning. This was also proper, I considered, in order to cover our retreat, for by first scouring the river bank, no natives could remain along it to discover, that our journey was not, as they would naturally suppose, continued downwards.

A death-like silence now prevailed along the banks of the river, no far-heard voices of natives at their fires broke, as before, the stillness of the night — while a painful sympathy for the child bereft of its parent, and anticipations of the probable consequences to us, cast a melancholy gloom over the scene. The waning moon at length arose, and I was anxiously occupied with the observations, which were most important at this point of my journey, when a mournful song, strongly expressive of the wailing of women, came from beyond the Darling, on the fitful breeze which still blew from the north-west. It was then that I regretted most bitterly the inconsiderate conduct of some of the men. I was, indeed, liable to pay dear for geographical discovery, when my honour and character were delivered over to convicts, on whom, although I might confide as to courage, I could not always rely for humanity. The necessity for detaching the men in charge of the cattle, had, however, satisfied me that we could not proceed without repeated conflicts, and it remained now to be ascertained, whether greater security would be the result of this
first exhibition of our power.

Chapter VII.

Commencement of the homeward journey — The cattle begin to fail — Halt and endeavour to lighten the carts — Rain comes on — Native conversations at a distance — Party separated to watch the cattle — Illness of some of the men from scurvy — Mr. Larmer's excursion into the country to the eastward — The Spitting tribe again — Return of Mr. Larmer, who had found water and inhabitants — A day's halt — Ride to Greenough's group — View from the summit — Barter with natives beyond the Darling — The Red tribe again — New species of caper eaten by the natives — Importunity of the Red tribe — Cross the Darling — View from the summit of Mount Macpherson — Rain again threatens — Absence of kangaroos and emus on the Darling — The Ocra tribe again — Hints to Australian sportsmen — Meet the Fort Bourke tribe — Mr. Hume's tree — Return to Fort Bourke — Description of that position — Saltness of the Darling — The plains — The river supported by springs — Traces of floods — Extent of the basin of this river — Its breadth — Surface of the plains — Geology of the Darling — Woods — Gum acacia abundant — Grasses — General character of the natives — Their means of existence — Nets used by them — Superstitions — Condition of the females — Singular habits of a rat — Security of a species of ants — Birds — Fishes — Apprehended scarcity of water on leaving the Darling — Six of the cattle dead from exhaustion — Rest of two days at Fort Bourke — Visited by the Fort Bourke tribe.

July 12. — EARLY this morning, ten men returned to the river, with orders to raise the bullock to the bank, but after they had done so, it again lay down, unable to move, the legs having become, probably, cramped or benumbed from remaining so long fast in the mud. They then descended the river about two miles, to where the other bullock lay, which they were equally unable to move. No natives appeared, or were even heard; and thus we might be considered to occupy the left bank of the river, all along our front. We broke up the camp at ten A.M. and turned our faces homewards. Our old track was a tolerably well beaten road, and, therefore, much easier for the bullocks, especially those of the leading cart; it was also no longer necessary to face bush or scrub. To me the relief in travelling homewards was considerable, as I was much more at liberty to attend to arrangements necessary for our defence, than when the direction of our route required my attention. This day we cut off a corner, by which we shortened our way about a mile; and we reached our second encampment back, from that which we left in the morning, thus effecting two days' journey in one. We only got to our ground, however, by eight o'clock at night; and before we arrived, one bullock, which had been some time weakly, lay down to rise no more, and we were compelled to shoot it. The camp we reached was near the large native village on the river, and the hill with the natives' tombs, (see July 8), and the same spot, where the gin and the tall man first came up to us. We approached the place with some
caution, but found nobody in occupation, and we encamped with a strong guard on our cattle.

July 13. — As there was good food here, and our animals were much exhausted by the last journey, I considered it highly advisable to halt this day. We examined the loads, and, in order to lighten the carts as much as possible, we burned some heavy articles no longer required. The morning was damp and cloudy, and at nine it began to rain heavily. We had still to traverse about 400 miles of level country, subject to floods, and peopled by cunning savages, with whom we were now likely to be involved in war. About 11 o’clock, a long, loud cooy from the hill of tombs, announced that the natives had already overtaken us; but we were under arms immediately, and prepared for defence. Natives were soon after seen to pass along the river bank, but as none of them approached us, I sent four armed men towards the huts or village, with orders to ascertain what number was there, and in case they met a single native, to bring him to me. I was desirous to prevent any messenger, whom the tribe might have sent back to the country, through which we had to pass, from arriving before we could dispel by our peaceful demeanour, any fears that might be raised to provoke hostility on the part of the inhabitants there. The men found two natives hiding behind trees, who ran off when observed, and swam the river. About two o’clock one of the guard with the cattle, came in and reported that twelve or fourteen natives were watching on the other side of the Darling, and asked what he was to do. I instructed him and the other men to motion to all such to go away, but not to fire at any, unless it became necessary to do so in their own defence. The afternoon cleared up a little, but after dark the sky was overcast. The night passed quietly, without further alarm of natives.

The vicinity of the river was an advantage to us here, which the ground, for several stages on, would not afford; for in case of need it enabled all our men to be at hand.

July 14. — The morning was fair, but the sky continued to be cloudy, when we commenced our journey. After we had proceeded some miles, the cooys of the natives were heard around us, and we once more expected an attack. We were then in a close scrub, and the cattle were advancing slowly, for the ground had been softened by the rain. We halted the carts in a small open space, and prepared for defence. The men forming our rear guard, having concealed themselves behind bushes, intercepted three gins and a boy, who appeared to be following our movements. When discovered, they called out loudly “Wainba! Wainba!”; and we concluded from this, that the male savages were not far off, and that they employed these women on out-post duty. Our men beckoned to them to go back, and no other natives appearing, we resumed our march. The gins, however, were not to be driven from their object so easily; and indeed from the barking of our dogs towards the scrub during the night, and by the tracks observed in the sand across our route next morning, it appeared, that these poor creatures had passed the night, a cold one too, in the scrub near our camp without fire or water, and that they had preceded us in the morning. In the calm evening of that day, and as the sun was setting, I distinctly heard the women, at a distance of nearly two miles, relating
something respecting us to a party of their tribe beyond the Darling. It may be
difficult for those unused to the habits of Australian natives, to understand how
this could be; but it must be remembered, that these people having no fixed
domicile, the gins generally form a separate party, but may thus often carry on a
conversation, from a great distance, with their male companions — consequently
when a mile apart only, these people may be said to be in company with each other.
As the gins are always ordered by their lords and masters to meet them, at such
places of rendezvous, as they may think proper, we may account for the well known
accuracy of these natives in the names, which belong to every locality in their
woods.

Nearly the whole day’s journey led through a bushy scrub, and over ground rather
soft and heavy. We reached, however, our former place of encampment, which we
again occupied; and we sent our cattle to the river for the night, with a party of four
armed men. The evening was extremely cold and raw, the wind blowing from
south-west, with drizzling rain. Between us and the river the country was open, but
the above-mentioned scrub and low hills were close behind us; and through this
scrub, (as appeared by the foot-marks seen this morning), the gins had passed our
camp, and preceded us along our line of route, making towards the river as soon as
our track approached an open plain, probably because they could not have
continued on the track of the party there, without having been seen by us.

July 15. — The men returned from the river in good time with the cattle, having
neither seen nor heard the natives. The morning was beautiful, and we proceeded,
hoping that the fine weather might last. We passed the place where we had halted
on the 5th, and continued the journey for a mile or two further in a new direction,
by which we cut off a considerable detour, and gained in direct distance, about five
miles. We encamped near a bare hill, beyond which the river was about a mile
distant. There was scrub all round us, and I did not like our position; but it was
impossible to drive the wearied cattle further. As we approached this camp, I heard
the voice of one of the gins answered by that of a male, and "wite ma" was the
subject of conversation; they might have been two miles from us, as the voices of
the natives, in the woods, are audible, as just stated, a long way off, in a still
evening.

July 16. — After a cold frosty night, the morning was fine, and we continued our
journey. At about a mile and a half, we entered on our former track, and after five
miles more we encamped on the ground, which we had occupied on the 4th instant.
By this short journey, I hoped to refresh the cattle a little, and to make out a better
one next day, by getting through the brush, and past the natives’ bivouac. This
camp of ours was a good mile from the river, and it was very necessary to send a
separate party to remain on its bank all night with the cattle.

July 17. — In these times, when I saw the animals brought up by the men all safe,
from the river in the morning, I was wont to thank God in my heart, for their
preservation. This morning, I set out on a direct line for our former camp, not so
much for the sake of cutting off two miles, which we did, as to avoid the very soft
and heavy ground, through which we had travelled with difficulty in the journey
down. In this last and more direct line, we found excellent firm plains for nearly the whole of the way; and we fell in with our old route, where I wished, exactly at our former camp. Thus we had got over a day’s stage by half-past one o’clock. The cattle were tired, but as we should be here, in the midst of scrub and brush, and close to a large camp of natives, we continued our route about five miles further, to the spot where we had before repaired the wheels, and we reached it at five o’clock. One poor bullock laid down by the way, and we were obliged to leave it. We heard no natives on the river, although it was here, that we first fell in with the tribe which followed us down; and from the absence of all natives now, it seemed, that they had heard of the affair on the river, and kept out of our way perhaps from fear of us; at all events, their absence was a great comfort, and we hoped it might continue.

July 18. — Two men went back early this morning, and brought on old “Pistol,” the bullock which had lain down the day before. We started at ten o’clock, passing our encampment of the 1st July, and halting on the bank of the river bed, where, on coming down, we had found some water. It was now, however, dried up, but we had taken the precaution to bring on enough for the party, and there was good food for the cattle, and great appearance of rain falling. We had no occasion therefore to send to the river, which was a long way off. “Pistol” again fell behind this afternoon, and it was really distressing to see the animals in so weak a state, with such a long journey still before them. Some men now shewed symptoms of scurvy, and Robert Whiting being unable to walk, had to be carried on the carts. The cloverleaved plant growing here,* was therefore cooked for the men as a vegetable; and such medicines were administered as were likely to check the complaint: near this lagoon we also found the Plantago varia of Mr. Brown. The weather appeared unsettled; the sky again lowering, and at sunset it was overcast with portentous rainy looking clouds. The air had become mild, when the wind, which had blown some days from the south and south-west, suddenly came round to the north, and a few drops of rain fell in the evening.

July 19. — The wind blew strongly all night from the north-west, and in the morning huge clouds darkened the sky, but there was no immediate prospect of rain. The air was warm and parching, and we proceeded with our thirsty cattle to the next stage of our journey, (the camp of the 30th June,) distant about five miles. This we reached by half-past eleven, and I sent the cattle with four armed men to the river, which was about a mile from our position. In the course of the afternoon the wind from north-west increased to a gale, but the air was still warm, and the sun set in a clear sky, while the heavy clouds sank to the eastern horizon, where sheet lightnings played incessantly until after midnight. The air brought by that wind from the north-west was so dry, as to occasion a most unpleasant heat and parched sensation in the skin of the face and hands, and several men complained of headache. That air seemed to contain no moisture, and in all probability blew over extensive deserts.

July 20. — The morning was clear, with a cold and gentle breeze from north-west. We this day reached the spot which we had occupied on the 29th June, and again
encamped there, with the intention of halting two days, in order to refresh the cattle. During the afternoon the sky became again overcast, and the wind shifting to the south-west, blew strongly with drizzling rain.

*July 21.* — Very tempestuous weather, unlike any we had hitherto met with in the interior. I sent Mr. Larmer with four men to examine the dry creek, which we had now left higher up towards the hills on the east, that he might ascertain if any ponds remained there, as it lay in our best line of route homewards. That creek afforded the only prospect during this dry season, of a line of route by which we might avoid the great detour in following the Bogan river, which route would otherwise be unavoidable, merely from the general scarcity of water. Two of the men were now invalids, one with scurvy, the other with dysentery.

*July 22.* — The wind blew very keenly all night, and in the morning the sky was cloudy, but no rain fell; towards noon the sun appeared, and the air became milder. About two P. M. I was informed that the “Spitting tribe” was on the river bank, and in communication with our men in charge of the cattle; also, that three had come over and sat down, asking, as usual, for tomahawks. These were, the old man already mentioned, (as wanting part of his nose,) and two strong men. Our party beckoned to them to keep back, but they came over in three canoes. They had been fishing on the river, and had been roasting and eating the fish on the opposite bank. Overseer Burnett offered them his clasp-knife in exchange for a “cod” weighing about 19 lbs.* but they would only give a small fish weighing not above one pound; and then coolly went over, and sat down to eat the fish themselves. Our camp was established about a quarter of a mile from the river, on the edge of a plain, and near a scrub, for the sake of fuel. At four P. M. the alarm was given, that the natives were close to the camp, and we no sooner saw them, than the whole of the scrub proved to be on fire, to the imminent danger of our equipment. I sent five men with muskets to them (*au pâs de charge*); and in five minutes, they had retired across the river, two shots having been fired over their heads, as they ascended the opposite bank. It appeared, that this party consisted of eight men, each carrying a spear and a waddy, besides the same boy, who had been seen higher up, and who was observed on this occasion very busy lighting branches in the scrub; the vile old fellow “sans nose” was one, and also the sullen man, who was the first we had ever seen throw dust. These latter stood on our side, covering the passage of the others, and crossing last, which manly conduct was the best trait I had seen in their character. On reaching the top of the opposite bank, they commenced their usual chant and demoniac dance, waving burning branches over their heads, brandishing their spears, and throwing their waddies high in the air, even above the lofty trees, all the time retreating in leaping and singing order. It was evident, that our dogs had frightened them; and at the report of the guns, the tall fellow fell flat on the earth, as he was ascending the opposite bank. Later in the evening, some natives were seen driving the bullocks about on the opposite side, but as they desisted when called to, and afterwards cooyed to the others, before they joined them, it was supposed, that these had just arrived from a distance.

Mr. Larmer returned at dusk, having seen two more fine ponds of water, in the
direction of the river bed, which we had lately left. He reported, however, that the
water-course ran eastward, or contrary to that of the Darling, a direction also
opposed to the fall of the hills, where it no doubt originated. The party met a tribe
of blacks, in huts, at the largest and most eastern of these ponds. They were
perfectly inoffensive, only looking from their huts and asking, as it seemed, which
way the party was going. Mr. Larmer reported, that he saw from the range, which
he ascended, a higher one about 40 miles to the southward, and smoke in the
intermediate valley, the country being covered with a thick scrub.

July 23. — We proceeded at first 5½ miles along our former route, than eight
miles in a north-east direction, by which course we avoided the former camp of the
“Spitting tribe,” and a portion of our route which led over a very soft, cracked
plain: we also shortened the distance so much as to gain one day upon three of our
former stages. In making this new cut, we had the good fortune to meet with firm
open ground, so that we encamped by three P.M., within sight of the river and our
former route, and five miles beyond the camp of June 27, where the Spitting tribe
had probably remained, expecting us.

July 24. — Early in the morning, we observed a smoke in the woods near the
river, at a distance of about two miles. At length, I saw through my glass a native
with a skin cloak advancing over the naked plains towards us, but he soon
disappeared, then I perceived two others coming rapidly forward; at length I heard
them calling, and observed that one held high up, a green branch in his right hand.
The intervening country was an extensive, open, dusty plain, and our camp was
partially concealed by trees. The savages came to a stand for a moment, at a low
bush, a quarter of a mile off, but on my turning for a short time and again looking,
I perceived them already far away, scampering at amazing speed back towards the
river. It seemed, as if they had become alarmed at our silence, or on discovering our
numbers, and the extent of our camp. Of course we expected a visit from their
tribe, either during the day’s journey or in the evening. By proceeding in a direction
72° 45’ E. of N., we travelled along a fine plain, and hit exactly a sharp angle in our
former route (June 24). Thus a distance of a mile and a half was gained upon that
line, and some very soft and heavy ground avoided. This day’s route was,
consequently, almost a straight line, and we halted opposite to a bend of the river,
2½ miles short of the camp of June 23. As we approached this part of the river, a
dense column of smoke, such as the natives send up as signals, arose from it. We
saw no more of the natives, however, that night, although the men with the cattle
noticed their fires on the other side of the river.

July 25. — As we journied along the former tract, and over a plain near the
Darling, we observed smoke to arise from the same place, in which it had appeared
on the preceding evening; but still no natives came to us. On passing our old camp,
we perceived that two men and a boy had that morning stood on the ashes of our
former fires, and gone all over the ground. We saw nothing, however, of the natives
during the whole of this day; and we finally halted within half a mile of our
encampment of June 23. Here we found a species of Atriplex related to A.
Halimus.*
July 26. — The cattle having had a fatiguing journey, I thought it best to give them a day’s rest, especially as I wished to examine the country and a group of hills to the eastward. I, therefore, set out with three men for the highest summit, (bearing 124° from N.), and distant thirteen miles. We passed over four miles of firm, open ground, with some small rough gum-trees upon it. We then crossed a track on which I saw the angophora, for the first time, since we traversed Dunlop’s range; and near it we passed a hollow about half a mile wide, and a mile and a half long; in which, although the surface was of clay, there was no appearance of water ever having lodged, a circumstance for which we could only account, by supposing, that much rain seldom falls, at any season, in this part of the interior. We next entered a scrub of dwarf casuarinæ, and myoporum montanum, (R. Br.), the latter bush prevailing so as to form a thick scrub at the foot of the hills, and even upon them. The range, like all those which I had examined near the Darling, was of exactly the same kind of rock as D'Urban’s group, Dunlop’s range, &c. &c. viz. quartz rock breaking naturally into irregular polyedrons, but at the base I noticed ferruginous sandstone. The summit afforded a very extensive view of the country to the eastward, which rose towards a range extending south-east and north-west, its two extremities bearing 103° and 122° from north. At the foot of which, a blue mist might be supposed to promise a river or chain of ponds in an ordinary season; and a rather high and isolated range of yellow rock, in the direction of Oxley’s Mount Granard, seemed to overlook some extensive piece of water or spacious plain to the south of it. An intervening valley appeared also to form a basin falling southwards, but immediately beyond the group, I was upon, a vast extent of country, not low, but without any prominent features, although chequered with plain and bush, stretched far to the eastward. There were no large trees visible on any side, but a thick scrub of bushes covered much of the country. Upon the whole, I considered, that in a wet season, we might have travelled straight home, as there were many dry water holes in the surface, where it consisted of clay, but that, unless rain fell, it would be wiser, considering the exhausted state of our cattle, to keep to the beaten track, for the animals travelled much better upon it, and going back or homewards along that track, was more convenient in various respects, than to travel where there was no road at all. As it now became necessary to distinguish the different ranges on my map, I attached to this remarkable cluster of hills the name of Mr. Greenough, a gentleman who has done so much in uniting geology with geography, to the great advantage of both.

On returning to the camp, I found that two natives had been in communication with our party on the river, during my absence; and that overseer Burnett had made a good bargain, having obtained from one of them, a very well made net, in exchange for a clasp knife, with which the native seemed much pleased. These visitors were young men, carrying each a net, and seemed to belong to the other side of the river. Soon after I returned, our old friends of the Red tribe came up in a body of about twelve, carrying boughs. It was near sun-set, and still they shewed no disposition to go back to the river, but, on the contrary, they seemed about to make up their fires, and remain with us for the night. As their calls for tomahawks were
incessant, it was easy to foresee, that it would soon be necessary to frighten them away with our guns, if they were allowed to continue near us. I therefore directed Burnett to point to the river, and request them to go thither to sleep, which they at length did. We also took care not to allow them to come close to the carts, to prevent which several men met them at a little distance, where they took their stand. On the bank of the river, at this place, we found beside the native fires, the remains of a fruit, different from any I had seen before. It seemed to be of a round shape, with a rind like an orange, and the inside, which appeared to have been eaten, resembled a pomegranate.* We here lost a bullock, which fell into a deep part of the river and was drowned, having been too weak to swim to the other side.

July 27. — Early this morning, the Red tribe came up, and again begged for tomahawks. It was evident now, how injudicious we had been in giving these savages presents; had we not done so, we should not have been so much importuned by them. To avoid their solicitations, which were assuming an insolent tone, evinced by loud laughing to each other, at our expense, we loaded and moved off as quickly as possible, and they remained behind to examine the ground, which we had quitted. Upon the whole, however, the conduct of this tribe was much better than that of any we had seen lower down the river. They brought no arms, and had never attempted any warlike demonstrations, or to come forward when told to keep back; neither did they follow us. We got over our journey by two o’clock, and encamped near the old ground of June 23. Here the bed of the Darling, consisted of ferruginous clay, with grains of sand.

July 28. — We proceeded by the beaten route, and pitched our tents within about a mile of our former camp. The cattle being very weak, I was desirous to avoid some soft ground near that position, by taking a shorter cut next morning. The part of the river adjacent to this spot was fordable, the bed consisting of a variety of sandstone, composed of small siliceous grains cemented by decomposed felspar.

July 29. — The day being clear, and the party within thirteen or fourteen miles of Mount Macpherson, a fine hill beyond the river, (bearing 301½° from N.), I determined to give the cattle a day’s rest, and to ascend that hill in order to take another look at the western interior beyond the Darling. I thought, I might thus be enabled to fix many of the points observed from Mount Murchison, or at all events, to ascertain the nature of the country to the north-west. I accordingly crossed the Darling with four men, and proceeded straight for the hill over a very open country, and plains which were tolerably firm. On my way, however, I saw nothing new as to ground. The clay plains were bounded by a ridge of red sand (extending south-west and north-east), at a distance of four miles. On this ridge were divers casuarinæ, and beyond it, was a low polygonum hollow, and a water-course in which water evidently sometimes ran north-east (!), and a duck-net stake, fixed opposite to a tree, still remained there. It appeared that in all these side channels, or tributaries of the Darling, the water flowed upwards, or from the river, a circumstance not unlikely to happen where the main channel rolls the accumulated waters of distant regions through absorbent plains, on which partial rains can have but little effect.
At about eight miles, we reached firm gravel, consisting of small and very hard stones, precisely similar in character and position to that near Mount Murchison. The pebbles were mixed with red earth, which also formed part of the lower features connected with the height before us. We crossed a deep gully, the bed of a creek in rainy seasons, but which had now been long dried up. The very hard sandstone still appeared, weathered to a purple colour; the lower part was most ferruginous, and not so hard as above; in the creek below, I observed a red crust of clay, and nodules of iron-stone. There were several rocky and deep ravines in the side of the principal height, and in these the oat-grass, or *anthistiria*, appeared, (for the first time since we had left the upper Bogan), also several plants, which were new to me, and among them a bush of striking beauty, with a rich yellow flower, being a species of *cassia*. The summit of Mount Macpherson was clear, but it did not afford the view I expected. The height consisted of some ridges, which did not appear much higher further to the westward: those in that direction being connected with the summit, and also with each other, and extending to the north and south, prevented me from seeing almost any of the features observed from Mount Murchison, which hill was barely visible. The only striking feature, I could perceive east of the Darling, was Greenough’s group, which rose upon the horizon, level on that side, save where one or two summits of the higher ground, to the eastward, just appeared to break the sharpness of the bounding line. But the flatness of the north-western line of vision was still more remarkable, and it was difficult to understand how the basin of the Darling, which appeared so narrow below, could find limits there. The country to the northward, if not a dead level, was varied by only some slight undulations, and it was partially covered with stunted bushes, alternating with a few naked plains. As far as I could see with my glass, no smoke appeared to rise from the vast extent, visible in that direction. After taking the bearings of the different points, we returned, and recrossed the Darling about sunset. At the base of the hill, we met with several kangaroos, and had some shots (with bullets) at a very tame bustard. There was a rocky channel, where water can be but seldom scarce. We saw none, but from the presence of kangaroos, we thought that there must have been some very near the hill. This hill I named Mount Macpherson after the collector of internal revenue at Sydney.

*July* 30. — Proceeded on our journey by our former route, and arrived by four P. M. at our old camp of the 18th and 19th June, which we again occupied. We were still at a loss to know for what purpose the heaps of one particular kind of grass* had been pulled, and so laid up hereabouts. Whether it was accumulated by the natives to allure birds, or by rats, as their holes were seen beneath, we were puzzled to determine. The soft ground retained no longer the footsteps imprinted on it by the haymakers, whoever they had been. The grass was beautifully green beneath the heaps, and full of seeds, and our cattle were very fond of this hay. I found there also two other kinds of grass, which were equally new to me, the one being an *Andropogon* allied to *A. bombycinus*; the other apparently a species of *Myurus*.

*July* 31. — Continued along our route to our former camp of 17th June.

*Aug.* 1. — Two smart showers of about two minutes duration each, fell during...
the night, but the wind, which had been blowing from the north-west was so parching, that the cauvass of our tents was quite dry by day-break. The sky was overcast with heavy clouds in the morning, but by noon it became clear. We travelled so as to make a short cut on our two days’ journey of the 16th and 17th June, and thus, at about eight miles, we made that part of the river which we had seen formerly when nearly three miles from it, and here we encamped. As we crossed the plain on which the last kangaroo had been killed, we saw many fresh tracks of these animals; and the dogs took after one, which they killed, as appeared by their mouths when they returned. It may be observed that lower down on the Darling, we saw neither kangaroos nor emus, a sufficient proof of the barrenness of the adjacent country. This day the ground somewhat resembled forest land, and we saw one or two trees of substantial timber, of the description which the colonists term mahogany.

Aug. 2. — We proceeded in a direction, by which we reached our former route, after four miles travelling; and at a distance of five miles more, we came to a spot near the river, where we encamped with the intention of avoiding next morning the detour, we made on approaching the camp, when we formerly occupied the spot in the bend of the river. As soon as our people approached the bank, we met with a gin and two young girls, upon which they called to an old man, who soon came up. He appeared no way alarmed, and seemed to have seen us before. The fatal teakettle again attracted the attention of a gin, and she pointed it out to her grey lord and master, who pronouncing the well known word “Occa” (give), reminded us of the greedy tribe in whose precincts we had now arrived, and which was, in fact, distinguished by the name of the “Occa boys”, from their constant use of the word, and coveting every thing they saw. The old man, however, continued his journey down the river, without obtaining the kettle, or yet a knife, which he also demanded from one of our men, whom he saw cutting tobacco.

Aug. 3. — We continued in a northern direction, till we cut upon the route to our last camp, and we thus avoided two bad miles, without lengthening the journey to the next of our former encampments, which we reached in good time, to allow the cattle to feed.

Aug. 4. — We set off about eight this morning, and reached by five P. M. our encampment of the 12th and 13th of June. On the way, the ranges on our right, as they rose in view, afforded some relief to our eyes, so long accustomed to a horizon as flat as the ocean; and a gentle, cooling breeze from the east, felt very different from the parching west winds, to which we had been exposed. This day and the one before, were warm, and breathed most gratefully of spring. We re-crossed a gravel bed of irregular fragments of quartz and flint, at the base of some slight hills, which reach from the range to the river. Between these undulations were soft plains, the surface of which was cracked and full of holes; and it seemed that the torrents which fall from the hills, are imbibed by this thirsty earth. As we approached our camp, the dogs were sent after two emus, and at dusk one of them returned having killed his bird, though we did not find it, until early next morning. The emu came to hand, however, in good time even then, for the men had been long living on salt
provisions. Our former lagoon had become a quagmire of mud, and we were forced to send for water from the river. The pigeons and parrots which swarmed about this hole at dusk, the quantity of feathers, and the tracks of emus and kangaroos around it, shewed how scarce this essential element had become in the back country. At such small pools, water becomes an object of desire and contest, and, so long as it lasts, these spots in times of scarcity, are invariably haunted by that omnivorous biped man, to whom both birds and quadrupeds fall an easy prey. We, however, during a sojourn of more than two months in the Australian wilderness, had been abundantly supplied with the finest water, from that extraordinary river which we had been tracing, and without which those regions would be deserts, inaccessible to, and uninhabitable by, either man or beast.

Aug. 5. — As the last journey had been a long one, and we had some rough ground before us, we rested a day here, while the blacksmith repaired one of the cart wheels. The calls of the natives were heard very early in the morning, and two fellows came to our men on the river, impudently demanding tomahawks; but little attention was paid to them, and they did not visit the camp. We had no longer any desire to communicate with the aborigines, for we had too long, in vain, held out to them the olive branch, and made them presents; and as we could not hope to gain their friendship, we were resolved to brook no longer the sight of their burning brands and other gestures of hostility; still less were we inclined to give tomahawks on demand, since our presents had not been received with that sense of obligation, which might have been shewn by any class of human beings, however savage. I, therefore, now determined to avoid the natives wherever I could, and if they came near the party, to encourage their approach as little as possible.

Aug. 6. — We continued along our old route, but at about seven miles we cut off a considerable angle in that point of it, where we formerly saw the Puppy tribe, and were thus enabled to pass two miles beyond our former ground, and to pitch our tents near the river. At this encampment, we perceived smoke arising from the same native bivouac, which I visited in my journey on horseback, before the party left Fort Bourke. From this smoke and other circumstances, it would appear, that some of the tribes, on the Darling, are not migratory, but remain, in part at least, the gins and children possibly, at some particular portion of the river. This seems probable too, considering how much better they must thus become acquainted with the haunts of the fishes, which are here their chief food. The ground, we now occupied, was, upon the whole, the best piece of country, in point of soil, that I had seen upon the Darling. Dunlop’s range was just behind, an extremity of it extending to the river, at three miles west from our camp. Three miles further eastward, our old route was crossed by a hollow which appeared to be the outlet of an extensive water-course, coming from the south-east, along the base of Dunlop’s range, or the low country between it and D’Urban’s group. We had scarcely started this morning, when the dogs killed another emu, and in the course of the day, we passed and recognised the spot, where our first emu was killed. Thus in one day, on our outward journey, we had traversed the country in which all the emus we had ever killed on the Darling, three in number, had been found.
The hill which we crossed in our route, consisted of a different sort of rock from any of those that we had seen further down the Darling, being a splintery quartz, in which the grains of sand or quartz are firmly embedded in the siliceous cement.

Aug. 7. — The morning was calm and sultry, but we continued the homeward route along our former track, and over a fine, firm plain. As soon as we had crossed, what may be termed Dunlop’s creek (the dry hollow above-mentioned), we started four kangaroos; of which the dogs first killed one, which we got, and afterwards another, in a scrub into which they had pursued the rest. These two were the only kangaroos that we killed on this river; and the circumstance afforded another proof of the superiority of the grass in the adjacent country, compared with that lower down. Neither these animals nor emus can approach the Darling (owing to the steepness of its banks), except by descending in the dry channels of water-courses, or by gullies: hence, probably, their appearance near Dunlop’s creek, which affords an easy means of access; and hence also, perhaps, the chief motive for the establishment of the native camp in that neighbourhood, from the facility afforded for killing the animals as they approached to drink. Of the kangaroo and emu, it may be observed, that any noise may be made in hunting the latter without inconvenience; but that the less made in chasing the former the better. The emu is disposed to halt and look, being, according to the natives, quite deaf; but having an eye proportionally keen. Thus it frequents the open plains, being there most secure from whoever may invade the solitude of the desert. The kangaroo, on the contrary, bounds onward while any noise continues; whereas, if it be pursued silently, it is prone to halt and look behind, and thus to lose distance. Dogs learn sooner to take the kangaroo than the emu, although young ones get sadly torn in conflicts with the former. But it is one thing, for a swift dog to overtake an emu, and another thing to kill, or even seize it. Our dogs were only now learning to capture emus, although they had chased and overtaken many. To attempt to lay hold by the side or leg is dangerous, as an emu could break a horse’s leg with a kick; but if a dog fastens upon the neck, as good dogs learn to do, the bird is immediately overthrown and easily killed. The flesh resembles a beef-steak, and it has a very agreeable flavour, being far preferable to that of the kangaroo.

We passed our old camp of the 10th of June, and taking a new route thence in a north-east direction; we avoided a bad scrub, and encamped in fine open ground on the river. We were soon hailed by some of our old friends of the Fort Bourke tribe, by far the best conducted natives, that we had seen on the Darling. They asked our men for tomahawks, and I had instructed them to explain, that for three large cod-perch they should have one in exchange. We could catch none of these fishes ourselves, which was rather singular, as some of our poor fellows were indefatigable in making the attempt every night, with hook and line and all kinds of bait. The natives seemed to understand our wants, and they promised to bring us fish in the morning. At sun-set, the wind changed to the south-west, and the sky became overcast: the air also was cooler, and after such heat as that which we experienced to-day, at this season, a fall of rain might have been expected; but I felt less apprehensive here, from four months’ experience of the climate of the interior.
Aug. 8. — Early this morning, a number of natives came near our camp, but without bringing any fish. The man to whom the promise of a tomahawk had been made, was not, however, amongst them. I went up to the party when we were about to continue our journey, and I recognized one of the Fort Bourke tribe, the “total gules” man, who had formerly appeared very shy and timid. Now, however, in half a minute his hand was in my pocket; on which I instantly mounted my horse and rode on. We crossed the tracks of our horses’ feet on my first excursion, and entered a plain, where we struck into the old route. In this plain, we saw three emus, and killed one, after a hard run. On coming to the hollow, which leads to the tree marked with Mr. Hume’s initials (and which may therefore be called Hume’s Creek), I measured with the chain its channel to the river, so as to connect the tree with the survey. I found that it bore due north from where our route crossed this hollow, the distance being sixty-nine chains. We reached our camp of the 9th of June by half-past two o’clock, and took up the same ground.

Aug. 9. — We continued our journey along the old track to our camp of the 8th of June, where we once more rested for the night. This was a very convenient station, being nearly on the margin of the river, the bank of which, consisting of concretionary limestone, afforded easy access for the cattle to the water, while the surrounding hollows supplied them with plenty of grass. I was now enabled to reduce the cattle guard from four to two men, which was a great relief to them. The backward journey allowed me a little time to look about me, and the river scenery here was fine. Indeed the position of our camp was most romantic, being a little eminence in the midst of grassy hollows, and recesses of the deepest shade, covered by trees of wild character and luxuriant growth.

Aug. 10. — The whole party was ready to start early this morning, and we proceeded in good time, in hopes of reaching our old home at Fort Bourke. Our dogs caught two of the largest kind of kangaroo, as we crossed the plains. The cattle, although now weak, seemed also eager to get back to their old pasture, on which they had fed so long formerly. We accomplished by four P. M. the journey of fourteen miles. From Fort Bourke, we had been absent two months and two days, having travelled during that time over 600 miles, even in direct distance. On our return from the lower country, this place looked better than ever in our eyes. The whole of the territory seen by us down the river, did not present such another spot, either for security, extent of good grazing land, or convenient access to water. The fort was uninjured, except that the blacks had been at infinite pains to cut out most of the large spike nails, fastening the logs of which the block-house was constructed. We all felt comparatively at home here; and indeed we were really about half way to our true home, for we had retraced about 300 miles, and were not more than the same distance from Buree, which is only 170 miles from Sydney. The cattle had done so well, that I resolved to give them two days’ rest; and more could not be afforded them, as the weather, though beautiful, might change, and we had some very soft ground still to go over. It was remarkable, that the water of the river, which for the last three days’ journey had been brackish, was here again, as formerly, as pure and sweet as any spring water. Fort Bourke consists of an elevated
plateau, overlooking a reach of the river a mile and a half in length, the hill being situated near a sharp turn, at the lower end of the reach. At this turn, a small dry water-course, which surrounds Fort Bourke on all sides, save that of the river, joins the Darling, and contains abundance of grass. The plateau consists of about 160 acres of rich loam, and was thinly wooded, before it was entirely cleared by us in making our place of defence. There are upon it various burying-places of the natives, who always choose the highest parts of that low country for the purpose of interment, their object being probably the security of the graves from floods. The tribe frequenting that neighbourhood, consists of a very few inoffensive individuals, less mischievous, as already observed, than any we had seen on the banks of the Darling.

We were about to leave, at last, this extraordinary stream, on which we had sojourned so long, enjoying abundance of excellent water, in the heart of a desert country. From the sparkling transparency of this water, its undiminished current, sustained without receiving any tributary throughout a course of 660 miles, and especially from its being salt in some places and fresh at others, it seems probable that the river, when in that reduced state, is chiefly supported by springs. It would appear that the saltiness occurs in the greatest body of water, where no current was perceptible, and as this was excessive when the river was first discovered, it may be attributed to saline springs, due to beds of rock-salt in the sandstone or clay. The bed of the river is on an average about sixty feet below the common surface of the country. To this depth the soil generally consists of clay, in which calcareous concretions and selenite occur abundantly; but at some parts, the clay, charged with iron, forms a soft kind of rock in the bed, or banks of the river. There are no traces of water-courses on these level plains, such as might be expected to fall from the hills behind; though the latter contain hollows and gullies, which must in wet seasons conduct water to the plains. The distance of such heights from the river, is seldom less than twelve miles; and it would appear, that the intervening country is of such an absorbent nature, that any water falling in torrents from the hills, is imbibed by the soft earth, or is received in the deep broad cracks, which sear the hollow parts, and in wet seasons must take up much water and retain it, until either evaporated, or sunk to lower levels. The water may thus be absorbed and retained for a considerable time, or until it is carried by slow drainage into the river, especially where the lower parts of such plains are shut in by hills approaching the channel. Thus, where the extremity of Dunlop’s range shot forward into the wide level margin, we found that the water had lost all taste of salt, a circumstance most easily accounted for, by supposing that springs being more abundant there, from the near vicinity of the hills, had diluted the water which we had found salt higher up. That some tributary, or branch joins the river from the opposite bank, at or near the sweep it describes round the hill, is not unlikely. I could not conveniently examine that part from our side, and hence it remains doubtful whether the problem admits of such easy solution.

The marks of high floods were apparent on the surface, frequently to the extent of two miles back from the ordinary channel. Within such a space, the waters
appear to overflow and then to lodge in hollows (covered with *polygonum junceum*), and which were at the time of our visit full of yawning cracks. Such parts of the surface would naturally be the first saturated in times of flood, and the last to part with moisture in seasons of drought. I observed that there was less of that kind of low ground, where the water was saltest, which was to the westward of D'Urban’s group.

The basin of the Darling, which may be considered to extend, in parts, at least, to the coast ranges on the east, appears to be very limited on the opposite or western side; a desert country from which it did not receive, as far as I could discover, a single tributary of any importance. A succession of low ridges seemed there to mark the extent of its basin, nor did I perceive in the country beyond, any ranges of a more decidedly fluviatile character.

The average breadth of the river at the surface of the water, when low, is about fifty yards, but oftener less than this, and seldom more. Judging from the slight fall of the country, and the softness and evenness of the banks (commonly inclined to an angle with the horizon of about 40°), I cannot think, that the velocity of the floods in the river ever exceeds one mile per hour, but that it is in general much less. At this time the water actually flowing, as seen at one or two shallow places, did not exceed in quantity, that which would be necessary to turn a mill. The banks every where displayed one peculiar feature, namely, the effect of floods in parallel lines, marking on the smooth sloping earth, the various heights to which the waters had in different floods arisen.

Some of the hollows behind the immediate banks on both sides, contained lagoons; in several of these, reeds had taken the place of water; in others the first coating of vegetation, which the alluvium receives on exposure to the sun, consisted of fragrant herbs, and amongst them we found the scented trefoil ("Câlomba"),* which proved an excellent anti-scorbutic vegetable when boiled. It was found, however, only at three places.

The surface of the plains nearest the river, is unlike any part of the earth’s face, that I have elsewhere seen. It is as clear of vegetation as a fallow field, but it has greater inequality of surface, and is full of holes. The soil is just tenacious enough to crack, when the surface becomes so soft and loose, that the few weeds which may have sprang up previous to desiccation, seldom remain where they grow, being blown out by the slightest wind. Over such ground it was very fatiguing to walk, the foot at each step sinking to the ankle, and care being necessary to avoid holes, always ready to receive the whole leg, and sometimes the body. It was not very safe to ride on horseback even at a walk, and to gallop or trot in that country, was quite out of the question. The labour which this kind of ground cost the poor bullocks, drawing heavy carts, reduced them to so great a state of weakness, that six never returned from the Darling. The work was so heavy for the two first teams on our advancing into these regions, that one team was rendered quite unserviceable by leading; but on returning we found the beaten track much easier for the whole party. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, we were much indebted to Providence for the continued dryness of the winter; for although it seemed then, as if nothing
short of a deluge, could have completed the saturation, there were also many proofs, that great inundations sometimes occurred; and it was still more obvious, that had rainy weather, or any overflowing of the river happened, we could no longer have travelled on the banks of the Darling.

The rocks about the surface of this country are few and simple. Besides the clay, nothing occurred in the river bed, except calcareous concretions, selenite, and in some parts sandstone similar to that seen at the base of almost all the hills. Back from the river, the first elevation usually consisted of hillocks of red sand, so soft and loose, that the cattle could scarcely draw the carts through. The clay adjacent to the sand, was firmer than any clay seen elsewhere on the plains, because the sand there acted like a sponge, taking up the water from the adjacent clay, which consequently preserved its tenacity at all seasons. This edge of clay along the skirts of plains at the base of the red sand ridges, I found the most favourable ground for travelling upon. Still further back, gravel, consisting of fragments, not much water-worn, of various hard rocks, appeared, forming low undulations towards the base of more remote hills, which consist of a very hard sandstone. I may here mention, however, that the extremity of Dunlop’s range, which, by approaching the river, there occupied the place of the hard gravel in other situations, seemed to be composed of the same rock of which much of that gravel consisted.

Of the hills in general, it may be observed, that those on the left bank are most elevated at the higher parts of the river, whereas those on the right bank, rise into greatest height, towards the lower parts of the river, as far as explored by us. The plains extend on each side of the channel to a distance of six or seven miles, and are in general clear of timber. That deep and extensive bed of clay, so uniformly filling the basin of this river, has every appearance of a mud deposit. Behind the plains the country is sparingly wooded, except by the stunted bush (Myoporum montanum), which forms a thick scrub, especially on the side of the low hills. On the river bank, trees peculiar to it, grow to so large a size, that its course may be easily traced at great distances; and they thus facilitated our survey most materially. These gigantic trees consist of that species of eucalyptus called blue-gum in the colony; and their searching roots seem to luxuriate in the banks of streams, lakes, or ponds, so that the thirsty traveller soon learns to recognise the shining trunk, and white, knarled arms, as the surest guides to water. The alluvial portion of the margin of the Darling is narrow, and in most places overgrown with the dwarf box, which is another species of eucalyptus. In it are hollow places as already observed, covered with the polygonum juncem, which is an unsightly leafless bush or bramble. Grass is only to be found on the banks of the river, and, strictly speaking, the margin only can be considered alluvial, for this being irrigated and enriched by the floods, it is everywhere abundantly productive of grass, though none may appear in the back country.

In the ground beyond the plains, some casuarinæ and eucalypti are occasionally seen in the scrubs which grow on the red sand, and an acacia, with a white stem, and spotted bark, there grows to a considerable size, and produces much gum. Indeed gum acacia abounds in these scrubs, and when the country is more accessible,
may become an article of commerce.

The plants, were in general different from those nearer the colony, and though they were few in number, yet they were curious. Of grasses I gathered seeds of twenty-five different kinds, six of which grew only on the alluvial bank of the Darling. Among them were a poa, and the chloris truncata, and stipa setacea of Mr. Brown. The country was, nevertheless, almost bare, and the roots, stems, and seeds, the products of a former season, were blown about on the soft face of the parched and naked earth; where the last spring seemed, indeed, to have produced no vegetation, excepting a thin crop of an unbelliferous weed.

The character and disposition of the natives, may be gathered from the foregoing journal of our progress along the river. It seldom happened, that I was particularly engaged, with a map, a drawing, or a calculation, but I was interrupted by them, or respecting them. It was evident, that our presents had the worst effect, for although they were given with every demonstration of good will on our part, the gifts seemed only to awaken on theirs, a desire to destroy us, and to take all we had. While sitting in the dust with them, conformably to their custom, often have they examined my cap, evidently with no other view than to ascertain, if it would resist the blow of a waddy. Then, they would feel the thickness of my dress, and whisper together, their eyes occasionally glancing at their spears and clubs. The expression of their countenances was sometimes so hideous, that after such interviews, I have found comfort in contemplating the honest faces of the horses and sheep; and even in the scowl of “the patient ox,” I have imagined an expression of dignity, when he may have pricked up his ears, and turned his horns towards these wild specimens of the “lords of the creation.” Travellers in Australian deserts will find, that such savages cannot remain at rest when near, but are ever ready and anxious to strip them by all means in their power, of everything, however useless to the natives. It was not until we proceeded en vainqueur, that we knew anything like tranquillity on the Darling; and I am now of opinion, that to discourage at once the approach of such natives, would tend more to the safety of an exploring party, than presenting them with gifts. These rovers of the wilds seem to consider such presents, as the offerings of fear and weakness; and I attribute much of their outrageous conduct to such mistaken notions, and their incorrigible covetousness, against which, the best security, unfortunately for them and us, appeared to be to keep them at a distance.

The further we descended the river, the more implacably savage we found the blacks. I have already remarked, that the more ferocious had not lost their front teeth, and that those we had seen on the Upper Darling, had all lost one tooth. Indeed it was precisely, where we first witnessed the inauspicious ceremony of the green branch burnt, and waved at us in defiance, that we first found natives, who retained both front teeth. A considerable portion of the river, quite uninhabited, lay between these fire-throwers and the less offensive natives, and there was a difference in the pronunciation, at least, if not in the words, of the tribes. The old men on the Darling, are by far the most expert at stealing; and notwithstanding my marks of respect to them in particular they were not the less the instigators and abettors of every thing wrong. A mischievous old man is usually
accompanied by a stout middle aged man and a boy; thus the cunning of the old one, the strength of him of middle age, and the agility of the youth, are combined with advantage; both in their intercourse with their neighbours, and in seeking the means of existence. The old man leads, as fitted by his experience to do so; and he has also at his command, by this combination, the strength and agility of the other two. The natives of the Darling live chiefly on the fish of the river, and are expert swimmers and divers. They can swim and turn with great velocity under water, and they can both see and spear the largest fish, sometimes remaining beneath the surface a considerable time for this purpose. In very cold weather, however, they float on pieces of bark; and thus also they can spear the fish, having a small fire beside them in such a bark canoe. They also feed on birds, and especially on ducks, which they ensnare with nets, in the possession of every tribe. These nets are very well worked, much resembling our own in structure, and they are made of the wild flax, which grows in tufts near the river. These are easily gathered by the gins, who manage the whole process of net-making. They give each tuft (soon after gathering it) a twist, also biting it a little, and in that state it is laid about on the roof of their huts until dry. Fishing nets are made of various similar materials, being often very large; and attached to some of them, I have seen half-inch cordage, which might have been mistaken for the production of a rope-walk. But the largest of their nets are those set across the Darling for the purpose of catching the ducks which fly along the river in considerable flocks. These nets are strong, with wide meshes; and when occasion requires, they are stretched across the river from a lofty pole erected for the purpose on one side, to some large opposite tree on the other. Such poles are permanently fixed, supported by substantial props, and it was doubtless one of them, that Captain Sturt supposed to have been erected, to propitiate some deity.

The native knows well “the alleys green” through which at twilight, the thirsty pigeons and parrots rush towards the water; and there, with a smaller net hung up, he sits down, and makes a fire ready to roast the birds, which may fall into his snare.

These savages have a power of manipulating with their toes, so as to do many things surprising to men who wear shoes. This power they acquire chiefly by ascending trees from infancy, their mode of climbing depending as much on the toes as the fingers. With the toes, they gather fresh-water muscles (unio) from the muddy bottom of rivers or lagoons; and the heaps of these shells beside their old fire places, which are numerous along the banks, shew that this shell-fish is the daily food of, at least, the gins and children. In their attempts to steal from us, their feet were much employed. They would tread softly on any article, seize it with the toes, pass it up the back, or between the arm and side, and so conceal it in the arm-pit, or between the beard and throat. The hoary old priest of the Spitting-tribe was intent on tricks of this kind, assisted by his people, and while he was thus plotting or effecting mischief he chaunted that extraordinary hymn to “some deity”, or devil. It was evident, that these people were actuated by superstitious ideas of some kind; but which, judging by their acts, had no connexion with any good principle. When the two old men paced thrice round our lowest position on the Darling, chaunting
their song, throwing their arms to the sky, and rubbing themselves with dust; arrangements were no doubt in progress, for the destruction of strangers, of whose good will towards them, they had seen abundant proofs, not only in our conduct, but in the useful presents we had made them. They had no grounds for any suspicion of danger from us; yet, that these ceremonies were observed, the better to ensure success in the plans for our destruction, admitted of little doubt, for they were connected with all their hostile movements. Yet even in defence of such an implacable disposition towards the civilized intruder, much may be urged. No reflecting man can witness the quickness and intelligence of the aborigines, as displayed in their instant comprehension of our numerous appliances, without feelings of sympathy. He must perceive, that these people cannot be so obtuse as not to anticipate in the advance of such a powerful race, the extirpation of their own, in a country which barely affords to them the means of existence. Such must be the conclusion in their minds, although it is to be hoped, that the results of our invasion may be different; and, that if these savage people do not learn habits of industry, a breed of wild cattle may at least compensate them, for the loss of the kangaroo and opossum.

The population of the Darling seemed to have been much reduced by small-pox, or some cutaneous disease, which must have been very virulent, considering their dirty mode of living; and its violence was indeed apparent in the marks on those who survived.

Considering the industry and skill of their gins or wives, in making nets, sewing cloaks, muscle fishing, rooting, &c.; and their patient submission to labour, always carrying the bags which contain the whole property of the family, the great value of a gin to one of these lazy fellows, may be easily imagined. Accordingly the possession of them appears to be associated with all their ideas of fighting; while, on the other hand, the gins have it in their power on such occasions, to evince that universal characteristic of the fair, a partiality for the brave. Thus it is, that after a battle, they do not always follow their fugitive husbands from the field, but frequently go over, as a matter of course, to the victors, even with young children on their backs; and thus it was, probably, after we had made the lower tribes sensible of our superiority, that the three gins followed our party, beseeching us to take them with us.

Depending chiefly on the river for subsistence, they do not wander so much as those who hunt the kangaroo and opossum, in the higher country, near our colony. Hence the more permanent nature of the huts on the Darling; and it would appear, that different tribes occupy different portions of the river. The Spitting tribe desired our men to pour out the water from the buckets, as if it had belonged to them; digging, at the same time, a hole in the ground to receive it when poured out; and I have more than once seen a river chief, on receiving a tomahawk, point to the stream, and signify that we were then at liberty to take water from it, so strongly were they possessed with the notion, that the water was their own.

We saw no kangaroos lower down than Dunlop’s range, neither did we seen any emus. In the red sand-hills were many burrows of the wombat, but these also
became scarce, as we proceeded downwards. A species of rat was remarkable for the ingenious fabric, it raised to secure itself from the native dog, or birds of prey. The structure consisted of a rick or stack of small branches, commonly worked around and interlaced with some small bush, the whole resembling a pile laid for one of the signal fires so much used by the natives. As these heaps of dead boughs drew the attention of our dogs, we at length examined several of them, and always found a small nest in the centre, occupied by the same kind of rat. This animal had ears exactly resembling those of a small rabbit, soft downy wool and short hind legs; indeed, but for the tail, it might have passed for a small rabbit.

The work of an ant peculiar to the country, also attracted our attention. Instead of a mound, these insects made a habitation or excavation under the surface, about six feet in diameter, and it was quite smooth, level and clean, as if constantly swept. It was also nearly as hard as stone; and the only access to it was by one or two small holes. This surface was, to us, on first advancing into the interior, one of its wonders. Thus this variety of ant dwells securely at some depth below, for nothing less than a pickaxe can penetrate to the larvæ; but those of another variety of the common kind, which construct mounds, are eaten by the native females and children, who carry wooden shovels for the purpose of digging them out.

The bronze-wing pigeon was here, as elsewhere, the most numerous of that kind of bird. Next in abundance was the crested pigeon, which seems more peculiar to these low levels. There were large flocks of a brown pigeon with a white head, and not an uncommon bird elsewhere; also a small species of dove with very handsome plumage. The large black cockatoo was sometimes seen, and about the river banks, the common white cockatoo with yellow top-knot (Plcytophphus geleritus). The smaller bird of this genus with a scarlet and yellow crest, and pink wings (Plcytophphus Leadbeateri), was rarely noticed, and it appeared to come from a distance, flying usually very high. The pink-coloured wings and glowing crest of this beautiful bird, might have embellished the air of a more voluptuous region; and, indeed, from its transient visits, it did not seem quite at home on the banks of the Darling. The plumage of several kinds of parrots was extremely rich, and even the small birds were clothed in pink and blue. But the air, however much adorned by the feathered race, had its thieves, as well as the earth. The crows were amazingly bold, always accompanying us from camp to camp. It was absolutely necessary to watch our meat while in kettles on the fire, and, on one occasion, notwithstanding our cook’s vigilance, a piece of pork weighing three pounds, was taken from a boiling pot, and carried off by one of these birds! The hawks were equally voracious. A pigeon had been no sooner shot by Burnett, than an audacious hawk carried it away, and, as if fearless of a similar fate, he flew but a very short distance from the fowler, before he had taken half the feathers off.

The species of fish most abundant in the Darling, is the Gristes Peelii, or cod-perch, and they are caught of a very large size by the natives. We also saw the thick-scaled mud-tasted fish (Cernua Bidyana, see page 95). We did not, on this occasion, see that very remarkable fish, the Eelfish (Plotosus Tandanus), so abundant in the higher parts of the river. The water was too clear, and the weather too cold, for
fishing with bait, one of each of the two species first mentioned, caught during our first occupation of Fort Bourke, being all we ever procured.

No rain had fallen during the four months, which had elapsed since we left the colony, and it was probable that the ponds of the Bogan, many of which our cattle had drank up during our advance, would not afford a sufficient supply of water, nor even be numerous enough on the route for our daily wants, considering the short stages, we were obliged to travel, on account of the exhausted cattle. We had already lost six bullocks on our return journey, some having got bogged, and others having lain down from weakness, never to rise. For three hundred miles, we were now to depend on the ponds of the Bogan, and again to contend with the scarcity of water, a disadvantage from which we had been quite free, while on the banks of the Darling.

Aug. 11. — Having, at length, two days of leisure, I was anxious to complete my surveys of this river. I found, that the distance from D’Urban’s group to Mr. Hume’s tree, the furthest point attained by Captain Sturt, was 17 miles and 22 chains, not 33 miles as stated by that traveller; and that the highest summit of D’Urban’s group, bore from it 53° E. of S. not 58° E. of S. the latter bearing, as given by Sturt, being probably a clerical or typographical error.

Aug. 12. — About ten A. M. the calls of the natives were heard, and four or five came towards the camp, asking for tomahawks. I sent two of our people to them, but they were restless and importunate; soon after I saw them running, having set the grass on fire. We then sallied forth in pursuit, to make them retire across the Darling, but they had crossed ere we saw them. I believe these were strangers, for the gins of the Fort Bourke tribe continued, all the while, quietly to fish for muscles in the river, without taking notice of them.

Chapter VIII.

The party leaves the Darling — Natives approach the camp during the night — Scared by a rocket — Discovery of a Caper-tree — The kangaroos and emus driven away by the natives — Difference between the plains of the Darling and Bogan — Extreme illness of one of the party — New-Year’s range — A thunder-storm — Three natives remind us of the man wounded — Another man of the party taken ill — Acacia pendula — Beauty of the scenery — Mr. Larmer traces Duck Creek to the Macquarie — A hot-wind — “Talambé” of the Bogan tribe — Tombs of Milmeridien — Another bullock fails — Natives troublesome — Successful chase of four kangaroos — Natives of the Bogan come up — Water scarce — Two red painted natives — Uncertainty of Mr. Cunningham’s fate — Mr. Larmer overtakes the party — Result of his survey — Send off a courier to Sydney — Marks of Mr. Dixon — Tandogo Creek and magnificent pine forest — Harvey’s range in sight — Improved appearance of the country — Meet the natives who first accompanied us — Arrive at a cattle station — Learn that Mr. Cunningham had been killed by natives — Cookopie ponds — Goobang Creek — Character of the river Bogan — Native inhabitants on its banks — Their mode of fishing — Manners and customs — Prepare to quit the party — The
Aug. 13. — THIS morning we finally quited Fort Bourke and the banks of the Darling, to return by our former route along the Bogan. We halted within a mile of our previous encampment, and again drank of the waters of that river, but from a very shallow pond, that which we formerly had recourse to, being quite dry.

Aug. 14. — We continued the journey most prosperously, all things considered, and bivouacked beside a large pond, two miles beyond our ground of the 23rd May. We saw natives all about, but they did not venture too near us. I supposed they were of the tribe, which formerly behaved so well, when we passed these ponds. About eight P. M. however, we perceived numerous fire-sticks approaching among the bushes; and though I counted nine in motion, yet I heard no noise. I directed the men to be silent, curious to know what these people meant to do. At length, when the lights had approached within 150 yards of our camp, every one suddenly disappeared; the bearers preserving all the while, the most perfect silence. I then thought it advisable to scare these natives away, supposing that they were lurking about our camp with the intention to steal. I accordingly placed some men with instructions to rush forward shouting, as soon as I should send up a rocket. Its ascent, and our sudden accompanying noise had, no doubt, a tremendous effect on the natives, for even in the morning they remained at a respectful distance.

Aug. 15. — We began to discover some signs of vegetation in the earth. Blades of green grass appeared among the yellow stalks, and on the plains, we found a new species of Danthonia; the whole country, indeed, already wore a better appearance than on any part of the Darling. We passed our station of 22nd May, about a mile, and encamped close to a good pond. Several natives’ huts were near, at which the fires were still burning; the inhabitants having fled; but I forbade the men to go near these huts, or touch a stone hatchet and some carved boomerangs, which had been left behind. A native dog lay as if watching these implements; and it barked on my approaching one of the huts, a circumstance unusual in one of these animals. Soon after, four natives came up shouting, and two of them having advanced in front, sat down, but we took no notice of them, thinking that they had followed from the last camp, and belonged to the fire-stick visitors; they called back the fugitives, however, and encamped together on a pond lower down.

Aug. 16. — As we moved off about eight this morning, the blacks hung about in groups, but we paid no attention to them. We had now, happily for both parties, arrived where the natives had probably heard of fire-arms, and of the numerous white men beyond the hills, neither were the blacks of these parts ever known to behave like the savages on the lower Darling. I sought, in vain, for my lost telescope during this day’s journey; the natives having probably found it, as the whole line of our track was much marked with their footsteps. We reached our former camp of May 20 and 21, by two o’clock, and again pitched our tents near that spot.

Aug. 17. — Nineteen of our bullocks had strayed during the night, but were
found about seven miles back, in a scrub near the Bogan. We did not, therefore, start until ten o’clock, but were able, nevertheless, to cross the Pink hills, and reach our ground of May 19. To-day I fell in with a tree, of which I saw but a single specimen during my former journey, and I had observed only a sickly one before during this expedition. It bore a yellow flower, and fruit resembling a small pomegranate, on a hooked stalk. I had unfortunately omitted to gather specimens of it, when seen by me in flower, in 1831; and now I could not procure any of the seeds, every rind being hollow, and the interior destroyed apparently by insects. I considered this a very remarkable tree, as well from its rare occurrence, as on account of its fruit, of which the natives appear to make some use.

The Pink hills, as I have already mentioned, consist of the diluvial gravel; and their position at the point separating the tributary basin of the Macquarie and Bogan, from the channel of the Darling, is just where such a deposit might be produced.

Aug. 18. — I was more successful in my search, this morning, for seeds of the fruit above-mentioned; and I was surprised to find many specimens of the tree in the scrub, through which we had previously passed, without observing them. On one plant, we found some fruit apparently full grown, but not ripe; and on others perfect specimens of the last year’s crop, including, of course, the seeds. The fruit resembles a small lemon, but has within, small nuts or stones, enveloped in a soft pulp, and the whole has an agreeable perfume. We also found some specimens of the flower, rather faded. We reached our old encampment of May 18, by three o’clock.

Aug. 19. — When all were ready to start, it was discovered that one bullock was missing; the two men who had been in charge of the cattle all night, were sent in search of it, while the party proceeded towards our former camp of May 17. As our route, between these camps, traversed the great bend, where the course of the Bogan changes from north to west-north-west, I was enabled to cut off four miles, by travelling N. 145° E. a part of the way. We crossed some undulating ground, with an open forest upon it, in which we killed two large kangaroos. We supposed, on account of this success, that we had outwitted the blacks by our cross course; for we had reason to suspect that they proceeded a-head of us along our old track, and drove off the emu and kangaroo, as we seldom saw either. We, however, surprised two natives cutting away at an opossum’s hole in a tree at some distance to our left; and on seeing us, they made off with great speed towards the northern bend of the river, and our former route. On reaching our old encampment, we discovered new beauty in the plains on the Bogan, when compared with those on the banks of the Darling. There we dreaded plains, the surface being soft and uneven. Here, on the contrary, they delighted the eye with their great levelness, while the firmer surface was no less agreeable to the foot. The grass also had been so cleanly burnt off, that the surface resembled a floor, and although such a piece of perfect level country, extending for miles, was by no means a common feature, it was, perhaps, more striking to us, on coming from the soft plains, on account of its firmness, neither hoofs nor wheels leaving any impression upon it. The two men
came in with the stray bullock soon after the tents were pitched, and thus our party was again in a state to move forward. One of the men, Robert Whiting, who had been long afflicted with the black scurvy, continued to get weaker daily; and it seemed very doubtful whether his life could be preserved, until we should reach a station where vegetables might be procured. In other respects, he was as well off as if in an hospital; the proper medicines were given to him, he was kept warm in a tent, and on the journey he was conveyed in a covered van. He was, however, sinking daily, all his teeth were dropping out — and yet, poor fellow, he had been, when in health, one of the most indefatigable of the party, and had been also with me, on my journey to the northward. He did not look the same man on this occasion, from the first setting out; and it was evident, that he had brought the disease from an ironed gang, where it had been prevalent some time before.

_Aug. 20._ — Following our old route, we crossed the extremities of New-Year’s range, and at the rocky point, where it was first seen by us, I obtained bearings on it, and several other heights to the westward, which I had seen also from that range. The sky was obscured this morning by a kind of smoky haze, which brought with it a smell of burning grass. It was evident, that either the Macquarie marshes, or some other extensive tract, to the eastward, was on fire, as the wind blew from that quarter. The obscurity continued during the whole of the day, and the smell also. As we crossed the plain, which appeared to Captain Sturt like a “broad and rapid river,” the dogs killed an emu, and thus we were now pretty well supplied with fresh meat. We at length encamped, where we first came to the creek, after descending from New-Year’s range, having found a good pond there.

_Aug. 21._ — Early this morning, we were all awakened by the unwonted sound of _thunder_, the first we had heard, after having been 4½ months in the interior. The wind had been high during the night, but a dead calm preceded the rumbling peals which were first heard, at a great distance. Soon, however, we had the cloud near enough in all its glory, with lightning playing above and about us, until the atmosphere seemed one continued blaze of light; the rain also fell heavily for a short time. At daylight the sky was cloudy, and it seemed that the drought was about to break up; at least this was the most remarkable change in the weather, which we had met with on the journey; and as we were doubtful about the state of the ponds of the Bogan, I was well pleased with the prospect of rain. We proceeded to the old camp of May 15, where we again pitched our tents. There was not much rain during the day, but about sunset a heavy cloud, accompanied by thunder and a squall, broke over us. Soon after, the wind lulled, the sky became clear, and in the morning, we found ice on the water; the atmosphere having resumed its usual serenity.

_Aug. 22._ — Early this morning, the cooys of three natives were heard. On meeting them, they went through the usual formalities; an old man fixing his eyes on the ground, with due decorum. They could say “budgery;” and by their repeating this word, they appeared, in our eyes, infinitely less savage than the natives on the Darling. They also plainly alluded to the man wounded with small shot, at the encounter which took place on our formerly occupying the next camp up the
Bogan. We understood them to allude to this event, by their tapping rapidly with
the finger over the arm and shoulder; and then pointing towards the place, where
the unfortunate rencontre happened. We had been more than usual on our guard,
in returning towards the haunts of a tribe where we had, although unwillingly, done
such mischief; but these fellows seemed, by their laughing, to advert to it as a good
joke, and we, therefore, concluded that the poor fellow had recovered. They asked
for nothing, and on retiring, made signs, that they were going towards the hills, or
westward. We travelled towards our former camp of May 14, but the distance being
sixteen miles, it was too much for our weak animals. We halted therefore four miles
short of it; and though we turned a mile off the route to the eastward, in search of
the Bogan, we did not find it, until after we had encamped, and then at nearly a mile
further to the eastward still. Another man of the party, Johnston, who was rather
aged, began to shew symptoms of the black scurvy, which made him walk lame.
This might be partly attributed to the rancidity of the salt pork, rather than the
saltiness, as it had been in a great measure spoiled by having been taken out of the
proper barrels, and put, without brine, into the water casks, before I joined the
party. The two men now afflicted with scurvy, were precisely those who eat this
pork most voraciously; and consequently its effect soonest became apparent upon
them.

Aug. 23. — The weather again quite serene. We continued our march, and passing
our former camp of the 14th, reached that of May 13, by two P. M. The ponds, in
which we had before found water, were now dried up; but we fortunately
discovered others a little distance higher. At two miles onward from the camp of
May 14, we saw bushes of *acacia pendula* for the first time, since we had previously
passed that place. The locality of that beautiful shrub is very peculiar, being always
near, but never within, the limits of inundations. Never far from hills, yet never
upon them. These bushes, blended with a variety of other acacias, and crowned
here and there with casuarine, form very picturesque groups, especially when
relieved with much open ground. Indeed, the beauty of the sylvan scenery on the
lower Bogan, may be cited as an exception to the general want of pictorial effect in
the woods of New South Wales. The poverty of the foliage of the eucalyptus, the
prevailing tree, affords little of mass or shadow; and indeed seldom has that tree,
either in the trunk or branches, anything ornamental to landscape. On these plains,
where all surrounding trees and shrubs seemed different from those of other
countries, the *Agrostis virginica* of Linnaeus, a grass common throughout Asia and
America, but new to me in Australia, grew near the scrubs. Here also grows a new
species of *Eleusine*, being a very tall nutritious grass.*

Aug. 24. — Retracing still our former steps, we reached a pond on the Bogan, 3½
miles short of our camp of May 12. There, I fixed the camp in open ground, and
near good grass, with the intention of resting for two days; this repose having
become absolutely necessary, for the purpose of refreshing our exhausted cattle.

Aug. 25. — Being near the route of Mr. Hume, when he proceeded westward
from Mount Harris, and crossed two creeks, of which the Bogan was one; I was
desirous of ascertaining the source of the other, whose channel he had found,
intermediate, between this river and the Macquarie. Being occupied in completing
my plans of the Darling, preparatory to my immediate return to the colony, I
instructed Mr. Larmer to proceed on a survey of that creek, by tracing from our
next camp (that of May 12), on a bearing of 102° E. of N., until he reached it, and
then to follow it up. Mr. Larmer took with him five men, and a week’s provisions,
also a copy of our recent survey of the Bogan, with Mr. Oxley’s Macquarie; and I
instructed him to rejoin the main party at Cudduludury, the camp where I calculated
we should arrive, about the probable time of his return.

Aug. 26. — The morning was calm, but about noon a hot wind set in, blowing
very strongly from the north-north-west, the thermometer stood at 86°, but by
sunset at 80°. I had been sensible of a parching and unseasonable dryness and
warmth in the winds, from that quarter, throughout the winter, while farther in the
interior; and it may be inferred, from these hot winds blowing so early in the
season, that the drought and the absence of any humidity in the climate, prevailed
to a very great extent, over the interior regions. This is, what I should expect to find
in the central parts of Australia, from the nature of that portion which I had seen
and the state of the weather throughout the winter. An almost perpetual sun-shine
had prevailed, dry cirro-cumulous clouds had arisen indeed sometimes, but no
point of the earth’s surface, was of sufficient height to attract them, or to arrest
their progress in the sky. There seemed neither on the earth nor in the air sufficient
humidity to feed a cloud. Dew was very uncommon, the moisture from the one or
two slight showers, which did reach the ground, was measured out in this shape
upon the vegetation, on the mornings immediately succeeding their fall. The hot
wind of the Bogan met with no antidote, as in Sydney, where the heat of a similar
wind is usually moderated towards evening, by a strong south-west breeze. On the
Bogan the wind was oppressively hot during the night, and lulled only towards
morning.

Aug. 27. — Our cattle moved on in the morning, apparently much better for the
rest, and the grass on which they had fed here. We reached, in good time, a small
open plain, distant about two miles from our camp of May 11, and halted close by a
pond in the bed of the Bogan. At this point, there were several fires, but the natives
had run off on our approach; at sunset, however, a young man came frankly up to
our camp, when we recognized “Talambé,” one of those who had accompanied the
king of the Bogan. We were all very glad to meet with an old acquaintance, even of
this kind and colour; and although he could only say “budgery,” this was
something, after the total want of any common terms with the savages we had lately
seen; and really the mild tone of voice, and very different manner of this native, and
others of his tribe, who came up next morning, made us feel comparatively at
home, although still not very far from Oxley’s Table-land.

Aug. 28. — Several natives came up with Talambé in the morning, and they
accompanied us on our route. As we passed a burial-ground, called by them
“Milmeridien,” I rode to examine it, and on reaching the spot, these natives became
silent and held down their heads. Nor did their curiosity restrain them from passing
on, although I unfolded my sketch-book which they had not seen before, and
remained there half an hour, for a purpose of which they could have had no idea. The burying-ground was a fairy-like spot, in the midst of a scrub of drooping acacias. It was extensive, and laid out in walks, which were narrow and smooth, as if intended only for “sprites;” and they meandered in gracefully curved lines, among the heaps of reddish earth, which contrasted finely with the acacias and dark casuarinæ around. Others girt with moss shot far into the recesses of the bush, where slight traces of still more ancient graves, proved the antiquity of these simple but touching records of humanity. With all our art, we could do no more for the dead, than these poor savages had done. As we approached Nyingan we crossed a plain, on which we killed a kangaroo, which afforded a seasonable supply, for our stock of pork was nearly exhausted; and two men were now so ill as to require to be carried in the light covered waggon. We encamped at Nyingan, near a large pond of water.

**Aug. 29.** — One of the bullocks had sunk in the mud while drinking at the pond, and when at length it was drawn out, it was so weak as to be unable to stand. I therefore halted this day, in hopes he would recover before next morning. Our friends, the blacks, had been rather forward during the night, and throughout this day, they lay about my tent pointing to their empty stomachs, and behaving in a contemptuous manner, although we had given them most of our kangaroo. At length, I determined to send them off, if this could be done, without quarrelling with them. I directed Burnett, to take some men with fixed bayonets, and march in line towards them. This move answered very well, the natives receded to a distance, perfectly understanding our object; but there sat down, and made their fires. Only two came up next morning, again pointing to their stomachs; but I knew from experience, that to feed them was to retain them permanently in our camp, and now I did not want them, and had no food to spare.

**Aug. 30.** — The bullock could not be made to rise, and we were, after all, obliged to leave him. When we proceeded the natives remained behind, of course intending to kill and eat the poor animal. This day, in crossing a plain, I saw, with my glass, the head of a kangaroo in the grass at a distance. We ran the dogs towards it, when two got up. One dog, named Nelson, killed the smallest and threw it over his head, all the while keeping his eye on the other, which he immediately pursued and also killed. He then saw and took after a third, a very large forest kangaroo; and this also he seized and fought with, until Burnett got up to his assistance. About three miles further a fourth kangaroo was seen and killed by the same dog, so that we obtained abundance of fresh provisions for several days. We encamped in our old position of the 9th of May. In the evening some natives, whom we had formerly seen with the king of the Bogan, came up, with two very timid old men. We gave them some kangaroo, and they behaved very well, retiring to a fire at some distance, in order to cook it, and pass the night.

**Aug. 31.** — We were accompanied in our travels this morning, first by several young natives, and afterwards by a chief who came before us rather ceremoniously, and halted in an open plain, until I went up to him. His costume was rather imposing, consisting of a net-work, which confined his hair into the form of a
round cap, having in the front, a plume of white, light feathers; a rather short cloak of opossum skins was drawn tightly around his body with one hand, his bommerangs and waddy being grasped fast in the other. (See Pl. 21.)

As we crossed the large plain within the bend of the Bogan, and where its course changes from west to near north, our eyes were refreshed with the sight of a crop of green grass, growing in all the hollow parts, some rain having recently fallen there. We encamped on our old ground at Walwadyer.

**Sept. 1.** — The natives whom we last met with, and had entertained at our camp, with a view to obtain their assistance in finding water, at the end of this day’s journey, took to their heels exactly when the carts started this morning; carrying off with them a little native boy, an orphan, whom we had washed, scrubbed, dressed, and carried on a cart, meaning to take him with us to the colony. We proceeded as far as our next camp, called Bugabadá, where, finding some water, I halted, until I could ascertain the distance to the next pool. For this purpose, I sent a party to Cuddúldury with directions to meet Mr. Larmer, (who had been instructed to rejoin the party at that place this day), and to let him know, where we were. They returned at sun-set, without having either found water or seen Mr. Larmer. As I knew the Bogan was dry for many miles above Cuddúldury, I made arrangements for carrying on a supply next day, that we might proceed to some ponds on this river, distant about twenty-five miles. Still it was impossible for the party to reach that point in one day, and the water we could carry would not be enough for our cattle. At nine P. M., however, distant thunder was heard, the sky became overcast and several smart showers fell during the night, thus affording most providentially, a prospect of dew on the following night, which would refresh the horses and bullocks.

**Sept. 2.** — Two natives came towards our camp, having hideous countenances, and being savagely painted with crimson on the abdomen and right shoulder; the nose and cheek-bones were also gules, and some blazing spots were daubed, like drops of gore, on the brow. The most ferocious-looking wore round his brow, the usual band newly whitened. He, like all those more savage natives, had neither a word nor even a smile for us. The other, my men recognized to be Werrajouit, the native who formerly had in his possession, the handkerchief which was supposed to have belonged to Mr. Cunningham. I thought, that if that gentleman had really been sacrificed, some of these fellows had been guilty of his murder; but we were still uncertain of his fate; and perhaps his life had been saved by some of these very natives, whom the men were now much inclined to seize as his destroyers. A gin and child were brought to us, that we might give some clothes to the latter, a practice we had foolishly encouraged at the first interviews; so that they almost persecuted me with young children, expecting that they should receive something. This gin had an English havresack, and Burnett, by my orders, examined the contents; but he found nothing likely to have belonged to Mr. Cunningham, except a piece of cloth. This search was made, after they had disappointed us respecting a water-hole, and when the man who had promised to be our guide had decamped.

All the ponds in which we had found water before, were dry, nor could we obtain it elsewhere, although Burnett had examined the Bogan to Burdenda. I knew by the
result of our former search for Mr. Cunningham, that no water was to be procured down the bed of the river for many miles; and I therefore cut off four miles of this day's route, and continued our journey as far as possible, having provided against a night without water, by carrying as much in barrels as supplied the whole party, and afforded half a gallon to each of the horses and bullocks. We encamped on a grassy plain, about five miles on, in our journey of the 1st of May.

Sept. 3. — I sent Burnett and two men forward to examine some ponds, beyond our former camp of the 30th of April, while the rest of the party followed. Mr. Larmer overtook us during this day's journey, having last night been encamped with his party only three miles behind us. He had found in Duck creek, long reaches, like canals, full of excellent water, and covered with wild fowl of every description. On its banks grew large gum-trees, like those on the Darling; and he had traced this channel to a large lagoon, near the Macquarie, the bed of which was found to be quite dry. Many small water-courses led from the Macquarie into Duck creek, which indeed appeared to be the lowest channel of this river, the general fall of the country being to the westward. The identity of the two channels was further established by the quartzose sand found in both. It appears, that a low range of firm ground separates the Bogan from Duck creek, the bed of which, and all the land between it and the Macquarie, consists of an alluvial soil altogether different, according to Mr. Larmer, from any we had seen on the Darling. This surface was covered with a luxuriant green crop of grass, a sight which we had not enjoyed on this journey, and there were also numerous kangaroos and emus, for whose absence from the plains of the Bogan, we could not previously account.

Mr. Larmer's men were still seven miles behind him, and had had no water since they left the Macquarie two days previously, nor much to eat, for they had carried rations for seven days only, and this was the ninth since they quitted the camp. We, therefore, sent back a man with a loaf and a kettle of water, and he met them four miles behind the party. We continued the journey four miles beyond our old camp, to a pond which the overseer had found, and was then the nearest water to our former position. To this pond the cattle came on tolerably well, after having travelled fourteen miles, and having passed the previous night almost without water. The party was at length reunited here; and we had now passed the so much dreaded long dry part of the bed of the Bogan. An old native and a boy, apparently belonging to the Myall tribes, came in the evening, but we could learn nothing from them. They were covered with pieces of blanket, and the man used a Scotch bonnet as a bag. They said they had been to Buckenbâ where there were five white men. In the bed of the river, where I went this evening to enjoy the sight of the famished cattle drinking, I came accidentally on an old footstep of Mr. Cunningham, in the clay, now baked hard by the sun. Four months had elapsed since we had traced his steps, and up to this time, the clay bore these last records of our late fellow-traveller!

Sept. 4. — The old man, with a hideous “mumping face,” again came up, and took his place at one of our fires, having sent the boy on some message, probably to bring others of his tribe, or tell them of our movements. I asked him about Mr.
Cunningham, but could only obtain evasive answers, and I thought it best to order him peremptorily to quit our camp. This I did in loud terms, firing a pistol at the same time over his head. He walked off, however, with a firm step, and with an air which I thought rather dignified under the circumstances. Early this morning, I sent overseer Burnett on before us with three of the party to look for water, leaving the cattle and the men who came in yesterday to rest until 10 A. M. To-day and yesterday, we once more beheld a sky variegated with good swelling clouds, and enjoyed a fresh breeze from the south-west. The sight even of such a sky was now a novelty to us, and seemed as if we had at last got home. We had, in fact, already ascended five hundred feet above the level of the plains of the interior, and were approaching the mountains. At eleven, we proceeded and struck into our old track, where it touched on the Bogan, and we crossed its channel half a mile beyond where we had been encamped so long, when looking for Mr. Cunningham. On this day’s journey, we again intersected his footsteps; and I could not avoid following them once more to the pond on the Bogan, where he must have first drunk water, after a thirst and hunger of four or five days! There was water still there, though it had shrunk two yards from its former margin; but not the impression of a native’s foot appeared near it, nor any longer the traces of Mr. Cunningham. I was now about to follow the Bogan further up in order to make sure of water, and thus to leave our track, with the intention of falling into it again, at Cogoorduroy or Cookopie Ponds. We had now passed the scene of Mr. Cunningham’s distresses, and I judged that a man on horseback might travel safely along our old route with despatches. We had been about five months shut out from all communication with the colony, and I was eager to avail myself of the first safe opportunity of sending to the government, a report of our progress.

We were still about 120 miles from Buree, a distance which could be travelled over on horseback in three days, and William Baldock, who was in charge of the horses, was very willing to be the courier. The party was to proceed by a new route in the morning, consequently, I had only the night for writing all my letters.

Sept. 5. — I sent off my courier at ten A. M., having ordered him positively not to encamp at water-holes, but only to let his horse drink, fill his own horn, and choose his resting-places at a distance from any water. He was also instructed to ask any natives, he might meet with, if they had met the other white fellows, &c. This last being a ruse to prevent the tribes from annoying him, which they were more likely to do when they saw him quite alone.

The Doctor and two men were sent forward at an early hour along the banks of the Bogan, in search of water-holes. We followed in the same direction, crossing to the right bank, at that very pond at the junction of Bullock creek, which saved the lives of the cattle after they had thirsted two days, (April 16). We finally encamped on some good pools, after a journey of seven miles. The “doctor” joined us long after it was dark, and reported that he had found plenty of water all along the bed of the river as far as he had proceeded, which was about ten miles higher, in a direct line. Near where we encamped, the marks of Mr. Dixon’s cattle and horses were very plainly visible, and by their depth we perceived how very wet and soft the
ground had then been.

Sept. 6. — We set forward on a bearing of east-south-east, which I took to be the general direction of the Bogan, considering the position of Croker’s range on the east, and that of the hills in the south, which I had traced. We travelled through forests of magnificent “pine” trees (callitris pyramidalis), and crossing, at twelve miles further, a dry creek, which appeared to be that of Tândogo, we encamped on the Bogan, where there was a good pond of water. This abundance was the more acceptable, as we had now left behind a part of the bed of this little river, which for thirty miles was quite dry; the total want of water there, being chiefly owing to the absorbent nature of the subsoil. We were now drawing towards its sources amongst the hills, and the same scarcity no longer prevailed. The height and girt of some of the callitris trees were very considerable. Thus, we found that Australia contains some extensive forests of a very good substitute for the cedar of the colony (cedrela toona, R. Br.), which is to be found only in some rocky gullies of the Coast range, and is likely to be exhausted in a short time. The acacia pendula adorned the immediate banks of the Bogan, but the grass was old and dry, being a crop of two years’ growth; the cattle consequently did not feed well on it, and at last grew so weak, that they could not be worked more than four hours, and thus our progress was limited to about eight miles a day.

Sept. 7. — We followed the bearing of 139½°, as the direction in which we were most likely to find the Bogan, considering its general course and the position of the hills to the southward. After travelling eight miles, a sight of the highest point of Hervey’s range, enabled me, at once, to determine my place on the map. We then proceeded on the bearing of 103°, and made the Bogan at a spot, where its banks were beautiful, and the grass of better quality than any we had seen for some time. The acacia pendula grew there in company with the pine (or callitris), the casuarina and eucalyptus, besides many smaller trees, in graceful groups, the surface being very smooth and park-like.

Sept. 8. — Proceeding in a south-south-east direction, we crossed, at seven miles, a creek, which I took for that of Tândogo, and thereupon turned towards the south-east. After a journey of eleven miles, we encamped about three-quarters of a mile from the Bogan, on a spot where we found excellent grass. We had now arrived where the pasturage was so much better than any we had seen, that we could not doubt that a greater quantity of rain had fallen here, than in the regions where we had been. The improvement was obvious, not alone in the quality of the grass, but in the birds, the woods, the clouds, and distant horizon, which all bespoke our approach to a more habitable region, than that in which we had so long been wandering. We crossed some fine sloping hills, and found on the Bogan, a rich flat, somewhat resembling those tracts of black soil, which are so much prized on some of the larger rivers of the colony. A hot wind blew from the north, and now brought with it smoke and an overcast sky, which in the evening turned to nimbus clouds. A south-west wind, (the usual antidote to the hot winds of Sydney) came in the evening, and some genial showers fell during the night.

Sept. 9. — A drizzling rain fell early in the morning, but about mid-day the
weather cleared up. We had not proceeded far before I was stopped by the Bogan, the course of which, I found, at length, to come more from the south. I had been fortunate in the line, which I had pursued, as the supposed direction of this river, above the part previously surveyed. This was on the bearing of 139½°, and chosen after considering the position of hills and other circumstances relative, and I now found that this line nearly cut through our three last camps, on the river. We were at length to turn southward, and this still appeared to be the main channel, judging by the breadth of the bed, and the long deep ponds of water. Indeed we had no longer any apprehensions about finding water, while travelling along the main channel; and this day we crossed over ground, well covered with grass. During our progress along this unsurveyed part of the Bogan, we had several times heard the natives and called to them, but they could not be induced to come near us. To-day, however, I saw smoke at a distance, and hastened towards it with Burnett, who succeeded (although the rest of the tribe fled) in intercepting one individual between him and me, who proved to be our old friend Bultje, the very intelligent native who had formerly been our guide. The rest of the tribe soon returned, and gathering around us, they all seemed much amused with our relation (and representations) of the conduct of the “Myall blackfellows” on the Darling. They could not afford any explanation of those ceremonies, which appeared to be as strange to them, as they had been to us. The only observation of Bultje, on learning that some of them had been shot, was, “Stupid whitefellows! why did you not bring away the gins?” We eagerly enquired, whether he knew anything of one white-fellow of ours, who had been lost, but he appeared surprised to hear it. He told us, however, that we were near a cattle station, where two white men had been recently established, having come from the colony, along our track over the mountains. I hastened towards the dwelling of these white men, and the symmetrical appearance of their stock-yard fence, when it first caught my eye, so long accustomed to the wavy lines of simple nature, looked quite charming as a work of art. Our hearts warmed at the very sight of the smoking chimney; and on riding up to the hut, I need not say with what pleasure, I recognized two men of our own race. On seeing my pedestrian companions however, armed, feathered, and in rags; these white men were growing whiter, until I briefly told them who we were, and that we really were not bushrangers. They said a bushranger, on horseback, had been seen in that country, only a few days before by the natives, at whom he had fired a pistol, when they had nearly caught him at a water-hole. I was glad to ascertain the fact, even in this shape, that my courier Baldock, whom they of course meant, had got safely so far with my despatches. One of these men having but lately left the settled districts, had seen in the newspapers, an account of one of my party having been killed by natives; and he stated that the names of four natives and two gins were mentioned, adding that the person murdered, was supposed to have been my man in charge of the sheep. My informant also pointed towards, where the white man was said to have been killed, as indicated by the blacks; and this was exactly where our distressing loss befell us. I was also informed, that the natives thereabouts were now in dread of the arrival of soldiers, and thus, for the first time, I learned that poor
Cunningham, had really been murdered by these savages. Intelligence of this kind often travels in exaggerated shapes, through the medium of the natives; and I had lately been anxious to see some of them, as many of those so near the colony can speak very well. Now we understood why the Bogan was deserted. The non-appearance of the chief, who had been so obsequious on our going down, was perhaps a suspicious circumstance, when connected with the fact, that a silk handkerchief had been seen on the first of that tribe whom we met, and the strange movements and bustle, which took place among those at our camp at Cudduldury, during my absence of four days.

The station, which we had reached, was occupied by the cattle of Mr. Lee, of Bathurst; the two stockmen, for such the white men proved to be, seemed to have enough to do, to keep the natives in good humour, as the only means of finding the cattle or securing their own safety among the savage tribes. With the latter object probably in view, they seemed to have encouraged the expectation of soldiers, on the part of the natives about them. Soldiers have been too seriously instrumental in the civilization of the aborigines, wherever they have become civil, to be soon forgotten; and the warfare by which the Bathurst settlers were first established in security, would be remembered, no doubt, with some apprehension of the consequences of this last act of barbarism. The stockmen informed me, that I should meet with another cattle station, which had been established by Mr. Pike, where my route crossed “Goobang” creek. The fact, that the stock of the settlers already extends over all available land, within reach of the present limits of location, is clearly exhibited by the speedy occupation of these two stations. They are placed on the only two good tracts of land, crossed by our party before we reached the arid plains of the interior. Even my boat depot on the Nammoy, the terra incognita made known only by my first despatch, was immediately after occupied as a cattle-run by the stock-keepers of Sir John Jamieson.

The Bogan still coming from the south-east, we continued our journey in that direction for four miles, beyond the cattle station, and then halted. Near this camp, two branches of the Bogan united, and the one which came from the eastward appeared to contain most water. I calculated that we were within eleven miles of Cookopie; a pond in our old track, at which we had encamped on the 13th of April, and which bore south-east from this camp. Here we killed our last remaining sheep but one: and it was worthy of remark, that after travelling upwards of 1100 miles, it was found to be fatter and weigh more by two pounds, than any of those which had been previously killed as we proceeded, although the best had been always selected for slaughter. It appears thus how well a wandering and migratory life agrees with sheep in this hemisphere, as of old in the other. Ours gave very little trouble, and at length became so tame, that they followed the horses or cattle like dogs. The sheep were leanest on the Darling, and on their way back their improved appearance was remarkable.

Sept. 10. — Accompanied by four natives and a boy, we continued our journey, and as my reckoning, since I deviated from our old route, had been by time only, I allowed a black, named “Old Fashioned,” and the boy, to guide us to “Cookopie.”
In going south-west, we soon crossed the first creek, and for some way could not proceed on the bearing, which led to the other, as the natives pointed, and which had the best ponds in it. At length, its course came more from the northward, and we travelled on good, open, forest-land, until our guides brought us directly to the very pond of water, beside which we formerly encamped. We had travelled but nine miles, which was two miles less than I reckoned the distance to be, a pleasant discovery in our present case, when even the proposed journey for the day, although short, had appeared too much for the very weak condition of our animals. I had indeed thought of going up the first creek in order to join our route at Coogoorduroy; but we had now been so fortunate as to gain, by a journey of nine miles, the point which, had we gone round by Coogoorduroy, must have been the end of our second day’s journey. We had here the satisfaction of recognizing the track of my courier’s horse, tracing our foot-marks homewards at a good fast pace. This pond was nearly dry, the little water remaining being thick and green. It was more, however, than I expected to find, and it was quite sufficient for our wants. By resting here, it was in my power to reach, by another day’s travelling, Goobang creek, where the ponds were deep and clear, and the grass good. This pond of Cookopie appeared to be near the head of a small run of water arising in hills behind “Pàgormungor,” a trap hill distant only five or six miles along our route homeward.

**Sept. 11.** — This morning Farenheit’s thermometer stood at 23°, and the pond was frozen three-quarters of an inch thick. There was, however, so little water left, that only three of the bullocks could be supplied before starting. The natives who had promised to go on with us, nevertheless remained behind; but we proceeded by our old route to Goobang creek, and encamped on its left bank nearly a mile above, where we had crossed it formerly. Here the grass was superior to any we had seen lower down; numerous fresh tracks of cattle were visible on the ground, and the water lay deep and clear in ponds, surrounded by reeds. There were no reeds about the water-holes of the Bogan; and we had, in fact, this day left that river, and reached the sources of the Lachlan, to which stream the Goobang must sometimes be an important tributary. The ground separating these waters, which must travel towards the distant channels of such spacious basins as those of the Lachlan and Darling, consists here only of some low hills of trap-rock, connected with gently sloping ridges of mica schist. The country on the Goobang or Lachlan side appears to be the best; for the grass grows there much more abundantly, and the beds of the streams appear to be much more retentive. All the water, which we had used during five months, belonged to the basin of the Darling, but to-day we again tasted of that from channels which led towards the Lachlan. The chief sources of the Bogan arise in Hervey’s range, and also in that much less elevated country, situated between the Lachlan and the Macquarie. The uniformity of the little river Bogan, from its spring to its junction with the Darling, is very remarkable. In a course of 250 miles, no change is observable in the character of its banks, or the breadth of its bed, neither are the ponds near its source, less numerous or of less magnitude than those, near its junction with the principal stream. Mr. Dixon estimated the
velocity of the current at four miles per hour, where its course is most westerly. There are few or no pebbles in its bed, and no reeds grow upon the banks, which are generally sloping, and of naked earth, but marked with lines of flood, similar to those of the Darling. It has often second banks, and, as near that river, a belt of dwarf eucalypti, box, or rough gum, encloses the more stately flooded gum-trees with the shining white bark, which grow on the immediate borders of the river. It has also its plains along the banks, some of them being very extensive; but the soil of these is not only much firmer, but is also clothed with grass and fringed with a finer variety of trees and bushes, than those of the Darling. Yet in the grasses, there is not such wonderful variety as I found in those on the banks of that river. Of twenty-six different kinds gathered by me there, I found only four on the Bogan, and not more than four other varieties, throughout the whole course. It appeared, that where land was best and grass most abundant, the latter consisted of one or two kinds only, and, on the contrary, that where the surface was nearly bare, the greatest variety of grasses appeared, as if nature allowed more plants to struggle for existence where fewest were actually thriving.

The aboriginal inhabitants of the banks of the Bogan include several distinct tribes.

1st. Near the head of the river is the tribe of “Bultje,” composed of many intelligent natives, who have acquired a tolerable knowledge of our language; the number of this tribe is about 120. One, or in some cases two, of the front teeth of males, is extracted on arriving at the age of 14.

2nd. The next is the Myall tribe, who inhabit the central parts about Cudduldury, at the great bend of the Bogan to the northward. These natives can scarcely speak a word of our language, and they have several curious customs. Some of the young men are gaily dressed with feathers, are all called by one name ‘Talambé,’ and great care is taken of them. The chief and many of the tribe say they have no name, and when any others are asked the names of such persons, they shake their heads, and return no answer. The tribes in various parts of the colony, give the name of Myall to others less civilized than themselves, but these natives seemed to glory in the name, and had it often in their mouths. They were the only natives I ever knew, who acknowledged that they were “Myalls;” and I can say of them, as far as our own intercourse enabled me, that they were the most civil tribe we ever met with. They do not extract the front teeth.

3rd. The Bungàn tribe, with whom the one last mentioned made us acquainted, inhabits the Bogan between Cambelêgo and Mount Hopeless. They are perhaps less subtle and dissimulating than the Myalls, and if possible more ignorant than they, of our language and persons. Yet the Bungàns came forth from their native bush to meet us, with less hesitation, observing, at the same time, that downcast formality, which is the surest indication of the natives’ respect for the stranger, and ignorance of the manners of white men, especially when accompanied, as in this instance, with an openness of countenance and a frankness of manner, far beyond the arts of dissimulation.*

Lower down the Bogan, we saw so little of the inhabitants, that I cannot
characterize the tribes, although there appear to be two more, the haunts of one being eastward of New-Year’s range, those of the other, to the north of the Pink hills. Both these tribes appeared to be of rather an inoffensive and friendly disposition than otherwise, although quite ignorant of our language. They were terrified at the sight of our cattle, and even still more afraid of the sheep.

Unlike the natives on the Darling, these inhabitants of the banks of the Bogan subsist more on the opossum, kangaroo, and emu, than on the fish of their river. Here fishing is left entirely to the gins, but it is performed most effectually and in the simplest manner. A moveable dam of long, twisted dry grass through which water only can pass, is pushed from one end of the pond to the other, and all the fishes are necessarily captured. Thus, when at the holes where a tribe had recently been, if my men began to fish, any natives who might be near would laugh most heartily at the hopeless attempt.

The gins also gather the large fresh-water muscle, which abounds in the mud of these holes, lifting the shell out of the mud with their toes. There is a small cichoraceous plant with a yellow flower, named Tāo by the natives, which grows in the grassy places near the river, and on its root, the children chiefly subsist. As soon almost as they can walk, a little wooden shovel is put into their hands, and they learn thus early to pick about the ground for those roots and a few others, or to dig out the larvæ of ant-hills. The gins never carry a child in arms as our females do, but always in a skin on the back. The infant is seized by an arm and thrown with little care over the shoulders, when it soon finds its way to its warm birth, holding by the back of the mother’s head, while it slides down into it. These women usually carry besides their children, thus mounted, bags containing all the things which they and the men possess, consisting of nets for the hair or for catching ducks; whetstones; yellow, white, and red ochre; pins for dressing and drying opossum skins, or for net-making; small boomerangs and shovels for the children’s amusement; and often many other things, apparently of little use to them.

On this creek, the grass was excellent, and to-day, for the first time, we saw cattle from the colony. As our own required rest, and I wished to examine the state of the equipment, arms, ammunition, and stores, previous to my leaving the party, as I now intended soon to do, I determined on halting here for three days, previous to ascending Hervey’s range. I also wished to amend that part of our traced line by returning in advance of the party, and marking out a better direction for the ascent of the carts; and to find out also, if possible, some water, which should be at a convenient distance, for a day’s journey, from the present camp.

When, on first advancing, I overlooked this lower country, the sun had nearly set, and I was anxious the expedition should reach the valley, and find water before darkness set in; the descent from these heights was thus made without selection, and at a point which happened to be rather too abrupt. To ascend it was a still more difficult labour, now that our cattle were much weaker, and would be also exhausted by the fatigue of a long journey.

Sept. 12. — I was occupied nearly the whole of this day, in examining the ration accounts, and taking an inventory of the equipment, stores, &c. We had made five
months’ rations serve the party nearly six months, by a slight alteration of the weights; this having been thought the best expedient for making our provisions last till the end of the journey, availing myself of the experience of my former travels in the interior, when I found that the idea of reduced rations, was disheartening to men when undergoing fatigue. The sheep which we took with us as live-stock, had answered the purpose remarkably well, having, as already stated, rather mended than otherwise during the journey. Their fatness however varied, according to the nature of the countries passed through. They became soon very tame, and the last remaining sheep followed the man in charge of it, and bleated after him, when all his woolly companions had disappeared.

The two boats mounted on the carriage, were still in a perfect state; and, although we had not derived much advantage from them, still in no situation, had they appeared a superfluous portion of our equipment. Possessing these, we crossed the low soft plains and dry lagoons of the Darling, without any apprehension of being entirely cut off by floods, while we were always prepared to take advantage of navigable waters, had we found any of that description. The carriage with the boats, mounted on high, and covered with tarpaulin, when placed beside the carts according to our plan of encampment, formed a sort of field-work, in which we were always ready for defence. We adhered to this, which had been arranged, not less with a view to general convenience, than for defensive purposes. The carts were drawn up in one line, with the wheels close to each other (See the opposite wood-cut); and parallel to it stood the boat carriage, room being left between them for a line of men. We had thus, at all times, a secure defence against spears and bommerengs, in case of any general attack. The light waggons and tents were so disposed as to cover the flanks of our “car borne” citadel, keeping in mind other objects also, as shewn on the plan.

The two light carts (9) covered one flank, the men’s tents (5, 5) the other. These light carts carried the instruments, canteens, trunks, and articles in daily use. The situations of the different fires were regulated also, and only allowed to be made in the places fixed for each. The door of my tent (2) was usually towards the meridian (1), and in observing stars it was desirable that no such light should shine before the sextant glasses, nor any smoke impede the observations. By the accompanying plan it will be seen that no light was in the way, while, by these positions, other purposes were also answered. The cook’s fire (11) was near the light carts. Mr. Larmer’s fire and tent-door (3) were placed so as to be in sight of the cook. The men’s fire was made opposite to the two tents (5, 5), so as to serve for the men of both. The other fire of the men (5) completed a general arrangement of fire-light around the boats and carts, so that nothing could approach by night unseen by the people at their fires. One of the heavy carts (7) was sufficient for the carriage of all articles in daily use: it was called the shifting cart, being the only one in the line which required to be loaded and unloaded at each camp; the rest contained gunpowder (6), and stores which were issued in rations every Saturday. One great convenience in having such a fixed plan of encampment was, that I could choose a place free from trees, and establish the whole party on the ground by merely pointing out the position for my
own tent (2), and how it was to face (1).

No further orders were necessary, and I could thus at once mount my horse and proceed to any distant height, with the certainty of finding the whole camp established, as I intended, on my return. In arriving late at night on any spot, and the party having to encamp in the dark, still every one knew where to go, for by constant custom, the arrangement was easily preserved. Thus, anything we wanted, could be found by night or day with equal facility; and we might be said, in fact, to have lived always in the same camp, although our ground was changed at every halt.

A stockman came to our camp, whose station was about six miles further up the creek, in one of the vallies amongst the ranges. He had heard from the natives, that they had killed a “white man, gentleman,” as they said, and he added a number of horrible particulars of the alleged murder of Mr. Cunningham by the aborigines, which subsequent accounts, however, proved to have been much exaggerated.

This day I had recognized Mount Juson, a conical hill where the beacon, which he had erected, while I was engaged at the theodolite, still stood. Mr. Cunningham had requested that I would give to the hill the maiden name of his mother, which I accordingly did. This appeared to me at the time, rather a singular request, and now it seemed still more so, for from his melancholy fate almost immediately after, it proved to be his last.

Sept. 13. — Taking forward with me two men, to the first of the two rocky places in our line, which, as already stated, I wished to alter, I found that both acclivities might be avoided, and the road also shortened at least a mile, by taking a more easterly direction up a valley, which led almost entirely through fine open forest land, to our old route. I completed this alteration about an hour before sunset. Water was the next desideratum, and I had the good fortune to find also enough of it in a rocky gully, where there was also greener pasturage than any that I had seen during the journey, distant only a quarter of a mile to the northward of my newly marked line. This was the only link wanted to complete the route, which the carts were to follow; and it may be imagined with what satisfaction I lay down for the night, by that water, which relieved me from all further anxiety, respecting the party I had succeeded in conducting through such a country, during a season of so great drought.

Sept. 14. — Having despatched the two men back to the camp, with information and written directions respecting the line to be followed, the plan of encampment, and the water; I struck again into our old track, by following which, I hoped to reach Buree that night, this being the station whence I first led the expedition, towards the interior.

The consciousness of being able, unmolested, to visit even the remotest parts of the landscape around, was now to me a source of high gratification; but this feeling can be understood by those only, who may have wandered as long in the low interior country, under the necessity of being constantly vigilant, on account of the savage natives, and to travel cautiously, with arms for ever at hand.

At length, I came upon a dusty road, presenting numerous impressions of the shoes of men and horses; and after having been so long accustomed to view even a
solitary, naked foot-mark with interest, the sight of a road marked with shoes, and the associations these traces revived, were worth all the toil of the journey. The numerous conveniences of social life were again at hand, and my compass was no longer required, for this road would lead me on without further care, to the happy abodes of civilized men.

On reaching Captain Raine’s station at Buree, a native named Sandy, informed me of the melancholy end of poor Cunningham; the particulars, he described, having been gathered by him from other natives, who were eye-witnesses of the appalling circumstances. A report from the officer of mounted police, whom these natives afterwards guided to the remains of my unfortunate fellow traveller, will be found in the Appendix.

I hastened to Bathurst, and made arrangements for sending back a cart and fresh horses, to bring on the sick men of the party, as quickly as possible to the hospital. Whiting, contrary to my expectation, lived to reach it; and he and the other invalids having received every attention from Mr. Busby, the Government surgeon, were restored to health in about three weeks after their arrival.

**Aromatic Journal kept during the Journey into the Interior of New South Wales in Winter 1835.**

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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>STATION</th>
<th>TIME OF THE DAY</th>
<th>WIND AND WEATHER</th>
<th>HEIGHT OF MER. COLUMN</th>
<th>THEB.</th>
<th>Height above the sea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 7</td>
<td>Paramatta river</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clear. (East.)</td>
<td>30.303</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Flag-staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>80½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>South of Govt. House</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>28.162</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 6</td>
<td>Plain at Buree</td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1377.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Summit Canobolas</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td>West.</td>
<td>25.821</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4451.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Low range</td>
<td>2½</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>28.390</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1815.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Camp Burone Creek</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1213.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Granite on Croker’s range</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.450</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1640.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Flat part of range</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1821.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Camp on chain of ponds falling south</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1698.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—</td>
<td>Station 4 of survey</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2006.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Elevation</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Wind Direction</td>
<td>Wind Speed</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Camp in valley.</td>
<td>28.838</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td>1244.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bed of Goobang creek.</td>
<td>27.948</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td>2160.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Summit station 7.</td>
<td>27.944</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
<td>2021.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Camp Burrabal.</td>
<td>28.908</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>1149.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A breast of Goonigal plains.</td>
<td>29.033</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td>1154.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Low forest ridge falling steep to the northward.</td>
<td>28.956</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
<td>1233.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Do at camp.</td>
<td>29.212</td>
<td>82½</td>
<td></td>
<td>1031.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Camp on elevated flat.</td>
<td>28.986</td>
<td>77</td>
<td></td>
<td>1205.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Flat ¾ mile beyond crk.</td>
<td>29.011</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td>1179.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Flat at cracks and dry water-hole.</td>
<td>28.986</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td>1170.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>On hill. Station 8.</td>
<td>28.956</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td>1226.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Trap rocks.</td>
<td>29.033</td>
<td>81</td>
<td></td>
<td>1226.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Low forest ridge falling steep to the northward.</td>
<td>28.956</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Conambula.</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Cookopie ponds.</td>
<td>29.212</td>
<td>82½</td>
<td></td>
<td>1031.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>A breast of Goonigal plains.</td>
<td>.444</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
<td>854.1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Open forest.</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>869.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>S. edge of plain.</td>
<td>.410</td>
<td>84</td>
<td></td>
<td>914.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Bank of Tandogo crk.</td>
<td>.382</td>
<td>83</td>
<td></td>
<td>928.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Flat W. side of Bene rks.</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td>693.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Scrubby range. 11½ — 27.948 78 2160.2

Camp in valley. 11 — 28.838 79 1244.3

Bed of Goobang creek. 4 Cirrocumuli. .726 87 1356.0

Summit station 7. 1 Cirrocumuli. 27.944 86 2021.6

Camp Burrabal. 8 Calm and clear.

First rise N. W. of it. 8½ — .950 53 1184.0

Second rise N. W. of it. 9 — .976 70 1188.1

Bed of Goobang creek. 9½ — 29.011 76 1179.1

Flat ¾ mile beyond crk. 9¾ — 28.986 77 1205.3

Flat at cracks and dry water-hole. 10½ — .996 74 1170.3

On hill. Station 8. 11 — .968 81 1226.7

Trap rocks. 11½ — 29.033 78 1154.3

Low forest ridge falling steep to the northward. 11¾ — 28.956 82 1233.5

Conambula. ½ W. Cirrocumuli. .966 85 1219.6

Cookopie ponds. 4½ Calm, clear. 29.212 82½ 1031.0

A breast of Goonigal plains. 9½ Clear. N. W. .444 75 854.1

Open forest. 11 — S. W. .455 80 869.3

S. edge of plain. 1 — S. W. .410 84 914.2

Bank of Tandogo crk. 4 Calm, clear. .382 83 928.9

Do at camp. 8 — .344 55 652.3

Camp on elevated flat. 7½ — .256 50 626.0

Flat W. side of Bene rks. 10½ Clear. Wind S. W. .292 79 693.7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Wind</th>
<th>Temp.</th>
<th>Alt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bed of dry creek.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N. W.</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>85½</td>
<td>659.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Acacia flat.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>710.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Undulating ground near Bogan.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clear. Wind S. W.</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>78½</td>
<td>709.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/₄</td>
<td>Bed of Bogan river.</td>
<td>4/₄</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>683.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**May 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Wind</th>
<th>Temp.</th>
<th>Alt.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2nd camp Bogan.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Clear. S.</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>532.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>3rd camp.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.733</td>
<td>60½</td>
<td>491.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4th camp.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.666</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>454.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5th camp (Bugabadà).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Clear. N. W.</td>
<td>.700</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>477.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 ½</td>
<td>6th (Walwádyir).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>.753</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>394.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11½</td>
<td>7th (Murreboùga).</td>
<td>11½</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.700</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>515.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½</td>
<td>8th (Dorôbal).</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>Cloudy. S. W.</td>
<td>.594</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>486.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>½</td>
<td>9th (Nyingan).</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>524.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10th (Canbelêgo).</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>456.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11th on Bogan.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Clear. W.</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>379.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3½</td>
<td>12th do.</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td>.736</td>
<td>76½</td>
<td>352.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>14th do.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>strong S.</td>
<td>.892</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>450.2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At tents near do.</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.858</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>464.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Low range S. of New-Year’s range.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>East.</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>505.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bed of the Bogan. S.E. of New-Year’s range.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>30.076</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>427.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do. below granitic part.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>S. W.</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>375.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3½</td>
<td>Next camp.</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td>Clear.</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>83½</td>
<td>232.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8½</td>
<td>Plain at Camp 1 mile S. of Bogan, E. of Oxley’s Table land.</td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>Cloudy.</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>344.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* A report had also been required of me by his Majesty’s government on the business of my department generally, and the duties required under a commission for a survey and division of the Colony, &c.

* Not less remarkable is the fact, that the outlets or mouths of these stupendous and extensive vallies on each side, are extremely narrow; as is evident on the general map of the colony. What can have become of the matter so scooped out? — (See Ch. 15. Vol. 2.)

* See page 9.

* A name derived from *rivulet*, and a very good one, being short.

* Native name for the river Macquarie.

* For an account of Wellington Valley near the Coutombs, see appendix to the second volume.

* Croly’s Gems.

* This we found afterwards to be the native term for any plain.

† *Anthistria Australis.*

* These trees being remarkable from their white shining trunks, resembling those of beech trees; a circumstance to which, as connected with the presence of water, I had just before drawn his attention.

* The Grecians used to supplicate with green boughs in their hands, and crowns upon their heads, chiefly of olive or laurel, whence *Statius* says: Mite nemus circa——— Vittæ laurus, et supplicis arbor olivæ.

* See page 255, for Dr. Lindley’s description of this plant.

* See pages 298–9.

* See description of this plant, as discovered in a better state on the banks of the Murray, Vol. II. chapter
6. June 5. (Gyrotemon.)

* See page 93.

* P. lavinode, (Lindl. Mss.); paniculâ compositâ contractâ capillari, ramis pedicellisque flexuosis, spiculis acutis glabris, glumâ exteriore rotundatâ laxâ: interiore 5-nervi, foliis vaginis geniculisque glabris lævibus.

† This bird has since been named by Mr. Gould *Platycercus hematogaster*.

* This clay, in the opinion of geologists, has every appearance of a mud deposit.

* Strange as this custom appears to us, it is quite consistent with some passages in the early history of mankind. King David and his host met with a similar reception at Bahurim. — “And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill’s side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.” 2 Sam. xvi. 13. So also we read in Acts xxii. 23, “They cried out, and cast off their clothes, and throw dust into the air.” Frequent mention is made of this as the practice of the Arabians, in Ockley’s History of the Saracens, when they would express their contempt of a person speaking, and their abhorrence of what he publicly pronounces. We find also this directly stated in Light’s Travels in Egypt, p. 64. “One more violent than the rest, throw dust into the air, the signal both of rage and defiance, ran for his shield, and came towards me dancing, howling, and striking the shield with the head of his javelin, to intimidate me.”

* Burder in his Oriental Customs says (No. 187), “An opinion prevailed both in those days and after ages, that some men had a power, by the help of their gods, to devote not only particular persons, but whole armies to destruction. This they are said to have done, sometimes by words of imprecation, of which there was a set form among some people, which Æschines calls (Unclear) the determinate curse. Sometimes they also offered sacrifices, and used certain rites and ceremonies with solemn charms.”

† “The malediction of the Turks, as of other oriental nations, is frequently expressed in no other way than by spitting on the ground.” — Clarke’s Travels, vol. iii. page 225. Mons. D’Arvieux tells us, “the Arabs are sometimes disposed to think, that when a person spits, it is done out of contempt; and that they never do it before their superiors. But Sir J. Chardin’s MS. goes much further; he tells us, in a note on Numb. xii. 14, that spitting before any one, or spitting upon the ground in speaking of any one’s actions, is throughout the East, an expression of extreme detestation.” — Harmer, vol. iv. page 429.

* M. de la Roque says of the Bedouin Arabs of Mount Carmel, “that the frequent change of the place of their encampment, not admitting their having places set apart for burial, they always choose a place somewhat elevated for that purpose, and at some distance from the camp. They make a grave there, into
which they put the corpse, and cover it with earth, and a number of great stones, lest the wild beasts should get at the body.” — Voy. dans la Palestine, ch. 23. See also 2 Kings xxiii. 16.–1 Kings xiii. 2. and Isaiah xxii. 15–17.

* A singular coincidence with the ancient customs of Israel. “The Jews used to mark their graves with white lime that they might be known, that so priests, Nazarites, and travellers might avoid them, and not be polluted. They also marked their graves with white lime, and so also in their intermediate feast-days. They made use of chalk, because it looked white like bones.” — Burder’s Oriental Customs, vol. ii. page 232. It may be also remarked that a superstitious custom prevailed amongst the Gentiles in mourning for the dead. They cut off their hair, and that round about, and threw it into the sepulchre with the bodies of their relatives and friends; and sometimes laid it upon the face or the breast of the dead, as an offering to the infernal gods, whereby they thought to appease them, and make them kind to the deceased. See Maimonides de Idol. c. xii. 1. 2. 5.

* Trigonella suavissima, (Lindl. MSS.); caulibus prostratis, foliolis obcordatis cum dente interjecto subdentatis subtrus pilosiusculus, stipulis semisagittatis aristato-dentatis trinerviis, umbellis paucifloris sessilibus, leguminibus falcatis reticulatis glabris.

† Large shells of the Unie genus projected from the hard and grassy surface, which had evidently been in the state of mud for a sufficient time to admit of their growth.

* Of the bracelet, as worn among the orientals, Harmer says, “This I take to have been an ensign of royalty; and in that view, I suppose, we are to understand the account that is given us, of the Amalekite’s bringing the bracelet that he found on Saul’s arm, along with his crown, to David, 2 Sam. i. 10.” — Vol. II. page 438.

* Harmer says “It was usual with the Greeks, (Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. 1. v. c. 3.) when armies were about to engage, that before the first ensigns stood a prophet or priest, bearing branches of laurels and garlands, who was called Pyrophorus, or the torch-bearer, because he held a lamp or torch; and it was accounted a most criminal thing to do him any hurt, because he performed the office of an ambassador. This sort of men were priests of Mars, and sacred to him, so that those who were conquerors always spared them. Hence, when a total destruction of an army, place, or people, was hyperbolically expressed, it used to be said, ‘not so much as a torch-bearer, or fire-carrier escaped.’ ” — Herod. Urania, sive 1. viii. c. 6.

* Trigonella suavissima (Lindl. MSS.); see page 255.

* Gristes Peelii.
* Atriplex halimoides; fruticosa erecta squamulo-so-incana, foliis rhombeo-ovatis integris, perianthii fructiferis axillaribus solitariis sessilibus spongiosis, dorsi alis ovatis integris. (Lindl. MSS.)

* Since ascertained to have been Capparis Mitchellii (Lindl. MSS.) See page 315.

* This plant was found by Mr. Cunningham in 1817, on Mount Flinders, when he called it C. teretifolia. Dr. Lindley has described it as follows: — C. teretifolia (Cunningh. MSS.), incano-tomentosa, foliis pinnatis 5–6-jugis eglandulous: foliolis teretibus filiformibus obtusis, paniculis terminalibus, ramulis corymbosis sub-5-floribus, bracteolis ovatis obtusiis concavis calycibusque tomentosis.

* Panicum lævinode (Lindl. MS.); for description see page 238.

* Trigonella suavissima, for the description of which plant, see page 255.

* “Morrudà, yerrabà, tundy kin arrà,
Morrudà, yerrabà, min yin guiny wite mà là.”

Song of Wollondilly natives; meaning

“On road the white man walks with creaking shoes;
He cannot walk up trees, nor his feet-fingers use.”

* Conilurus constructor. Ogilby.

* Danthonia lappacea, (Lindl. MSS.); spicis geminatis foliis brevioribus, paleâ inferiore sericeâ corneâ; lacinis lateralibus foliatis divaricatis aristâ rigidâ brevioribus.

* See page 287.

* My friend Dr. Lindley considers this one of the most interesting plants brought home by me, and has described it as follows: — Capparis Mitchellii, (Lindl. MSS.); stipulis spinosis, foliis obovatis supra glabris, pedunculis floribus solitariis elavatis foliis brevioribus, fructu sphaerico tomentoso. A fine specimen of Capparis related to C. Sandwichiana.

* E. marginata, (Lindl. MSS.); culmo tereti glabro, foliis glabris, ligulâ nullâ, spicis digitatis strictis, spiculis subsexfloris, paleâ inferiore carinâtâ mucronâtâ marginâtâ.
I have since been informed by an officer, who had been some time in Canada, that he noticed, when on shooting excursions with the Indians, that they observed a somewhat similar silence on meeting with strangers.
Expedition to the Rivers Darling and Murray, in the Year 1836.
Chapter I.

Route proposed — Equipment — List of the men — Agreement with a native guide — Live stock — Corrobory of the natives — Visit to the Limestone caves — Osseous breccia — First point to be attained — Halt on a dry creek — Break a wheel — Attempt to ascend Marga — Snakes — View from Marga — Reach the Lachlan — Find its channel dry.

TOWARDS the end of the year 1835, I was apprised, that the governor of New South Wales was desirous of having the survey of the Darling completed with the least possible delay. His excellency proposed, that I should return for this purpose to the extreme point on the Darling, where my last journey terminated, and that, after having traced the Darling into the Murray, I should embark on the latter river, and, passing the carts and oxen to the left bank, at the first convenient opportunity, proceed upwards by water, as far as practicable, and regain the colony somewhere about Yass Plains.

The preparations for this journey were made, as on the former occasion, chiefly in the lumber-yard at Paramatta, and under the superintendance of the same officer, Mr. Simpson. Much of the equipment used for the last expedition was available for this occasion. The boats and boat-carriage were as serviceable as ever, with the advantage of being better seasoned; and we could now, having had so much experience, prepare with less difficulty, for such an undertaking.

In consequence of a long continued drought, serviceable horses and bullocks were at that time scarce, and could only be obtained at high prices; but no expense was spared by the government in providing the animals required.

The party having preceded me by some weeks on the road, I at length overtook it on the 15th of March, in a valley near the Canobolas, which I had fixed as the place of rendezvous; and where, from the great elevation, I hoped still to find some grass. How we were to proceed, however, without water, was the question I was frequently asked; and I was informed at Bathurst that even the Lachlan was dried up.

On the following day, I organized the party, and armed the men. I distributed to each a suit of new clothing; consisting of grey trowsers and a red woollen shirt, the latter article, when crossed by white braces, giving the men somewhat of a military appearance.

Their names and designation were as follows: —

List of the Party proceeding to the Darling in March 1836.

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<td>Major T. L.</td>
<td>Chief of the party</td>
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<td>Rifle and pistols.</td>
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This was the army with which I was to traverse unexplored regions, peopled, as far as we knew, by hostile tribes. But I could depend upon a great portion of the men, and amongst them were some, who had been with me on the two former expeditions, and who, although they had obtained their emancipation as the well merited reward of their past services in the interior, were nevertheless willing to accompany me once more. I accepted their services, on obtaining a promise from the governor, that if the expedition was successful their conditional pardons might be converted into absolute pardons, a boon on which even some wealthy men in
the colony would probably have set a high value.

One of the most devoted of these followers, was William Woods, who having long toiled carrying my theodolite to the summits of the highest mountains, was at length more comfortably situated than he had ever been in his life before — as overseer of a road party. This poor fellow relinquished his place of authority over other men, and in which he received 1s. per diem; — again put on the grey jacket — and set a valuable example, as the most willing of my followers, wherever drudgery or difficulty, were most discouraging.

Our cattle were lean, but I took a greater number in consequence. The pasturage was still meagre, and scarcely any water remained on the face of the earth. It was unusually low in the holes last year, but this season very few indeed contained any. The equinox, however, was at hand, and I could not suppose, that it was never to rain again, however hopeless the aspect of the country appeared at that time.

In this camp of preparation, I was visited by our old friends, the natives; and one, who called himself John Piper, and spoke English tolerably well, agreed to accompany me as far as I should go, provided he was allowed a horse, and was clothed, fed, &c.; all which I immediately agreed to. I had not, however, forgotten Mr. Brown, and I reminded Burnett of that native’s desertion; but Burnett, who seemed to be on excellent terms with Piper, assured me that after he should be some weeks’ journey in the interior, dread of the savage natives would prevent him from leaving our party, and so it turned out.

But in breaking on our stock of provisions, we commenced with due regard to their importance on an interior journey, by so reducing the weight of our steel-yard, that a five months’ stock should last nearly seven months. This arrangement was, however, a secret, known only to Burnett and myself.

The plan of encampment was to be the same as on the former journey, only that a greater number of carts stood in the line parallel to the boat-carriage.

March 17. — I put the party in movement towards Buree, and rode across the country, on our right, with Piper. We found the earth parched and bare, but, as we bounded over hill and dale, a fine cool breeze whispered through the open forest, and felt most refreshing after the hot winds of Sydney. Dr. Johnson’s Obidah was not more free from care, on the morning of his journey, than I was on this, the first morning of mine. It was also St. Patrick’s day, and in riding through the bush, I had leisure to recal past scenes and times, connected with the anniversary. I remembered, that exactly on that morning, twenty-four years before, I marched down the glacis of Elvas, to the tune of “St. Patrick’s day in the morning,” as the sun rose over the beleaguered towers of Badajoz. Now, without any of the “pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war,” I was proceeding on a service not very likely to be peaceful, for the natives here assured me, that the Myalls were coming up (“murry coola,” i.e. very angry) to meet us. At Buree I rejoined my friend Rankin, who had accompanied me from Bathurst to the camp, and Captain Raine, who occupied this place with his cattle. A hundred sheep and five fat oxen were to be furnished by this gentleman, to complete my commissariat supplies. In the evening the blacks, having assembled in some numbers, entertained us with a “corrobory,”
their universal and highly original dance. — (See the vignette title-page to this vol.) — Like all the rest of the habits and customs of this singular race of wild men, the "corrobory" is peculiar, and, from its uniformity on every shore, a very striking feature in their character. The dance always takes place at night, by the light of blazing boughs, and to time beaten on stretched skins, accompanied by a song.* The dancers paint themselves white, and in such remarkably varied ways, that no two individuals are at all alike. Darkness seems essential to the effect of the whole; and the painted figures coming forward in mystic order from the obscurity of the back-ground, while the singers and beaters of time are invisible, have a highly theatrical effect. Each dance seems most tastefully progressive; the movement being at first slow, and introduced by two persons, displaying graceful motions both of arms and legs, others one by one join in, each imperceptibly warming into the truly savage attitude of the "corrobory" jump; the legs then stride to the utmost, the head is turned over one shoulder, the eyes glare, and are fixed with savage energy all in one direction, the arms also are raised and inclined towards the head, the hands usually grasping waddies, bommerengs, or other warlike weapons. The jump now keeps time with each beat, the dancers at every movement taking six inches to one side, all being in a connected line, led by the first. The line, however, is sometimes doubled or tripled, according to space and numbers; and this gives great effect, for when the front line jumps to the left, the second jumps to the right, the third to the left again, and so on; until the action acquires due intensity, when all simultaneously and suddenly stop. The excitement, which this dance produces in the savage, is very remarkable. However listless the individual may be, laying perhaps, as usual, half asleep; set him to this dance, and he is fired with sudden energy, and every nerve is strung to such a degree, that he is no longer to be recognized as the same person, until he ceases to dance, and comes to you again. There can be little doubt that the corrobory is the medium through which the delights of poetry are enjoyed, in a limited degree, even by these primitive savages of New Holland.

March 18. — As it was necessary to grind some wheat with hand-mills, to make up our supply of flour, I was obliged to remain a day at Buree; and I, therefore, determined on a visit to the limestone caves, by no means the least remarkable feature in that country. The whole district consists of trap and limestone, the former appearing in ridges, which belong to the lofty mass of Canobolas. The limestone occurs chiefly in the sides of vallies in different places, and contains probably many unexplored caves. The orifices are small fissures in the rock, and they have escaped the attention of the white people, who have hitherto wandered there. I had long been anxious to extend my researches for fossil bones among these caves, having discovered, during a cursory visit to them some years before, that many interesting remains of the early races of animals in Australia, were to be found in the deep crevices and caverns of the limestone rock. How they got there was a question which had often puzzled me; but having at length arrived at some conclusions on the subject, I was now desirous to ascertain, by a more extensive examination of the limestone country, whether the caves containing the osseous breccia, presented here similar characteristics to those, I had observed in
Wellington Valley.

The first limestone, we examined, had no crevices sufficiently large to admit our bodies; but, on riding five miles southward to Oakey creek, we found a low ridge extending some miles on its left bank, which promised many openings. We soon found one, which I considered to be of the right sort, viz. a perpendicular crevice with red tuff about the sides. Being provided with candles and ropes, we descended perpendicularly first, about six fathoms to one stage, then obliquely, about half as far to a sort of floor of red earth; Mr. Rankin, although a large man, always leading the way into the smallest openings. By these means, and by crawling through narrow crevices, we penetrated to several recesses, until Mr. Rankin found some masses of osseous breccia beneath the limestone rock, but so wedged in, that they could be extracted only by digging. Unlike the same red substance at Wellington Valley, where it was nearly as hard as the limestone, the red calcareous tuff found here was so loose, that the mass of bones was easily detached from it; but none of them were perfect, except one or two vertebrae of a very large species of kangaroo. Pursuing this lode of osseous earth, we traced it to several other recesses, and in the lower side of an indurated mass, (the upper part having been the floor of our first landing place,) we found two imperfect skulls of Dasyuri, the teeth being however very well preserved. This was, doubtless, an unvisited cave; for the natives have an instinctive or superstitious dread of all such places, and it is not, therefore, probable, that man had ever before visited that cavern. With all our ropes it cost some of us trouble to get out of it, after passing two hours in candle-light. It may thus be imagined what a vast field for such interesting researches remains still unexplored in that district, where limestone occurs in such abundance.

The objects of my journey did not admit of further indulgence in the pursuit, at that time; and I was content with drawing the attention of one of the party, a young gentleman residing in the neighbourhood, to it, in hopes he might discover some bones of importance.*

March 19. — Our stores being completed, we proceeded along the course of the little rivulet of Buree, towards the Lachlan. My first object was to gain Mount Granard, described by Mr. Oxley as the most elevated pic of a very high range, and laid down on his map to the westward of where the Lachlan takes a remarkable turn from its general direction, towards the low country more to the southward. I had long thought, that it might be possible to ascertain from this hill, whether any range extended westward, of sufficient magnitude to separate the basins of the Murray and the Darling. I wished to visit it last year, but the loss of Mr. Cunningham, the consequent delay of the party, and the adverse nature of my instructions in regard to my own views, together prevented me. I then saw, that the hills along the line, I was now about to follow, were favourable for triangulation; but the greater certainty of finding water in a large river like the Lachlan, was my chief inducement for now moving towards its banks, as the season was of such unusual drought. On this day’s journey, I took for my guidance the bearing of a line, drawn on the map from Buree, as fixed by my former survey, to the mouth of Byrne’s creek, as laid down by Mr. Oxley; and which I supposed to be the same as that which descends from
Buree. The line guided me tolerably well to where I encamped that night. This was on a fine looking plain, within sight of the wooded banks of the creek; but, on examining the bed of the latter, I could find no water, although I followed it two miles down. There I arrived at a cattle station, named Toogang, where there was water. It was nothing to the old hands of the Darling, to go only two miles for water. We suffered no inconvenience from this; but it was deplorable to see the bed of what must in some seasons be a fine little stream so completely dry and dusty. This day, we met with a new species of Psoralea.* At the camp, I ascertained the magnetic variation to be 9° 10' 15" E., by an observation of the star β Centauri.

March 20. — We proceeded, crossing the channel near the cattle station, where I learnt, that it was joined immediately below by that, which I had named King’s creek on my last journey; also that water was abundant in it below the junction. Some natives joined us, and Piper prevailed on one of them to be our guide, as far as he knew the country. The use of such a guide in following an unexplored water-course is, that bad places for the carts may be avoided, and the doubles of the stream cut off by the easiest routes. In crossing a gully which entered the creek near another station, called Chilberèngaba, we broke a wheel, and though we had travelled only about seven miles, we were obliged to encamp, and remain until the carpenter and the smith could repair it. In the mean time, I set out with the native guide for the summit of Màrga, which proved to be one of my old fixed points. It was about seven miles south-west of our camp; but, after a most fatiguing ascent of two steep and rocky ridges, during great heat, I was obliged to return without reaching Màrga. At the cattle station we heard of a bullock, which had been left by us in an exhausted state during our last expedition; and we succeeded in bringing it in, and in laying the yoke on its neck, for another visit to the banks of the Darling; it was fatter than any other of our working bullocks. I added a second species of Psoralea to that discovered yesterday, a small graceful plant with racemes of purplish minute flowers, elevated far above the leaves, and on slender stalks so tough as to be broken only with some difficulty.*

March 21. — According to arrangements made with Captain King, and Mr. Dunlop, the King’s astronomer at the Paramatta observatory, I halted the party this day, in order to make hourly observations of the barometer, thermometer, the sky, &c. This plan had been strongly recommended by Sir John Herschel; and, for our present purposes, it was most desirable, in order that we might ascertain, how far the fluctuations of the atmosphere in two places, so distant, as Paramatta and Byrne’s creek, corresponded in these simultaneous observations. During our last journey, some discrepancies in the heights, determined by the barometer on the Darling, led to a suspicion, that the fluctuations at such great distances, in situations so dissimilar, might vary considerably; and this was now to be ascertained.

March 22. — We continued our journey along the left bank of the creek, but with considerable difficulty and delay, occasioned by the projection of the rocky escarpment of the above-mentioned extremities of Mount Màrga; so that we had to break away masses of rock, and move the carts one by one, all hands assisting. We at length gained a pleasant tract of land, on which the grass was green and luxuriant
in consequence of some partial rain; and on this place I encamped with the intention of next day ascending Mårga. In the creek, we found ponds, deep and clear like canals; their borders being reedy and their margins green. In these ponds the natives speared several fishes, which had, however, a muddy flavour. Among them was one, apparently the eelfish, caught during my first expedition, in the Nammoy and upper Darling. This circumstance was rather in favour of the supposition, that the streams unite; but still the fish seemed somewhat different. On this day’s journey we saw several large snakes; one, large and black, was shot while swimming in a pond in the creek; the others were of that kind, named from the beautifully variegated skin, the carpet snake. The natives considered the latter very fierce and dangerous, saying, it never ran away, but always faced or pursued them. It had, in fact, the flat broad head and narrow neck, which in general characterise the most venomous snakes, also large fangs hooked inwards, which the natives particularly pointed out. It had also, near the tail, two articulations, with something like a toe and joint on each, such as I had not observed before in any other kind of snake. A smaller one of the same kind attacked one of the party, and also a native, but the former shook it from his clothes; it then fixed its teeth in the skin of the native, who detached it with difficulty; but, as no blood came from the bite, he seemed to care little about it. The native name of this place was “Cüenbla.”

March 23. — I set off, accompanied by my black guide mounted, for the top of Mårga, and we reached it this time, by a route, in which the native displayed the usual skill of his race. Certainly, I never ascended a hill of more perplexing features, all these heights being also of extremely difficult access, very steep, and extending in the direction of 10° and 12° E. of N. They consist of the sharp edges of inclined strata of hard purple-coloured clay-slate. I was, however, rewarded for the fatigues this hill had cost me, on two different days, not with a fine view, for the summit was too woody for that, but with a sight of some important points determined during my late journey; and others which I had then observed, only from the Canobolas, but which I was now enabled to fix by angles observed from this station. The most important point visible besides the Canobolas, was Mount Lachlan, by means of which, I determined the true situation of Mårga, and the neighbouring hill Nangår; which is rather higher, but more wooded, and 2½ miles distant towards the south-east. These two form the summits of an isolated mountain mass, on the left bank of Byrne’s creek, the top of Mårga being about 1,000 feet above our camp on its banks. I drew outlines (according to my usual custom), of all the hills on the horizon before us, and took angles on them with the theodolite. Descending by a shorter route, I reached the camp in time to protract my angles, whereby I ascertained, to my great satisfaction, that both Mårga and Nangår had been truly fixed from the Canobolas, as well as other points observed in my former journey, the accuracy of which, by a good angle with Mount Lachlan, I was thus enabled to prove without going out of my way, besides establishing there a good base for extending the survey southward.

March 24. — Our guide was now joined by some older natives, and one of them had been examining the country a-head, being anxious about the safe passage of
our carts. His reconnaissance had not been made in vain, for he led us to an easy, open pass, through a range of which we had heard much from stockmen, as likely to trouble us, because, as they said, its rocky extremities overhung the creek. We crossed it with ease, however, guided by the native. It consisted of granite, and evidently belonged geologically to the ridge traversed by us on the second day after leaving Buree, during our last journey. On the range, green “pine” trees (*callitris*), and a luxuriant crop of grass covering the adjacent country, multitudes of fat cattle were to be seen on all sides. I had heard, that after crossing the burnt-up surface of the colony, I should see green pastures here, beyond its limits. We crossed Byrne’s creek, near a cattle station called “Lagoua,” and after keeping its banks for four miles further (having for that distance granitic hills on our right), we finally quitted it, and passed over a grassy plain of the same kind of soil and character, as those extensive level tracts seen during our last journey, but having, what seemed singular to our unaccustomed sight, a coating of green herbage upon it. In our progress, I found no fewer than three new species of the pretty genus *Trichinium*; a small species of *Sida* before undiscovered, with minute yellow flowers, and also a fine looking acacia, with falcate leaves, singularly white, or rather silvery, and with drooping graceful branches. Travelling four miles more across level forest land, we reached the banks of the Lachlan at “Waàgan,” a cattle station, a mile and a half below the junction of Byrne’s creek of Oxley, which we had just traced in its course from Buree.

I beheld in the Lachlan, all the features of the Darling, but on a somewhat smaller scale. The same sort of large gum-trees, similar steep, soft, muddy banks; and, even in this place, a margin with an outer bank. But its waters were gone, except in a few small ponds, in the very deepest parts of its bed. Such was now the state of that river, down which my predecessor’s boats had floated. I had, during the last winter, drawn my whale boats 1,600 miles over land without finding a river, where I could use them; whereas, Mr. Oxley had twice retired by nearly the same routes, and in the same season of the year, from supposed inland seas!
Chapter II.

Continue the journey — Acacia pendula — Ascend Mount Amyot — Field’s Plains — Cracks in the plains — Ascend Mount Cunningham — Mr. Oxley’s tree — Rain — Goobang Creek — Large fishes — Heavy rain — Ascend Mount Allan Natives from the Bogan — Prophecy of a Coradjè — Poisoned water-hole — Ascend Hurd’s peak — Snake and bird — Ride to Mount Granard — Scarcity of water there — View from the summit — Encamp on the summit — Ascend Bolloon beyond the Lachlan — Natives refuse to eat emu — Native dog — Kalingalungaguy — Mr. Stapylton overtakes the party — Of the plains in general — Character of the Goobang and Bogan — Cudjallagong or Regent’s Lake — Nearly dry — Dead trees in it — Rocks near it — Trap and tuff — Natives there — Women — Men — Their account of the country lower down — Oolawambiloa — Gaiety of the natives — Colour light — Mr. Stapylton surveys the lake — Campbell’s Lake — Piper obtains a gin — Ascend Goulburn range — View from the summit — Warranary — A new Correa.

March 25. — FOLLOWING the direction of the general course of the Lachlan, as laid down by Mr. Oxley, we crossed a fine tract of open forest land, and at the distance of five miles arrived at a dry reach. Soon after we passed “Billábbugan,” a cattle station on the river, where the dry branch joined it; and at three miles further we traversed the southern skirts of a plain, and finally made a bend of the Lachlan, on which we encamped in latitude 33° 24'28"S. In the course of this day’s journey we discovered a bush resembling the European dwarfelder, but with yellow flowers, and fruit with scarcely any pulp.*

March 26. — This day, at five miles further, we ascended some undulating ground, on which the acacias of the interior grew We found the same ridged and wavy surface, with the acacia pendula, and the pigeons, which usually abound about such parts of the country. Here we found also a singular species of Jasmine, forming an upright bush not unlike a Vitex, with short axillary panicles of white flowers. It proved to be J. lineare, R. Br. We soon after came upon the borders of the great plain of Gulleròng, which extends about eight miles from east to west, and three northward from a branch of the river, then quite dry. These, I believe, were the Solwayflats of Mr. Oxley. We turned from them late in the afternoon, at the suggestion of a native wearing a brass-plate like a bottle label, and on which was engraved “Billy Hawthorne.” We succeeded in reaching a bend of the river containing water, only after travelling 18¼ miles; and in latitude 33° 23' 21" S.

March 27. — This day being Sunday, I halted; especially as the cattle had made an unusually long journey the day before. I wished to take sights, for the purpose of ascertaining the rate of my chronometer, and to lay down my surveys. I found that Mr. Oxley’s points on this river, were much too far to the westward; a circumstance to be expected, as his survey could not, at that early age of the colony, be connected with Paramatta by actual measurement, as mine was. Our latitudes, however, agreed
very exactly.

March 28. — Continued our journey, and, at only a mile and a half from our camp, I was surprised to find myself at the foot of Mount Amyot, better known to stockmen by its native name of “Camerberdàng.” I gave the party a bearing, or distant object to advance upon; and I lost no time in ascending the hill, followed by Woods with my theodolite. From its crest, low as it was, I still recognised the Canobolas, and ascertained from my drawings formerly made there, that even on this hill (Mount Amyot), I had taken an angle from their summit last season. It was valuable now, enabling me to determine the true place of the hill, from which I was to extend my angles further westward. I easily recognised Marga and Nangàr; and a very useful and remarkable point of my former survey to the northward of those hills, also several still more conspicuous ones in the country beyond the Lachlan. To the westward, I beheld the view etched in Mr. Oxley’s book, as “Field’s Plains;” and what was of much more importance to me then, Mounts Cunningham, Melville, Allan, &c. &c. on all which, as far as I could, I took angles, and then descending, rejoined the party about six miles on. I met at the foot of this hill a colonist, a native of the country.* He said he had been seventy miles down the river in search of a run for his cattle; but had found none; and he assured me that, without the aid of the blacks, who were with him on horseback, he could not have obtained water.

Mount Amyot had the appearance of granite from the plains, but I found that it consisted of the ferruginous sandstone. It is the southern extremity of a long ridge, elevated not more than 200 feet above the plains at its base. We encamped at a bend of the river, on the border of a small plain, named “Merumbà,” in latitude 33° 19' 16" S. Variation 8° 54' 15" E.

Mount Melville from Merumbà.

We were here disturbed by herds of cattle running towards our spare bullocks, and mixing with them and the horses. In no district have I seen cattle so numerous as all along the Lachlan; and notwithstanding the very dry season, they were nearly all in good condition. We found this day, near the river bed, a new herbaceous indigo, with white flowers and pods like those of the prickly liquorice (Glycyrrhiza echinata).*

Mount Cunningham.

March 29. — Our next point was Mount Cunningham, (“Beery birree” of the natives), and we travelled towards it along the margin of “Field’s Plains,” as the angles of the river allowed. This was our straightest course, but we had to keep along the river bank for another reason. The plains were full of deep cracks and holes, so that the cart wheels more than once sunk into them, and thus detained us for nearly an hour. A sagacious black advised us to keep near the river bank, and we found the ground better. We encamped at half-past two o’clock, after a journey of ten miles; and I immediately set out, accompanied by a native and a man carrying my theodolite, both on horseback, for the highest or northern point of Mount Cunningham (a). The distance was full five miles; yet we could not proceed direct on horseback; the scorched plains being full of deep, wide cracks; and we were,
therefore, compelled to take a circuitous route nearer the river. There our guide called up three savage looking natives with spears, whom he described to be the natives of the hill, and they accompanied us to the top. With some difficulty we led our horses near the crest, our new friends always keeping the vantage ground of us, apparently from apprehension. At length, I planted my theodolite on the highest part of the summit, which commanded a fine view of the western horizon; and from the mouths of my sable guides, I obtained the native names, in all their purity, of the various hills in sight. The most distant, named “Bolloon,” were said to be near the great lake Cudjällagong — no doubt “Regent’s Lake” of Oxley — and a peak they called “Tolga,” I took to be “Hurd’s Peak” of the same traveller. Still I saw nothing on the horizon in the direction of his Mount Granard, and in no other, any hill of magnitude, except in the quarter whence I came, where I still discerned my old friends Màrga and Nangàr, with Nyororòng and Berabidjal, high hills more to the southward.

_Nyororòng from Mount Cunningham._

Mount Cunningham consists of ferruginous sandstone. The sun had reached the horizon before I left the summit, which I did not, until I had obtained an angle on every visible point. We arrived at the camp soon after seven o’clock. Latitude, by an observation of Cor Leonis, 33° 15' 27" S.

_March 30._ — I ascertained accidentally this morning, that we were abreast of the spot, where Mr. Oxley left the Lachlan and proceeded southward. This, I learnt from a marked tree, which a native pointed out to me, distant about 250 yards south from our camp, on the opposite side of a branch of the river. On this tree were still legible the names of Mr. Oxley and Mr. Evans; and although the inscription had been there nineteen years, the tree seemed still in full vigour; nor could its girth have altered much, judging from the letters, which were still as sharp as when first cut, only the bark having overgrown part of them had been recently cleared away a little as if to render the letters more legible. I endeavoured to preserve still longer an inscription, which had withstood the fires of the bush and the tomahawks of the natives for such a length of time, by making a drawing of it, as it then appeared.

By Mr. Oxley’s journal, we learn, that where the river formed two branches, he, on the 17th of May, 1817, hauled up his boats, and on the following day commenced his intended journey towards the south-east. But our latitudes also assisted us in verifying the spot. Mr. Oxley made the latitude of his camp, (doubtless near the tree) 33° 15' 34" S. which gives a difference of seven seconds for the 250 yards between the tree and my camp. The variation of the needle Mr. Oxley found to be here, in 1817, 7° 0' 8" E. and I had made it at the last camp (Merimbah) 8° 54' 15" E., or nearly two degrees more, in a lapse of 19 years. The longitude of this point, as now ascertained by trigonometrical measurement from Paramatta, was 147° 33' 50" E., or 17' 50" (equal on this parallel to 17¾ miles) nearer to Sydney than it is laid down by Mr. Oxley.

We proceeded from this camp towards the southern extremity of Mount Cunningham, under which a small branch of the Lachlan passes so close, that the
party was occupied an hour and a half, in removing rocks to open a passage for the
carts. We then got into an open country, in which we soon saw the same dry branch
of the Lachlan before us; but we turned more to the north-west, until we reached a
slightly undulated surface. No branch of the river extends to the northward of
Mount Cunningham, as shewn on Mr. Oxley’s map; but a small tributary water-
course, then dry, skirts the eastern side of the hill, and enters that branch of the
Lachlan, which we were upon.

Yesterday and this day had been so excessively hot (82° in the shade), that I
confidently anticipated rain, especially when the sky became cloudy to the
westward, while the wind blew steadily from the opposite quarter. A dense body of
vapour in the shape of *stratus or fall cloud* of the meteorologist, was at the same time
stretching eastward along the distant horizon on both sides of us. After crossing
some sound, open plains of stiff clay, guided by the natives, we gained an extensive
pond of muddy water, and encamped on a hill of red sand on its northern bank,
and under shelter of a grove of *callitris* trees. The wind now began to blow, and the
sky, to my great delight, being at length overcast, promised rain enough to fill the
streams and waterholes: at twilight it began to come down. In the woods, we passed
through this day, we found a curious willow-like acacia, with the leaves slightly
covered with bloom, and sprinkled on the under side with numerous reddish
minute drops of resin.* The *Pittosporum angustifolium* we also recognized here, loaded
with its singular orange-coloured bivalved fruit.

*March 31.* — It rained during the night, and this morning the sky seemed as if it
would continue; the mercury in the barometer also falling, we halted. On a dry
sand-hill, with wood and water at hand, we were well prepared to await the results
of a flood; some good grass also was found for the cattle on firm ground at the
distance of about two miles. “Mount Allan,” (“Wollar” of the natives) lay north-east
by north, at a distance of 3¾ miles. It was not a conspicuous or commanding hill,
but between it and our camp, we this day discovered a feature of considerable
importance. This was the Goobang creek of our former journey, to all appearance
here as great a river as the Bogan, and indeed its channel, where we formerly saw it,
contained deep ponds of clear water, at a season when the muddy holes of the
Bogan had nearly failed us. Here the Goobang much resembled that river in the
depth of its bed and the character of its banks: and its sources and tributaries must
be also similar to those of the Bogan. Hervey’s range gives birth to the one,
Croker’s range to the other; and their respective courses being along the opposite
sides of the higher land extending westward between the Lachlan and Macquarie, all
their tributaries must fall from the same ridge. Of these, Mr. Oxley crossed several
in his route from the Lachlan to the Macquarie; Emmeline’s Valley creek belonging
to the basin of the Goobang; Coysgaine’s ponds and Allan’s water to that of the
Bogan. It was rather unfortunate, considering how much has been said about the
Lachlan receiving no tributaries in its long course, that Mr. Oxley left unexplored
that part, where a tributary of such importance as the Goobang joins it; especially as
the floods of this stream lay the country below Mount Cunningham under water,
and are the sole cause of that swampy appearance, which Mr. Oxley observed from
the hill on looking westward. It would appear that this traveller’s route northward, was nearly parallel to the general course of the Goobang. The name this stream receives from the natives here, is Billibang: Goobang being considered but one of its tributaries. Its course completes the analogy between the rivers and plains on each side, and the supposed disappearance of the channel of the Lachlan seemed consequently, as doubtful as the mysterious termination of the Macquarie.

April 1. — The rain continuing, the party remained encamped. The barometer had fallen since we came here, from 29.442, at which it stood last night at ten, to 29.180, which I noted this morning at six: the thermometer continuing about 60° (of Fahrenheit).

On dragging our net through the muddy pond, we captured two fishes, but of monstrous size, one weighing 17 lbs. the other about 12 lbs. Although very different in shape, I recognized in them the fish of the perch kind with large scales* and the eel-fish† formerly caught by us in the Nammoy. But the former when taken in that river, was coarse and tasted of mud, whereas this ruffe, although so large, was not coarse, but rich, and of excellent flavour — and so fat that the flakes fell into crumbs, when fried. This day a bird of a new species was shot by Roach. It was of the swallow kind, about the size of a snipe, of a leaden colour, with dark head and wings.

April 2. — The rain continued through the night, and this morning it fell rather heavily, so that enough of water could be gathered from the surface of the plains near our camp, to preclude the necessity for our having recourse to the muddy pool. The barometer began to rise slowly from seven in the morning, when it had reached its minimum; but the weather continued hazy, with drizzling rain (from the south-west), until four o’clock, when the clouds slowly drew up. The plains were not yet at all saturated, although become too soft for our carts. The evening was cloudy, but by ten o’clock the state of the barometer was such, as to leave little doubt about the return of fair weather. We this day found in the woods to the northward, a most beautiful species of Trichinium, with spiky feathered pale yellow flowers, sometimes as much as six inches long.‡

April 3. — Thick fog in the morning. The day being Sunday, the party remained in the camp; but I do not think we could have left it from the soft state of the plains, however desirable it might have been to proceed. After twelve I rode to Wollar (Mount Allan), with the theodolite, and from its summit I intersected most of the hills seen from Mounts Amyot and Cunningham. A small wart on the eastern horizon, very distant, yet conspicuous, I found to be Mount Juson, the hill on which I had stood with the brother of the botanist, whose name had been given to this hill by Mr. Oxley.

The sameness in the surface of this country, is apparently owing to the simplicity of its geological composition. All the hills I ascended below the junction of Byrne’s creek, consist of ferruginous sandstone, similar to that which constitutes all the hills I saw on, and even beyond, the Darling.

On passing to and from Mount Allan, we crossed, at three-quarters of a mile from the camp, Goobang creek, the bed of which exactly resembles that of the
Bogan. The remains of drifted weeds on the trees, and the uniformity of its channel, shewed that it is a considerable tributary of the Lachlan. At length the stars appeared in the evening, and I could once more see my unerring guides, the faithful little dog, and the mighty Hercules, whereby our latitude seemed to be $33^\circ 8' 55''$ S.

At the camp, we recognized among the natives seated at our fire, two of our friends from the Bogan. Their little shovel of hard wood (not used on the Lachlan), and one of the tomahawks formerly distributed by us, left no room to doubt whether we were right about their features. One was an old man, and a Coradjè, the other was a boy. They disappeared in the evening, but the Coradjè was so far civil as to tell the men that, having heard “the Major” was praying for rain, he had caused the late fall. This priest had also prophesied a little for our information, telling the men, that a day was at hand, when two of them would go out to watch the bullocks, and would never return.

April 4. — The surface being sufficiently dry to enable us to travel, we accordingly continued our journey, and crossing the Goobang at 5¼ miles, we kept the right bank of it during the day. The surface on that side was dry and firm; and it may be remarked, that if ever it becomes desirable to open a line of communication, from Sydney towards the country on the lower part of the Murray, the right bank of the Goobang will probably be found the best direction, as the adjacent valley affords both grass and water for the passage of cattle, and the doubtful plains of the Lachlan may be thus avoided.

We finally encamped on the Lachlan, at the junction of the Goobang, in latitude $33^\circ 5' 20''$; longitude E. $147^\circ 13' 10''$. There the river contained some deep pools, and we expected to catch fish; but Piper told us, that the holes had been recently poisoned, a process adopted by the natives in dry seasons, when the river no longer flows, for bringing the fish to the surface of deep ponds, and thus killing the whole; I need not add, that none of us got a bite. All these holes were full of recently cut boughs of the eucalyptus, so that the water was tinged black.

April 5. — As soon as the party had started, I gave the overseer the bearings and distances to be pursued; while I proceeded to the cone, named Hurd’s peak by Oxley, but by the natives Tölga. It was distant about four miles from our line of route. A low ridge of quartz rock extends from the Goobang to this peak; the base of which consists of chlorite slate, and its summit of squarish pebbles of quartz, with the angles rounded, associated with fragments of chlorite slate. There was just convenient room on it for the theodolite, and as it afforded a most satisfactory and commanding view, well suited for the purpose of surveying, it seemed to have been aptly named after a distinguished geographer. Many points of a distant range now appeared on the north-western horizon, in the direction of Oxley’s Mount Granard, and the ridge of Bolloon (towards the great lake, Cudjállagong) seemed not very distant. I took angles on all the points, and then hastened to overtake the party, which I did, after they had travelled about nine miles. At fourteen miles we made the banks of the Lachlan, and encamped by the side of it on the edge of a plain, in latitude $33^\circ 4' 38''$ S. longitude $147^\circ$ E. Judging by the relative position of Hurd’s
peak, &c., I supposed, it might have been about this place, that Oxley's party crossed to the right bank of the river, on his return towards Wellington valley. No traces, however, were discovered by us here, of the first explorers of the Lachlan.

April 6. — The night had been mild and clear, and the sun rose in a cloudless sky. We traversed plains of firmer surface than those crossed on the previous day. So early even as nine o'clock the heat was oppressive. On one of these plains, I witnessed an instance of the peculiar fascination attributed to the serpent race. A large snake, lying at full length, attracted our attention, and I wished to take it alive, but as Roach, the collector, was at a distance, some time elapsed before preparations were made for that purpose. The ground was soft and full of holes, into one of which it would doubtless have disappeared, as soon as it was alarmed. The rest of the party came up, yet, unlike snakes in general, who glide rapidly off, this creature lay apparently regardless of noise, or even of the approach of the man, who went slowly behind it, and seized its head. At that moment, a little bird fluttered from beside a small tuft, within a few feet of the snake, and, it seemed, as the men believed, scarcely able to make its escape.

When we were near the spot on which we intended to encamp, a native pointed out to me a small hill beyond the river, where, as he informed me, Mr. Oxley and his party had encamped, before he crossed the Lachlan. It was called by this native, Gobberguy. We pitched our tents a little higher than that hill, where a favourable bend of the river met my line of route. The cattle were much fatigued with the day's work, although the distance did not exceed eleven miles. It was in my power, however, to give them rest for a day or two, as the grass was tolerably good on that part of the river bank, and I was within reach of Mount Granard, a height which I had long been anxious to examine, as well as the country to be seen from it. Among the usual grasses we found one which I had not previously seen, and which proved to be a new species of Danthonia.*

April 7. — I set off early for Mount Granard, followed by six men on horseback, and a native named “Barney,” who was also mounted. We rode at a smart pace, on a bearing of 280° across thirty miles of soft, red sand, in which the horses sank up to their fetlocks, and we reached the foot of the hill a little before sunset. Throughout that extent, we neither saw a single water-course, nor discovered the least indication of water having lodged there during any season. At eleven miles from the camp, we crossed a low ridge of granite (named “Tarràtta;”) a hopeful circumstance to us, as promising a primitive range of hills, between the Darling and Lachlan, and because, in a crevice of this granite, our aboriginal guide found some water. The desert tract, we crossed, was in other respects unvaried, except that, in one place, we passed through four miles of a kind of scrub, which presented difficulties of a new character. The whole of it consisted of bushes of a dwarf species of eucalyptus, doubtless E. dumosa (A. Cunningham), which grew in a manner, that rendered it impossible to proceed, except in a very sinuous direction, and then with difficulty, by pushing our horses between stiffly grown branches. Where no bushes grew, the earth was naked, except where some tufts of a coarse matted weed, resembling Spinifex, impeded the horses, but seemed to be intended by
Providence, to bind down these desert sands. We saw blue ranges on our right, and I hoped that before we ascended Mount Granard, we should cross some water-course coming from them; but nothing of the kind appeared, and after traversing a dry sandy flat, we began to ascend. Finding myself separated from the summit; after we had climbed some way, by a deep rocky ravine, and being in doubt about obtaining water, I sent the people with the horses to encamp in the valley to which that ravine opened, with directions to look for water while daylight lasted. Meanwhile, I proceeded to the summit with one of the men and the native. I arrived there, and just before the sun went down, obtained an uninterrupted view of the western horizon; but the scene was inconclusive as to the existence of such a dividing range, as I hoped to see. Ridges and summits appeared abundantly enough, but they were not of a bold or connected character; and I did not obtain upon the whole, a better idea than I previously had, respecting the extension of that singular group of hills to the westward. I stood upon the best height, however, for carrying on my angles in that direction. To the eastward I saw Hurd’s Peak and Bolloon, also Goulburn’s and Macquarie’s ranges, Mount Torrens, and Mount Aiton of Oxley. The last hill appeared alone on the horizon, in a south-south-east direction, as shown in his map. But the most commanding point was Yerrarrâr, the highest apex of Goulburn range; forming with Bolloon and this station, an almost equilateral triangle of about 30 miles a side.

The features before us terminated rather abruptly towards the south, like cliffs of table-land, and seemed to mark out the basin of the Lachlan; but beyond those parts overlooking Mr. Oxley’s route, I could obtain no view, although I perceived, that I might from Yerrarrâr. Having completed my work as the sun was setting, I hastened to the valley, and learnt that the party had discovered neither water nor grass. Barney, the native, had nevertheless obtained both when with me at the top of the mountain; and, therefore, although it was dark and we were all fatigued, yet up that rocky mountain we were compelled to go with the horses, and encamp near the summit beside a little pool of water, which had been well known to Barney at other times. On this elevated crest, the air was surprisingly mild during the night, for although I slept in my clothes and on the ground, I enjoyed its freshness as a great relief from the oppressive heat of the day. Our singular bivouac, on the summit, which I had so long wished to visit, was adorned with a strange looking tree, probably *casuarina glauca*.

April 8. — Next morning, I had an opportunity of surveying the hills around me more at leisure, and I noted down their various names from the lips of “Barney,” for that desolate region, where neither a kangaroo nor a bird was to be seen or heard, was poor Barney’s country, that lonely mountain, his home!

I learned, that the only water in these deserts was to be found in the crevices of rocks, on such hills as this; and I thus understood the cause of the smoke, I observed last year arising from so many summits, when I looked over the same region, from a hill on its northern limits. Perhaps within thirty miles around, there was no other water, and the bare top of a mountain, was certainly one of the last situations where I should have thought of seeking for it.
We descended, after I had completed my survey from a hill which, perhaps, no white man will again ascend; I may, however add, for the information of those, who may be disposed to do so, that the well is on the crest of a ridge extending north-west from the principal summit, and distant there-from about 200 yards. I had brought provisions for another day, as I originally intended to examine the course of the Lachlan above Mount Torrens; but having seen enough from this hill, to satisfy me on that point, we retraced our steps to the camp.

April 9. — This day I halted, as well to rest the horses, as for the purpose of observing equal altitudes of the sun, and protracting my survey.

April 10. — Leaving the party encamped, I crossed the Lachlan, and rode eight miles due south to “Bolloon,” which proved to be the highest cone of a low ridge, situated within the great bend of this river. I found it a valuable station for continuing my chain of triangles downwards, as from it Mounts Cunningham and Allan, Hurds’s Peak, Peel’s and Goulburn’s ranges, Mount Granard, &c. are all visible. We passed some lower hills belonging to the same chain, and of which the basis seemed to be the prevailing ferruginous sandstone. On my return to the camp, I found the dogs had killed an emu. It is singular, that none of the natives would eat of this bird; and the reasons they gave, were, that they were young men, and that none but older men who had “gins” were allowed to eat it; adding, that it would make young men all over boils, or eruptions. This rule of abstinence was also rigidly observed by our interpreter Piper.

Late in the night, I was awoke by one of the watch, firing a pistol at a native dog, which had got close to the sheep-fold. At the same moment, a sheep leaped out, and having been, at the first alarm, pursued by our dogs, it was worried in the bed of the river. The native dog having howled as it escaped, was supposed to have been wounded. To prevent such occurrences in future, and as this arose from a neglect of my original plan, the two fires of the men’s tents were ordered to be again placed in such positions as threw light around the sheep-fold, which was of canvass, fastened to portable stakes and pegs. — (See plan of camp, Vol.I. page. 339.)

April 11. — We left this camp, (named “Camärba,”) and continued our journey around the great bend of the Lachlan, at which point (4½ miles from our camp), the low ridge of Kālingalūngaguy closed on the river. This ridge is a remarkable feature, extending north and south, and I expected to see some tributary from the north entering the river here; but we crossed, on the east side of the ridge, only a wide, dry, and grassy hollow, which was, however, evidently the channel of a considerable body of water in times of flood, as appeared by marks on the trees, which grew along the banks. All were of the dwarfbox kind, named goborro by the natives, a sort of eucalyptus which usually grows by itself on the lower margins of the Darling and Lachlan, and other parts subject to inundation, and on which the occasional rise of the waters is marked by the dark colour remaining on the lower part of the trunk. In the bed of the Lachlan, at the junction of the channel near Kālingalūngaguy, I found quartz rock.

We had not proceeded far beyond that ridge, when Mr. Stapylton overtook the
party, having travelled in great haste from Sydney to join us, as second in command, in compliance with my letter of instructions, sent from Buree. Mr. Stapylton was accompanied by two stockmen, having left his own light equipments at Cordowé, a station above Mount Cunningham. On the plains, which we crossed this day, grew in great abundance that beautiful species of lily found in the expedition of 1831, and already mentioned under the name of Calostemma candidum, also the Calostemma luteum of Ker, with yellow flowers.

At nine miles we crossed some granite rocks, evidently a part of the ridge of Tarràtta, thus exhibiting an uniformity in the granite with the general direction of other ridges, which is about north-north-east. The strike is between north and north-east; the dip in some places being to the west, and in others to the east, at great inclinations. The ridge of Kālingalungaguy consists of quartz, clay-slate, and the ferruginous sandstone, but I observed in the bed of the river, a trap dyke extending to the Bolloon ridge. Of the few low hills about the Lachlan, it may be observed, that they generally range in lines, crossing the bed of that river. Mount Amyot is a ridge of this sort, being connected to the southward with Mount Stewart and Nyororong; and to the northward, with the high ground separating the Bogan from the Goobang; the latter creek also forcing its way through the same chain on its course westward. Mounts Cunningham, Melville, and the small hills about them, on each bank, belong to another system of ridges of similar character, but more broken up; and the range of Kālingalungaguy with that of Bolloon form a third, also intersected by the river. The plains appear to be divided into several stages by these cross ridges, which may have shut up the water of high floods in extensive lakes, during the existence of which the deposits formed the surface of the present plains. Loose red sand also constantly forms low hills on the borders of these plains; and it seems to have been derived from the decomposition of the sandstone, and may be a diluvial or lacustrine deposit. Blue clay appears in the lowest parts of the basin, and forms the level parts of the plain, with concretions of marl in thin layers. This has every appearance of a mud deposit; but its depth is greater than the lowest part visible in the channel of the river. The parallel course of small tributaries joining rivers, which seem to be the middle drain of extensive plains, may have been marked out during the deposition of the sedimentary matter, as tributaries on entering the channel of greater streams, immediately become a portion of them; hence it is, the general inclination being common to both, that such tributaries do not cross these sediments of floods now termed plains, in order to join the main channel or river now remaining. Thus the Goobang, on entering the valley of the Lachlan, pursues a parallel course, until the ridge from Hurd’s peak confines the plain on the west, and turns the Goobang into the main channel. The Bogan, on the opposite side of the high land, may be said to belong to the basin of the Macquarie, although it never joins that river, but merely skirts the plains, which, below Cambelégo, may be all supposed to belong to the original bed of the Macquarie. Throughout its whole course of 250 miles, the left bank of the Bogan is close to low hills, while the right adjoins the plains of the Macquarie. The basin of the Macquarie, as shewn by its course near Mount Harris and Morrisset’s ponds,
falls northward, but that of the Darling to the south-west. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that the course of a tributary, so much opposed as the Macquarie is, to that of the main stream, should spread into marshes: still less, that, on being at length choked with the deposit filling up these marshes, it should work out for itself a channel, less opposed to the course of the main stream. Duck creek appears to be now the channel, by which the floods of the Macquarie join the Darling, and in a course much more direct than that through the marshes. Hence the Bogan also, being still less opposed to that of the Darling, finally enters that river, without presenting the anomaly of an invisible channel. In like manner, at a much lower point on the Darling, the course of the little stream, named Shamrock-ponds, so remarkable in this respect, may be understood. This forms a chain of ponds, or a flowing stream, according to the seasons, between the plains on the left bank of the Darling, and the rising grounds further to the eastward: but instead of crossing the plains to join the main channel, this supposed tributary, after approaching within one or two miles of the Darling, where its plains were narrow, again receded from it, as they widened, and finally disappeared to the left, where the plains were broad, so that its junction with the Darling has not even yet been discovered. On this principle the channel of the Lachlan, as soon as it enters the plains belonging to the basin of the Murrumbidgee, may be sought for on the northern skirts of these plains, although its floods may have been found to spread in different channels, more directly towards the main stream.

At 12¼ miles we crossed a dry and shallow branch of the river, and at 14½ miles, we at length reached the main channel, and encamped where a considerable pond of water remained in it, surrounded by abundance of good grass. In this hole we caught some cod-perch (Gristes Peelii).

April 12. — I sent back three men with two horses to bring on the light cart of Mr. Stapylton, intending to await its arrival (which I expected would be in five days), at the end of this day’s journey. It was my object to encamp as near as possible to Regent’s Lake, without diverging from the route which I wished to follow with the carts, along the bank of the Lachlan. For this purpose, it was desirable to gain a bend of that river, at least as far west as the most western portion of the lake, according to Mr. Oxley’s survey. This distance we accomplished, and more; for we were obliged to proceed several miles further than I intended, and along the bank of the river, because no water remained in its bed, until Mr. Stapylton found a good pond, where we encamped after a journey of 16¼ miles. Notwithstanding such an alarming want of water in the river, we saw during this day’s journey abundance in hollows on the surface of the plains; a circumstance clearly evincing that this river, as Mr. Oxley has truly stated, is not at all dependent for its supply on the rains falling here. The deep cracks on the plains, so abundant as to impede the traveller, seemed capable of absorbing not only the water which falls upon them, but also any which may descend from the low hills around. During our day’s journey, I found grey porphyry, the base consisting apparently of granular felspar, with embedded crystals of common felspar and grains of hornblende.

April 13. — The night had been unusually warm, so much so, that the
thermometer stood during the whole of it, at 76° (the usual noon-day heat,) and so parching was the air, that no one could sleep. A hot wind blew from the north-east, in the morning, and the barometer fell 4/10; of an inch; there were also slight showers. Leaving Mr. Stapylton in charge of the camp, I went with a small mounted party to “Cudjällagong” (Regent’s lake), which I found to be nine miles to the east-south-east of our tents. We passed by the place, where Cudjällagong creek first leaves the river, and by which this lake is supplied.

The uniformity of breadth and width in this streamlet, and its tortuous course, were curious, especially as it must lead the floods of the Lachlan almost directly back from the general direction of their current, to supply a lake. Thus the fluviatile process seemed to be reversed here, the tendency of this river being, not to carry surface waters off, but rather to spread, over land where none could otherwise be found, those brought from a great distance. The particular position of this portion of depressed surface, being so far distant from the general course of the river, and the communication between it and the river by a backwater so shallow and small, the lake can only receive a small share of the river deposits, and this only from the waters of its highest floods. We found the “noble lake,” as it appeared when discovered by Mr. Oxley, now, for the most part a plain, covered with luxuriant grass; some water, it is true, lodged on the most eastern extremity, but no where to a greater depth than a foot. Innumerable ducks took refuge there, and also a great number of black swans and pelicans, the last standing high upon their legs, above the remains of Regent’s lake. We found the water perfectly sweet even in this shallow state. It abounds with the large fresh water muscle, which was the chief food of the natives, at the time we visited it. On its northern margin and a good way within the former boundary of the lake, stood dead trees of a full grown size, which had been apparently killed by too much water, plainly shewing, like the trees similarly situated in Lake George and Lake Bathurst, to what long periods, the extremes of drought and moisture have extended, and may again extend, in this singular country.

That the lake is sometimes a splendid sheet of water, was obvious in its line of shores. These were overhung on the south-western side by rocky eminences, which in some parts consisted of a red calcareous tuff containing fragments of schist; in others, of trap-rock or basalt, which was very hard and black. The opposite shore was lower, with waterworn cliffs of reddish clay. By these cliffs, and the beaches of drifted sand under them, we perceived, that the prevailing winds, in all times of high flood, came from the south-west; the north-east side being very different from the opposite, which was free from sand, and bore no such marks of chafing waves.

At two places the banks are so low, that in high floods, the water must flow over them to the westward, and supply, as I supposed, Campbell’s lake, called “Goorongully,” and that to the north-east of Regent’s lake. Upon the whole it appeared that the trap which originally elevated the western shore, had either partially subsided, or that it was connected with a crater or cavity of which the only vestige is this lake. The calcareous conglomerate, was unlike any rock I had seen elsewhere, consisting in part of a tuff resembling the matrix of the fossil bones
found in limestone fissures. It is also worthy of notice that it appears in some low undulations which extend from the lake to the river, and that the channel conveying the waters to the lake lies in a hollow between them.

On first approaching the lake, we saw the natives in the midst of the water, gathering the muscles (*unio*). I sent Piper forward to tell them who we were, and thus, if possible, prevent any alarm at our appearance. It began to rain heavily as we rode round; and although detached parties of gins, on the south shore, had taken fright, left their huts, and run to the main camp, I was glad to find, when we rode up, that they remained quietly there, under cover from the heavy rain. These huts or *gunyas*, consisted of a few green boughs, which had just been put up for shelter from the rain then falling. The tribe consisted of about a hundred. The females and children were in huts at some distance from those of the men. A great number sat huddled together and cowered down under each gunya, their skinny limbs being so folded before their bodies, that the head rested upon the knees. Among the faces were some which, being hideously painted white (the usual badge of mourning), “grinned horribly;” and the whole was so characteristic a specimen of life among the aborigines, that the heavy rain did not prevent me from making a sketch. While I was thus employed, the natives very hospitably made a fire in a vacant gunya, evidently for the purpose of warming poor “Barney,” our guide, who seemed miserably cold, having no covering except a jacket, thoroughly wet. The men were in general strong, healthy, and muscular, and among them was one who measured six feet four inches, as we afterwards ascertained at our camp. My chief object in visiting the lake, was to cultivate a good understanding with these natives, in the hopes, that one of them might be induced to accompany me down the Lachlan. The facility with which Piper, then at a distance of 200 miles from his native place, Bathurst, conversed with these people, shewed that their dialects are not so varied as is commonly believed; and I had little doubt that he would be understood, even on the banks of the Darling. He ascertained from one of these natives of Regent’s lake, that after eight of our daily journeys, according to his comprehension, the bed of the Lachlan would contain no water, and that we must go to the right across “the middle,” as Piper understood, reaching in four days more a lagoon, called “Burribidgin,” or “Burribadimba:” that there I must leave the carts, and go with the native on horseback; and that in two days’ travelling, at the rate we could then proceed, we should reach “Oolawambiloa,” a very great water. They also said that water could be found in the bush at the end of each of those four days’ journey, by one of their tribe who would go with us, and who had twice been at the great water. All this news made me impatient to go on; but we had to remain a day or two for the light cart. It rained heavily during the whole afternoon; nevertheless a body of these natives accompanied us back, keeping pace with our horses. Each carried a burning torch of the resinous bark of the callitris, with the blaze of which these natives seemed to keep their dripping bodies warm, laughing heartily, and passing their jokes upon us, our horses, and particularly upon our two guides of their own race, Piper and Barney, who seemed anything but at home on horseback, with wet clothes dripping about them. These natives were of a bright copper colour, so
different from black, that one had painted his thighs with black chequered lines, which made his skin very much resemble the dress of a harlequin.

April 14. — Mr. Stapylton proceeded with a party to make a survey of Cudjallagong lake and creek, an operation which could be accomplished with less inconvenience, as that gentleman’s equipment, could not come up to us until the 16th. He extended his survey to the small lake, to the north-east, the first discovered by Mr. Oxley, and named by him Campbell’s lake. Mr. Stapylton found only a grassy plain without a drop of water. By an opening from Cudjallagong lake, he proceeded to another likewise seen by Mr. Oxley. It had also become a verdant plain, nevertheless I thought it was necessary to distinguish it on my map by its native name of Goorongully, as Mr. Oxley had not applied any to it.

April 15. — The sky had continued overcast, although no rain fell, after the evening of the 13th. This day, however, the wind changed from north-west to west, and the sky became clear. The surveying party returned from the lake by midday; and with it, came also Piper my aboriginal interpreter, who had gone there chiefly with the view of obtaining a gin, a speculation which I thought rather hazardous on his part; yet, strange to say, a good strong woman marched behind him into our camp, loaded with a new opossum-skin cloak, and various presents, that had been given to Piper with her. How he contrived to settle this important matter with a tribe to whom he was an utter stranger could not be ascertained; for he left our party on the lake by night, going quite alone to the natives, and returned from their camp in the morning, followed by his gin. To obtain a gin at Cudjallagong was the great ambition of most of the natives we had left behind, among whom were two, friends of Piper, whom I compelled to return, and who were most anxious to accompany us that they might obtain wives at this place.

April 16. — The morning was beautifully clear, and I set out for the summit of Goulburn range, named Yerrarar, fourteen miles distant from the camp. The country we rode over was so thinly wooded, that the hill was visible nearly the whole way. The soil was good, and firmer than the common surface of the plains, the basis being evidently different, consisting rather of trap, than of the sandstone so prevalent elsewhere. At exactly half way, we passed a hill of trap-rock, connected with a low range, extending towards still higher ground nearer Regent’s lake, on the eastern side. This was the first trap-rock I had seen, besides that of the lake, during our whole journey down the Lachlan. On the summit I found hornstone and granular felspar. The whole of Goulburn range consisted also of the same rock. It was rather light coloured, partially decomposed, and lay in rounded nodules and boulders, which formed, however, ridges across the slopes of the ground, tending in general 12 or 14 degrees E. of N. The hills were everywhere rocky, so that the ascent cost us nearly an hour, and we were forced to lead our horses; but it was well worth the pains, for the summit afforded a very extensive prospect. The most interesting feature in the country was Regent’s lake, which, although fifteen miles distant, seemed at our feet, reflecting like a mirror, the trees on its margin; and on the other side we looked into the unknown west, where the horizon seemed as level as the ocean. In vain, I examined it with a powerful telescope, in search of some
remote pic; only a level and thinly wooded country extended beyond the reach even of telescopic vision.

With the spirit-level of my theodolite, I found that the most depressed part extended about due west by compass, a circumstance which first made me imagine, the Lachlan might have some channel in that direction. Of the Mount Granard range, I could see and intersect only that remarkable cape-like point, which was also the high land visible to the westward from Mount Granard itself, being named “Warranary,” by Barney. Closer to the summit on which I stood, were various ranges besides that of which it was the highest point, but even this was not, strictly speaking a range, for it consisted on the southward of different masses, separated by portions of low, level country. I recognized many of my stations, such as Mount Cunningham, Bolloon, Hurd’s Pic, Mount Granard, &c. and having taken all the angles I could with the theodolite, and gathered some specimens of a curious new correa,* and a few bulbs of a pink-coloured amaryllis, which grew on the summit,† we descended, and just as it became quite dark, reached the camp, where I found that the men had arrived with Mr. Stapylton’s light cart, although his own horse, having strayed at Cordowe, did not accompany it.
Chapter III.

North arm of the Lachlan — Quawys — Wallângomê — Wild cattle — Ascend Moriâttu — Leave the Lachlan to travel westward — No water — Natives from Wàrranary — Course down the Lachlan resumed — Extensive ride to the westward — Night without water — Continue westward and south-west — Sand hills — Atriplex — Deep cracks in the earth — Search for the Lachlan — Cross various dry channels — Graves — Second night without water — Native tumulus — Reedy swamp with dead trees — Route of Mr. Oxley — Dry bed of the Lachlan — Find at length a large pool — Food of the natives discovered — Horses knock up — Scenery on the Lachlan — Character of the different kinds of trees — Return to the party — Dead body found in the water — Ascend Burradorgâng — A rainy night without shelter — A new guide — Native dog — Branches of the Lachlan — A native camp — Children — A widow joins the party as guide — Horse killed — The Balyan root — How gathered — Reach the united channel of the Lachlan — No water — Natives' account of the rivers lower down — Mr. Oxley's lowest camp on the Lachlan — Slow growth of trees — A tribe of natives come to us — Mr. Oxley's bottle — Waljeers lake — Trigonella suavissima — Barney in disgrace — A family of natives from the Murrumbidgee — Inconvenient formality of natives meeting — Rich tints on the surface — Improved appearance of the river — Inhabited tomb — Dead trees among the reeds — Visit some rising ground — View northward — Difficulties in finding either of the rivers or any water — Search for the Murrumbidgee — A night without water — Heavy fall of rain — Two men missing — Reach the Murrumbidgee — Natives on the opposite bank — They swim across — Afraid of the sheep — Their reports about the junction of the Darling — Search up the river for junction of Lachlan — Course of the Murrumbidgee — Tribe from Cudjâllagong visits the camp in my absence — Caught following my steps — Piper questions them.

April 17. — WE proceeded along the right bank of the Lachlan, crossing at five miles a small arm or ana-branch* which had been seen higher up diverging from the river, and flowing towards the north-west, by Mr. Oxley. The local name of it is Yamórrima. Beyond this water-course Cannil plains extend, and were more grassy than plains in general. I observed a small ridge of trap-rock near the river. We crossed soon after the base of Mount Torrens, also a hill of trap; and a continuation on this bank of the Lachlan of the Goulburn range. Mount Torrens is, however, only an elongated hill. The trap-rock re-appears in some lower hills further northward, of which Mount Davison is the highest and most eastern.

Beyond Mount Torrens, we entered the region, which lies to the westward of the Macquarie range, and found several new plants, especially a very pretty Xerotes, with sweetly perfumed flowers, being a good deal like X. leucocephala, but with the leaves filamentous at the edges, and the male spikes interrupted.* We encamped on a deep pond at a bend of the Lachlan named Gonnigûldury. I learnt from the old
native guide, who accompanied us from Regent's lake, that they call those ponds of a river which never dry up, “Quawy,” a word which proved to be of use to us in descending the Lachlan. At this camp I found, by a careful observation of \( \alpha \) and \( \beta \) Centauri, that the magnetic variation was 8° 56' 15" E.

April 18. — We continued along the river bank, passing quawys of various names, as they were pointed out by our guide. We crossed the skirt of an extensive plain (Eeöàppa), which brought in view, just a-head of us, a low ridge named Wallàngomè. At 8½ miles, we found the river close under the southern extremity of this hill, and its rocks so obstructed our passage, that we were delayed an hour in clearing a way. I ascended that point nearest the river, and determined its position by taking angles on various heights, already laid down in my map, such as Granard, Yarrarâr, Mount Torrens, &c. The hill itself consisted chiefly of quartz rock, but at its base, were water-worn blocks of quartzose sandstone, containing pebbles of quartz, and they seemed to be the principal rock in the bed of the Lachlan.

As we proceeded, a low rocky ridge or extremity from Wallàngomè, extended upwards of a mile along the river. Soon after we had passed a bend called Taralágo, we crossed the southern limits of a plain. of which the local name is Nyaïndurry, being bounded on the north-west by an isolated hill named Moriàttu. After passing successively two similar points of the river, we reached that of Gòoda, where we encamped, the latitude observed being 33° 23' 3" S.

Mr. Stapylton, with overseer Burnett and the natives, had gone forward early in the morning towards the hills near this place, in pursuit of wild cattle, which were said to abound near it. The tracks we perceived were old, and although the other party had found many that were newer, they returned without having seen any of these wild animals. It appeared that a herd of such cattle, had got together about Macquarie’s range, then only a short way a-head of us, and I saw no objections to the overseer’s killing one or two, as he wished to do, in order that we might feed our native guides, without drawing so largely as we were otherwise compelled to do, on our own stock of provisions. This was a fortunate day for us, in regard to plants. Besides several curious kinds of grass,* a splendid blue Brunonia was found on Wallàngomè. Its colour surpassed any azure I had ever seen in flowers, the tinge being rather deeper than that of the turquois. We also obtained the seed, so that I hoped this plant, which seemed hardy enough, might become a pleasing addition to our horticultural treasures.

“The flowers are nature’s jewels.”

†

The pink lily‡ was also found, as on Yerrarâr, amongst rocks, but growing in rich red soil. We gathered a number of the bulbs, being very desirous to propagate this plant, which differs from the common white amaryllis, and others belonging to the plains, not only in colour, but also in the absence from their corona of intermediate teeth. We again found here the new Xerotes, having the flower in five or six round
tufts on the blade. The flowered blades drooped around, radiating from the centre, while those without flowers stood upright, giving to the whole an uncommon appearance; the flower had a very pleasant perfume.

April 19. — Mr. Stapylton conducted the party forward, while I went to the summit of Moriatu, with the theodolite. Thence I saw Mount Granard, Yerrar, and Mount Torrens, also the various points which I had intersected from Wallangomè. A level plain appeared to extend southward in the midst of the groups of ridges composing Macquarie and Peel’s ranges. “Coccaparra,” a range very abrupt on the eastern side, appeared to be Macquarie’s range of Oxley, and an elevated extremity of it, near the river, I took to be Mount Porteous, and of which the local name is Willin.* To the northward, the most remarkable feature was a line of plains similar to those beside the main channel of the river, and they appeared to border a branch from it, which extended in a western direction, under the base of a small hill, named Murrangong, and far beyond it. The hill, on which I stood, was the most perfectly isolated that I had ever seen, low level ground surrounding it on every side. It consisted of a variety of the same quartz rock as Wallangomè, but contained pebbles of laminated, compact felspar. This hill was abrupt and rocky on the west and north-west sides, the best ascent being from the south-east.

We overtook the party, after it had crossed some extensive plains, where we observed a species of solanum, the berries of which our native guides gathered and ate.† Overseer Burnett made another search this day on “Coccaparra” range for the wild bullocks; the party fell in with a herd, but it kept at a great distance and got off into scrubs. Their bedding places and paths were numerous, and it thus appeared, that the number of these animals was considerable. We gathered on Coccaparra and Mount Porteous several bulbous plants of a species quite new to me, the root being very large. There also we found a remarkable acacia, having long upright needle-like leaves, among which a few small tufts of yellow flowers were sparingly scattered.* We encamped on a pond of the river named Burrabadimba, after travelling fifteen miles.

April 20. — After proceeding some miles on this day’s journey, our Cudjallagong guide pointed in a west-north-west direction, as the way to “Oolawambiloä.” Leaving, therefore, the Kalare or Lachlan, near a great bend in its general course, which below this (according to Mr. Oxley’s map), was south-west, we followed the route proposed by my native friend, as it was precisely in the direction, by which I wished to approach the Darling. The universal scarcity of water had, however, deprived me of every hope that any could be found in that country, at a season when we often sought it in vain, even in the bed of one of the large rivers of the country. Our guide, however, knew the nature of our wants, and also that of the country, and I eagerly followed him towards a hill, the most distant and most westerly on the northern horizon. At sunset, we halted full twenty miles short of that hill, beside the bed of a small river, resembling, in capacity and the nature of its banks, that of the Bogan; but to the manifest consternation of our guide, we could find no water in it, although some ponds had been only recently dried up. This water-course, he informed me, was the same which I had seen passing by
Murrangòng, but he said it did not return its waters to the Lachlan, a circumstance which I could not understand. Booraràn was the name, he gave it. He went with some of our people in the dark, and found a few quarts of water two miles beyond it, but our cattle were obliged to pass the night without any. The barometer had been falling for several days, and the wind arising suddenly at 9 P.M., brought a misty mass of cloud, which began most providentially to drop upon us, to the great relief of our thirsty cattle. This day we found, on the plains, a new species of Sida, with small yellow flowers, very fragrant, and on a long stalk.* In the woods I observed a eucalyptus, of a graceful drooping character, apparently related to E. pilularis and amygdalina.

April 21. — A rainy morning. Some strange natives approached from the woods, while I was looking at the country beyond the dry channel, in the direction in which our guide still wished us to proceed, (about west-north-west). They were grave and important looking old men, and each carried a light. They called out to me in a serious tone “Weeri Kally” — words which I too well understood, meaning simply “No water.” I took my guide to them, but he still seemed in doubt about the scarcity. It was necessary not to depend on uncertainties on such a point, and I, therefore, lost no time in shaping our course again towards the nearest bend of the Lachlan, which we reached, after travelling nine miles in the rain, and we encamped beside a pond or quawy, named “Buree.” I considered this day’s journey to be the first deviation from the most direct line of route towards that part of the Darling, where my last journey terminated. It was evident that in common seasons, the country I wished to traverse was not without water, our guide having suggested it as the way to “Oolawãmbiloä,” (a name always referring to a great abundance of water). I considered it necessary now to ascertain, if possible, and before the heavy part of our equipment moved further, whether the Lachlan actually joined the Murrumbidgee near the point, where Mr. Oxley saw its waters covering the country; or whether it pursued a course, so much more to the westward, as to have been taken for the Darling by Captain Sturt. Near the Lachlan, at this place, the anthericum bulbosum occurred in abundance, and the cattle seemed to eat it with avidity.

On the bank of the river, a new species of roselle appeared amongst the birds, and several were shot and preserved as specimens.

April 22. — I proceeded westward, accompanied by five men and an aboriginal guide, all mounted on horseback. My object, was to obtain, if possible, some knowledge of the final course of the Lachlan; and, secondly, to ascertain how far the hills to the north-west of our camp ranged beyond that very remarkable feature, resembling a cape or promontory, and named Wàrranary, which marked the extent of our sight and knowledge at that time. This point was in a direct line between the camp, we then occupied on the Lachlan, and the lowest part of the Darling attained during the former journey, and we had just fallen back from want of water; a circumstance likely to compel me to follow the Lachlan downwards, at least if it could be ascertained thus early, that this river could not possibly be the supposed Darling of Sturt. In case it proved otherwise, I thought it not improbable, that at the end of two days’ journey westward, I might fall in with the Lachlan, and if I
could find water in it at such a point under any circumstances, I considered that a position so much advanced would be equally favourable, either for reaching the junction of the Murray, or the upper Darling. Should I succeed in reaching the Lachlan at about sixty miles west of my camp, I might be satisfied, that it was this river which Captain Sturt took for the Darling, and then I might seek that river by crossing the range on the north. Whereas, should I find sufficient reason to believe that the Darling would join the Murray, I might continue my journey down the Lachlan until I reduced the distance across to the Darling as much as the scarcity of water might render necessary.

We traversed fine plains of greater extent than I had ever seen before, and in general, of more tenacious surface. They were in many parts covered with salsolaceous plants, but I found also a kind of grass which I had not previously noticed; and a curious woolly plant with two-spined fruit, belonging to the genus Sclerolæna of Brown. I looked in vain, however, for the continuation of the range to the northward. The cape, before mentioned, first rose to a considerable height over the horizon, but as we proceeded, it sunk so as to be just visible behind us, bearing at the point where we lay down for the night, 31°E. of N. The continuation of the range, as we now saw, receded to the north-west; so that the horizon of these plains continued unbroken, save by the cape-like point of Warrany.

A flight of the cockatoo of the interior, with scarlet and yellow top-knot, passed over our heads from the north-west.

The intense interest of this day’s ride, into a region quite unknown, urged me forward at a good pace, having a horizon like that of the sea before and around us, and being in constant expectation of seeing either some distant summit, or line of lofty river-trees; all the results of the journey depending on whether it should be the one or the other. Neither, however, as already stated, appeared, and the sun went down on the unbroken horizon; nor could the native discern from the top of the highest tree, any other objects besides the lofty “yarra” trees of the Lachlan, at a vast distance to the south-west by south. During the ride many a tree and bush rose on the horizon before us, and sunk on that we left behind. We saw five emus together, which did not run so far from us as usual, but stood at a little distance to gaze on our advancing party. In a strip of scrub, consisting of acacia longifolia and lanceolata, and some other graceful shrubs, I found a new species of correa, remarkable for its small, green, bell-shaped flowers, and the almost total absence of hairiness from its leaves. Near this scrub, we saw also many pigeons and parrots; which strengthened our hopes of finding water, which hopes, however, were disappointed, and we at length tied our horses’ heads to the trees in a bit of scrub, and I lay down on a few boughs for the night, under the cover of a gunya or bower, which, on such occasions, was set up by Woods in a very short time. (See vignette, on title-page vol. I.)

April 23. — Dew had providentially fallen during the night, and it proved in some measure a substitute for the want of water to our horses. It was also highly favourable to the object of our tour, in affording a refraction when the sun rose, so that Coccaparra (Macquarie’s range) appeared above the horizon, and enabled me
to determine our distance from it to be sixty miles. Still even this refractive state of
the air brought no hills in view to the north or north-west, a circumstance which
surprised me, and afforded additional reason for supposing, that the Lachlan might
not unite so soon as had been imagined with the Murrumbidgee.

This may require explanation. The course of rivers is in general conformable to
the direction of ranges, or the position of those hills, which bound the valley or
basin, however extensive, in which they flow. As this range fell off to the north-
west, opposite to where the course of the Murrumbidgee had continued south-west,
it was less probable that the Lachlan would unite with the main stream there, than if
the range had approached, or had even continued parallel to it.

I was disappointed in not finding sufficient water for our use, remaining on the
surface after the late rain; and although the country appeared declining to the
westward, and we saw more pigeons and recent marks of natives, I was reluctantly
obliged, at length, to bend my steps south-westward, and afterwards south. The
country we traversed was one level plain, whose extent westward, we neither knew
nor could discover, and for some hours, during this day’s ride, scarcely a bush was
visible. Clumps of trees of the flooded box, or “Marúra” of the natives, appeared
occasionally in and about the many hollows in the surface; and, on the isolated
eminences of red sand, callitris trees grew, always hopeless objects to persons in
want of water. These patches of sand, however, were not numerous, and never rose
more than a few feet above the common surface, which in general consisted of clay
more or less tenacious. Parts of it were quite naked; but others bore a crop of grass
about three years old, which probably sprung up after the last thorough drenching
of the surface. So parched, however, was the ground now, especially in those parts
which bore no vegetation, that it yawned in cracks, too deep to be fathomed by the
length of my sabre and arm together. The best ground for travelling was of a
reddish colour, glossy and firm, with tufts of a species of atriplex upon it; a dwarf
grass with large seeds, not seen elsewhere by me, was springing up, apparently in
consequence of the late rains. This new vegetation did not grow near the old grass,
and was too thin and low to tinge the surface. The dreary look of the old grass in
other parts, decayed and of the colour of lead, could not be exceeded; roots and
stalks being all dead and decayed like rotten timber. Every blade drooped towards
the north-east, and shewed plainly how prevalent the south-west winds were on
these open wastes. In a gloomy day, a wanderer lost upon them, might have known
his course, merely by the uniform drooping of those blades of grass towards the
north-east.

After travelling ten miles south-west without perceiving any indication of the
river, I directed our course southward, and after proceeding seven miles in that
direction, we came upon a hollow of *polygonum junceum*, so full of wide and deep
cracks, that our horses were got across with difficulty. It extended in a south-west
direction towards some flooded box-trees. The country beyond was better wooded,
and at eleven miles, we at length approached a creek, and the large trees, which
enveloped it, looked like those of the river itself; but we saw none of the “yarra,” or
white trunked trees, which always accompanied such waters; and, although we
certainly found the channel of a considerable current, it was shallow, quite dry, and full of *polygonum junceum*.

I could hardly consider this a lateral branch of the river, as I thought that I had seen its head in some hollows, which I crossed on the plains the day before. After passing this channel, however, we descried a long dark line of river-trees, which, as our horses were getting tired, we were now somewhat anxious to see, and the native perceiving smoke arising from the woods there, I, at his request, altered my course to that direction, which was 30°E. of S. None of the party suffered so much, apparently, from the want of water, as “Barney” our native friend. He rode foremost of the men with a tin pot in his hand, his eyes fixed on remote distance, and his mouth open, with the lower lip projecting, as if to catch rain from the heavens. When we were within two miles of those trees, we found enough of rain water in a shallow hole to refresh our horses, but it was surrounded with such tempting grass, that the animals preferred the verdure to it. Barney drank as much as he wished, and I advised the men to fill their horns, but the horses soon trod the water into mud, and all expected to find plenty near the smoke; a hope in which I was by no means sanguine. The first line of trees we crossed enclosed only a shallow channel, overgrown with *polygonum*, and we in vain sought the natives, although we saw where portions of fire had been recently dropped.

Three miles further, we perceived a more promising line of trees, and smoke arising from them also. There, we found the “yarra” trees growing on a flat with a reedy channel meandering amongst them. The fire arose from some burning trees and grass; and there were huts of natives but no inhabitants. Green bushes grew luxuriantly, and amongst them, in a romantic looking spot, three separate graves had been recently erected. Still we could perceive neither signs of water, nor any of the natives, who might have told us where to find it. Crossing another small plain of firm ground, we came upon what seemed to be the main channel of the Lachlan, pursuing a course to the west-north-west. It had not however above one-third of the capacity of the bed above, but, in every other respect, it was similar. Having in vain looked for a water-hole, we hastened towards another line of trees which we reached by sunset. It consisted of the “yarra” kind also, but overhung what was only a hollow in the midst of a plain, although evidently subject to inundation. To find water there, seemed quite out of the question; but we were nevertheless obliged to halt, for the sun had set. Late in the night, as we lay burning with thirst and dreaming of water, a species of duck flew over our heads, which from its peculiar note, I knew I had previously heard on the Darling. It was flying towards the south-west.

*April 24.* — We proceeded on the bearing of 80° east of south, towards the nearest bend of a line of yarra river-trees. There we found, after riding two miles, another diminutive Lachlan, precisely similar to the former, but rather less: it was very sinuous in its course, and full of holes, but surrounded by green bushes with chirping birds; but it was too obvious that these holes had been long, long dry. Thence I pursued a course 24° N. of E. over naked ground, evidently subject at times to inundation, towards other large trees; being anxious to cross all the arms of
the Lachlan before taking up its general course, to guide us back to our camp, which lay then, by my calculation, 43 miles in direct distance, higher up the river. On this flat, we passed a newly raised tumulus, a remarkable circumstance, considering the situation; for I had observed, that the natives of the Darling always selected the higher ground for burying in; and, it might be presumed, that, on this part of the Lachlan, the tribe (whose marks were numerous on the trees), could find no heights within their territory. We found that this belt of river-trees enclosed a dry swamp only, covered with dead reeds, amongst which stood a forest of dead yarra trees, bearing well defined marks of water in dark stained rings, at the height of about four feet, on their barkless trunks. The soil was soft and rich, and where no roots of reeds bound it together, it opened in yawning cracks, which were very deep. This dried up swamp was nearly a mile broad, and beyond it we found firm open and good ground; some very large eucalypti or “yarra” growing between it and the edge of the reeds. I was now satisfied, that we had crossed the whole bed of the Lachlan; and I thought Mr. Oxley’s line of route might have passed near the spot where I then stood; and that in a time of flood all the channels save the one next the firm ground, might easily have escaped his notice. Here our horses began to be quite knocked up, chiefly from want of water; we therefore dismounted and dragged them on, for I hoped by taking the direction of Mr. Oxley’s line of route, as shewn on his map, that the branches would soon concentrate in one united channel. At the end of four miles, we found that junction had taken place, and the bed of the river as broad and deep as usual, but it was every where dry. I made the people lead the exhausted horses from point to point, while I examined all the bends, for the course was very sinuous; still I saw no appearance of water, nor even of any having recently dried up. After proceeding thus about two miles, the chirping of birds and a tree full of chattering parrots, raised my hopes that water was near; and at a very sharp turn of the channel, to the great delight of all, I at length saw a large and deep pool. Our horses stood drinking a full quarter of an hour; and during the time a duck dropt into the pond amongst them. The poor bird appeared to have been as much overcome by thirst as ourselves; for, on the inconsiderate native throwing his bommereng, it was scarcely able to fly to the top of the opposite bank. As the grass was good, I halted during the remainder of the day, for the sake of our horses; although the delay subjected us to another night in the bush. I made the men sit down, out of sight of the pond, for a reason which I did not choose to tell them; but, it was that we might not, by our presence, deprive many other starving creatures of a benefit, which Providence had so bountifully afforded to us.

On a large tree overlooking the pond, and which had already been deprived by the natives of a considerable patch of bark, I chalked the letter M, which the men cut out of the solid wood with their tomahawks. This being the lowest permanent pond above the separation of the river into so many arms, I thought that by such a mark of a white man, the natives would be more ready to point out the spot to any future traveller when required. I found about the fires of the natives, a number of small balls of dry fibre, resembling hemp, and I, at first, supposed it to be a
preparation for making nets, having seen such on the Darling. Barney, the native, however, soon set me right, by taking up the root of a large reed or bulrush, which grew in a dry lagoon hard by, and by shewing me how the natives extracted from the rhizoma a quantity of gluten; and this was what they eat, obtaining it by chewing the fibre. They take up the root of the bulrush in lengths of about eight or ten inches, peel off the outer rind, and lay it a little before the fire; then they twist and loosen the fibres, when a quantity of gluten, exactly resembling wheaten flour, may be shaken out, affording at all times a ready and wholesome food. It struck me that this gluten which they call Bålyan, must be the “staff of life” to the tribes inhabiting these morasses, where tumuli and other traces of human beings were more abundant than at any part of the Lachlan that I had visited.

April 25. — We continued our route upwards, along the right bank of the Lachlan, on a bearing of 36° E. of N. taken from Mr. Oxley’s map: and coming to the river, at nine miles, we again watered our horses, and rested them, for they were very weak. After travelling fifteen miles, one of them rode by Woods, who carried the theodolite, knocked up, when we were far from the Lachlan. With some difficulty we, however, got it on until we reached the river, and finding water, we halted for the day, after a ride of twenty-one miles.

The scenery was highly picturesque at that part of the banks of the Lachlan, notwithstanding the dreary level of the naked plains back from them. The “yarra” grew here, as on the Darling, to a gigantic size, the height sometimes exceeding 100 feet; and its huge gnarled trunks, wild romantic formed branches often twisting in coils, shining white or light red bark, and dark masses of foliage, with consequent streaks of shadow below, frequently produced effects fully equal to the wildest forest scenery of Ruysdael or Waterloo. Often as I hurried along, did I take my last look with reluctance, of scenes forming the most captivating studies. The “yarra” is certainly a pleasing object, in various respects; its shining bark and lofty height inform the traveller of a distant probability of water, or at least of the bed of a river or lake; and being visible over all other trees, it usually marks the course of rivers so well, that in travelling along the Darling and Lachlan, I could with ease trace the general course of the river, without approaching its banks, until I wished to encamp. The nature and character of several other species of the genus eucalyptus were nevertheless very different and peculiar. The small kind, covered with a rough bark, and never exceeding the size of fruit trees in an orchard, and called, I believe, by Mr. Oxley, the dwarf-box, but by the natives, goborro, grows only on plains subject to inundation, and it usually bears on the lower part of the trunk, the mark of the water by which it is at times surrounded. Between the “goborro” and the “yarra,” there seems this difference: the yarra grows only on the banks of rivers, lakes, or ponds, from the water of which the roots derive nourishment; but when the trunk itself has been too long immersed, the tree dies; as appeared on various lakes, and in reedy swamps on the Lachlan. The “goborro,” on the contrary, seldom grows on the banks of a running stream, but seems to thrive in inundations, however long their duration. Mr. Oxley remarked during his wet journey, that there was always water, where these trees grew. We found them, in most cases, during a
dry season, a sure indication that none was to be discovered near them. It may be observed, however, that all permanent waters are invariably surrounded by the “yarra.” These peculiarities we ascertained only after examining many a hopeless hollow, where grew the “goborro” by itself; nor until I had found my sable guides eagerly scanning the “yarra” from afar, when in search of water, and condemning any distant view of “goborro” trees as hopeless, during that dry season. In describing the trees which ornamented the river scenery, I must not omit to mention a long-leaved acacia, whose dark stems and sombre foliage, drooping over the bank, presented a striking and pleasing contrast to the “yarra” trunks, and the light soil of the water-worn banks. The “bimbel” (or spear-wood) which grows on dry forest land, the pine-like *callitris pyramidalis* on red sand-hills, and a variety of acacias in the scrubs, generally present groups of the most picturesque description.

April 26. — We continued towards the camp, which I reached at about nine miles, and found that nothing extraordinary had occurred during my absence. The overseer had been again to Coccoparra to hunt the wild cattle (by my orders), yet, although he found a herd, and put two bullets through one animal, all escaped. The party thought to hem them in, by driving them to the foot of the range; but as soon as the cattle found themselves beset, they climbed, apparently without much difficulty, the abrupt rocky face of the hills, throwing down on their ascent the large fragments and loose stones that lay in their way, and which, rolling down the declivities, checked their pursuers, until the bullocks, wounded and all, escaped.

The working cattle had little good grass at the camp, and another reason, I had for quitting it, was the state of the water-hole. Even at first it was small, and the water had a slightly putrid taste, the cause of which having been discovered, the water had become still less palatable. Piper, our native interpreter, in diving for fish on the previous day, had, to his horror, brought up on his spear, instead of a fish, the putrid leg of a man! Our guide (to the “Booraràn”) had left the camp during my absence; and it was said, that he was aware of the circumstance of the body of a native having been thrown into the hole; for he had abstained from drinking any of the water.

I had still, however, a desire to reconnoitre the country to the southward, in hopes, that I might see enough of its features, to enable me to arrive at some conclusion, as to the final course of the Lachlan, and to arrange our further journey accordingly.

April 27. — I rode to Burradorgâng, a saddle-backed hill bearing 117° from our camp, and distant 19 miles. This hill, I found to be the most western and the last, between the Murrumbidgee and the Lachlan. I only reached its base with tired horses an hour before dusk. Just as I dismounted, and began to climb the rocks, a drizzling rain came on from the north-west, and it unfortunately first obscured that portion of the horizon, which I was most anxious to see. To the northward, eastward, and southward, however, it continued clear, and the points visible in those directions, fully occupied my attention until the western horizon became distinct. I was at once enabled to identify this hill with an angle observed, when on the top of Yerrarâr. Granard, and the principal summits of Peel’s and Macquarie’s
ranges were visible; and, as the sky cleared, I could see Warranary, that south-western extremity of the Mount Granard range, already mentioned, and which I was enabled by my observations here, to connect with the trigonometrical survey. But even from this summit nothing could be observed beyond, besides the continuation of the range towards the north-west, at an immense distance. The object next in importance, was the country between me and the Murrumbidgee in a south-west direction. I expected that some kind of ridge, or hills above the common level, would separate that river from the Lachlan, if the courses of both rivers continued to separate to any considerable distance westward. But although I perceived a low ridge extending towards the west from the most southern part of Peel’s range, I also saw that it terminated in the low level of the plains at about 20° W. of S.

Burradorgang, this last of hills, consisted of ferruginous sandstone, like all the others I saw further in the interior, during the former journey. I descended to its base just as darkness came on; and myself and the men with me were forced to pass the night, exposed to the wind and rain, at a place where, nevertheless, we could find no water for our horses.

April 28. — The rain ceased some time before day-break, but the weather continued cloudy, and fogs hanging on the distant horizon, I was not tempted again to ascend the mountain, as I certainly should have done, had the morning been clear. We mounted, and retraced our steps to the camp. The country between this hill and the river consisted chiefly of soft red soil, in which grew the cypress-like callitris, also acacia, and the “Bimbel,” or spear-wood. It seemed to consist of a very low undulation, extending from the hill into the great angle formed by the Lachlan, whose general course changes near that camp from west to south-west. There was, however, a tract extending southward from the river for about three miles, on which grew yarra trees, bearing the marks of occasional floods, to the height of a foot above the common surface. This ground was probably in part under water when Mr. Oxley passed it, as he represents a swamp or morass in his map, within this bend of the river. I found on the low tract, between Burradorgang and our camp, a new curious species of solanum, so completely covered with yellow prickles, that its flowers and leaves could scarcely be seen. On reaching the camp I found that Piper had fallen in with some natives, one of whom, an old man, undertook to conduct us to the Murrumbidgee, in five days, assuring us that the Lachlan entered that river. This information, the dry state of the country, and the knowledge I had acquired of its principal features, determined me to follow the course of the Lachlan; and in the event of its soon uniting with the Murrumbidgee, to continue along the right bank of that river to its junction with the Murray, then to leave the bulk of our equipment, the carts and most of the cattle, and complete the survey of the Darling with a lighter party.

April 29. — We moved down the Lachlan, travelling in my former track, and we pitched our tents near the place, where I had slept on the 26th, the cattle not being able to go further, from the softness of the ground after the rain.

April 30. — Following the same track, the party reached, at the distance of twelve
miles, an angle of the river, named Curwàddilly, at which there was a good pond, and here we encamped. From this point I obtained a bearing on Burradorgàng, and it was the lowest station on the river, which could be connected with my survey of the hills; for when Burradorgàng sunk below the eastern horizon, a perfectly level line, bounded our view on all sides.

May 1. — Just as the party was leaving the ground, a noise was heard in the rear, and two shots were fired before I could hasten to the spot. These, I found, had been inconsiderately fired by Jones our shepherd, at a native dog belonging to our new guide, and which had attacked the sheep. This circumstance was rather unfortunate, for our guide soon after fell behind, alleging to the party, that he was ill. I knew, however, where to find water that day; and we proceeded to the fine pond which I was so fortunate as to discover on the 24th ult. after our horses had suffered thirst for three days and two nights. Two young natives who had accompanied us for some days, undertook to find water for a couple of journeys beyond this pond. The men caught in this friendly pool several good cod-perch (Gristes Peelii), a fish surpassing, in my opinion, all others in Australia. As we crossed the plains this day, I observed the natives eating a plant which grew in the hollows, and we found it, when boiled, a very good vegetable.

May 2. — We pursued a course nearly west for seven miles, having the Lachlan on our left, until we were stopped by a water-course, or branch of the river which crossed our intended route at right angles. Its banks were steep, and the passage of our waggons was consequently a work of difficulty, but the best crossing place appeared to be just where it left the main channel. Here, accordingly, we cut down the bank on each side with spades, and filled up the soft, lowest part of the hollow with stumps and branches of trees, and all of which being covered with earth from the sides, the carts were got safely across, after about half an hour’s work. We soon, however, came to another, similar water-course, but by the advice of the natives we followed it to the northward, and we found, that at a short distance it branched into shallow hollows of polygonum, which we traversed without delay or difficulty. Soon after we had resumed our course by crossing these hollows, we came upon the main channel, which very much resembled other parts of the Lachlan, only that it was smaller. Piper’s gin came to tell us, that there was water a-head, and that natives were there. We accordingly approached with caution, and having found two ponds of water we encamped beside them, the local name of the situation being Combèdyega. A fire was burning near the water, and at it sat a black child about seven or eight years old, quite blind. All the other natives had fled save one poor little girl still younger, who, notwithstanding the appearance of such strange beings, as we must have seemed to her, and the terror of those who fled, nevertheless lingered about the bushes, and at length took her seat beside the blind boy. A large supply of the balyan root lay near them, and a dog so lean as scarcely to be able to stand, drew his feeble body close up beside the two children, as if desirous to defend them. They formed indeed a miserable group, exhibiting, nevertheless, instances of affection and fidelity, creditable both to the human and canine species. An old man came up to the fire afterwards, with other children. He told us the
name of the water-holes between that place and the Murrumbidgee, but he could not be prevailed on to be our guide. Subsequently, however, a gin who was a widow, with the little girl above-mentioned, whose age might be about four years, was persuaded by him to accompany us.

At this camp, just after I had inspected the horses, and particularly noticed one, as the second best draught animal we had, I was requested by the overseer to look at him again, both bones of his near thigh having been broken by an unlucky kick from a mare. The horse had been with me on two former expeditions, and it was with great regret that I consented to his being shot. We were enabled to regale the old native with his flesh, the men shrewdly giving him to understand, through Piper, that the horse was with us what the emu was with them, too good a thing to be eaten by young men. He seemed to relish it much, and next morning we left him, roasting a large piece. The principal food of these inhabitants of the Kalâre or Lachlan appeared to be “balyan,” the rhizoma, as already stated, of a monocotyledonous plant or bulrush, growing amongst the reeds. It contains so much gluten, that one of our party, Charles Webb, made, in a short time, some excellent cakes of it; and they seemed to me lighter and sweeter than those prepared from common flour. The natives gather the roots and carry them on their heads in great bundles, within a piece of net. The old man came, thus loaded to the fire, where the blind child was seated; and indeed this was obviously their chief food among the marshes.

May 3. — We proceeded nearly west, according to the suggestion of our female guide. We crossed, at a few miles from Combèdyega, my track in the afternoon of April 23rd; and soon after we entered on plains similar to those which we had traversed that day —

“The morn was wasted in the pathless grass,
And long and lonesome was the wild to pass.”

We saw, however, the river-line of trees on our left, and late in the day we approached it. Here I recognized the Lachlan again united in a single channel, which looked as capacious as it was above, the only difference being, that the yarra trees seemed low and of stunted growth. A singular appearance on the bushes, which grew on the immediate bank, attracted my attention. A paper-like substance hung over them, in the manner in which linen is sometimes thrown over a hedge; but on examination it appeared to be the dried scum of stagnant water. This — marks of water on the trees, and the less water-worn character of the banks, which were of even slope and grassy — seemed to shew that the current of the river during floods, here loses its force, and that the water is consequently slower in subsiding than higher up the stream. The course of the river was very tortuous, but still I in vain traced the channel for water, even in the sharpest of its turnings, until long after it was quite dark. We encamped, at length, near a small muddy hole discovered with the assistance of our female guide, after having travelled nineteen miles. I found the latitude of this camp to be $33^\circ 52' 59"$, which was so near that of Mr. Oxley’s lowest point, according to his book, that I concluded we must be close
to it. Fortunately we found some natives at this water-hole, who told us, that a long while ago, white men had been encamped on the opposite side of the “Kalâre,” and that the place where they had marked a tree was not very far distant, but that it had recently been burnt down. We saw to-day for the first time on the Kalâre, the red top cockatoo (*Plectolophus Leadbeateri*).

May 4. — This morning it rained, and, considering the long journey of yesterday, I gave the cattle rest. Here the natives again told us of Oôlawambiloa, near a great river coming from the north, and only five days’ journey from where we should make the Murrumbidgee. They also told us that the latter river was joined by another coming from the south, before it reached Oôlawambiloa.

We had now, therefore, the direct testimony of the natives that the Darling (for it could be no other) joined the Murray, and that the river Lachlan did not lose its channel here, as supposed by Mr. Oxley, but that in five days’ journey further, we might expect to trace it into the Murrumbidgee.

May 5. — The ground being very heavy, the cattle in the carts proceeded but slowly along the plains to the northward of the Lachlan; and while the party followed Mr. Stapylton, I went along the bank with the natives, to visit Mr. Oxley’s last camp, which was not above a mile from that we had left. On my way, I crossed a bed of fine gravel, a circumstance the more remarkable, not only because gravel was so uncommon on these muddy plains, but because Mr. Oxley had also remarked that no stone of any kind could be seen within five miles of the place. This gravel consisted of sand and pebbles of quartz, about the size of a pea. Our female guide, who appeared to be about thirty years of age, remembered the visit of the white men; and she this day shewed me the spot, where Mr. Oxley’s tent stood, and the root with some remains of the branches of a tree near it, which had been burnt down very recently, and on which she said some marks were cut. Several trees around had been sawn, and on two, about thirty yards west from the burnt stump, were the letters [W W] and [I W 1817] The tree bearing the last letters was a “goborro” or dwarf box, and had been killed two years before, by the natives stripping off a sheet of bark; but from the growth of the solid wood around the carved part, it appeared, that this tree had increased in diameter about an inch and a half in seventeen years; the whole diameter, including the bark, being sixteen inches. We immediately dug around the burnt stump, in search of the bottle deposited there by Mr. Oxley, but without success. The gins said, that he rode forward some way beyond, and marked another tree at the furthest place he reached. I accordingly went there with them, and they shewed me a tree marked on each side, but the cuttings being in the bark only, they were almost grown out. It stood beside a small branch, or outlet of the river, which led into a hollow of *polygonum*. The natives also said, that one of Mr. Oxley’s men was nearly drowned in trying to cross this, but that they got him out. They positively assured me, that this was the farthest point Mr. Oxley reached; and it seemed the more probable, as during a flood the deep and narrow gully extending between the river and the field of *polygonum*, must have then been under water, and a most discouraging impediment to the traveller. I place this spot in latitude 33° 45' 10" S.; longitude 144° 56' E. The natives further
informed me that three white men on horseback, who had canoes (boats) on the Murrumbidgee, had visited this part of the Lachlan since, and that after crossing it and going a little way beyond, they had returned.

In the evening, while a heavy shower fell, the natives who had come with me gave the alarm, that a powerful tribe was advancing, with scouts a-head, as when they mean mischief. We were immediately under arms, and soon saw a small tribe, consisting chiefly of old men, women, and children, approaching our party. They sat down very quietly near us, lighting their fire and making huts, without saying a word; and on Piper going to them, we soon came to a good understanding. From them we learnt, that after the tree at Oxley’s camp had been burnt down, a bottle had been found by a child, who broke it, and that it contained a letter. This information saved us all further search, although it had been my intention to halt next day, and send back six men to dig for the bottle; I had purposed also to have promised a full one in exchange for it, if they had found it.

May 6. — The chief of the new tribe had ordered a man to accompany us as guide, but after going a mile or two he fell back and left us; and we were thus compelled again to depend on the information of the gin, for the situation of water. I regretted exceedingly the defection of this envoy, by whose means I hoped to have been passed from tribe to tribe.

The grass had improved very much on the banks of the Lachlan. A vast plain of very firm surface extended southward, but not a tree was visible upon it, while on our side the country was wooded in long stripes of trees. About seven miles from the camp, the river, the general course of which had been for several days about south-west, turned southward; and we came in sight of Waljeers. The natives had for some days told us of “Waljeers,” which proved to be the bed of a lake nearly circular, and about four miles in circumference. It was perfectly dry, but, in wet seasons, it must be a fine sheet of water. As we approached its banks I observed that the surface, which was somewhat elevated above the country nearer the river, consisted of firm red soil, with large bushes of atriplex, mesembryanthemum, and other shrubs peculiar to that kind of surface, which is so common on the left bank of the Bogan. The whole expanse of the lake was at this time covered with the richest verdure, and the perfumed gale which

— “fanned the cheek and raised the hair,
Like a meadow breeze in spring,”

heightened the charm of a scene so novel to us. I soon discovered that this fragrance proceeded from the plant, resembling clover, which we found so excellent as a vegetable during the former journey.* A young crop of it grew in scanty patches near the shores of the lake, and I recognized it with delight, as it seems the most interesting of Australian plants. The natives here called it Càlomba, and told us, that they eat it. Barney said it grew abundantly at Murroägin after rain. It seems to spring up only on the richest of alluvial deposits, in the beds of lagoons during the limited interval between the recession of the water and the desiccation of the soil, under a warm sun.† Exactly resembling new mown hay in the perfume,
which it gives out even when in the freshest state of verdure, it was indeed “sweet to sense and lovely to the eye,” in the heart of a desert country. When at sea off Cape Leuwin in September, 1827, after a three months’ voyage, and before we made the land, I was sensible of a perfume from the shore, which this plant recalled to my recollection.

In the bed of Waljeers, we again found the *Agrostis virginica* of Linnaeus, and an *Echinochloa* allied to *E. crusgalli*, two kinds of very rich grass; but most of the verdure in the middle of the bed consisted of a dwarf species of *Psoralea*, which grew but thinly..§ Hibiscus was also springing very generally. The bed of this lake had been full of the fresh-water muscle; and under a canoe (which I took away in the carts), were several large cray-fish dead in their holes. Dry and parched as the bed of the lake then was, the natives found nevertheless live fresh-water muscles, by digging to a substratum of sand. I understood that, they also find this shell alive, in the same manner in the dry bed of the Lachlan.

This lake was surrounded by yarra trees similar to those on the banks of the river; and within them was a narrow belt of slender reeds, but no bulrushes. On the western shore lay a small beach of sand. The banks were in height about eight feet above the ordinary water-line of the lake; and the greatest depth in the centre was about sixteen feet below that line. The yarra trees distinguishing the margin continued to form a dense belt extending westward from the northern shore; and the natives informed me, that these trees surrounded a much smaller lake named Boyongga, which lay, as they pointed, immediately to the northward of it.

On ascending the bank overlooking the western shore of Waljeers, we found that it also consisted of firm red soil, with high bushes of atriplex, &c. as on the opposite side. We next traversed a plain of the same elevation, but of firmer texture than any we had seen, nearer the Lachlan. The grass upon it was also good and abundant; and we found ourselves, upon the whole, in a better sort of country than we had seen for weeks; but still water was, if possible, scarcer than ever. After travelling about seven miles beyond Waljeers, we regained the banks of the Lachlan; but I pursued its channel about two miles, without finding a drop, and we encamped finally without having any for the animals, after travelling upwards of sixteen miles.

*May 7.* — The grass was green and abundant, and dew had fallen upon it during the night; our cattle, therefore, had not fared as badly as on other nights of privation; and were able to proceed. After we had left our former encampment, and the envoy had deserted us, it occurred to me, that our friend Barney, who had accompanied us a long way, appeared rather too anxious to have a gin. He had been busy, as I subsequently learnt, in raising a hue and cry on the approach of the tribe we last met, in hopes, that we might quarrel with them, and that he might get one, in consequence, on easy terms. I recollected, that he reminded me of his wants in this respect at the very moment these people were approaching. I foresaw the mischief likely to arise from this readiness of Barney to insult native tribes, while under the wing of our party; and the unfavourable impression he was likely to make on them respecting us, if he were allowed to covet their gins. I, therefore, blamed
him for causing the return of the guide, who had been sent with us by that tribe, placed him in irons for the night, and, much as I liked the poor fellow, as an intelligent native, I thought it necessary to send him back this morning, in company with a mute young savage, also from Cudjallagong, who seemed much inclined to become a follower of the camp. Our stock of provisions could not be too carefully preserved, and such followers, when beyond their beat, might have had claims on it, not to be resisted. There then remained with us, besides Piper and his gin, two intelligent native boys, each being named Tommy, together with the widow and her child. The “two Tommies” obtained new chronometrical surnames, being known in the party, as Tommy *Came-first* and Tommy *Came-last*. The former had been told plainly to go back, upon which he was heard to say, he should follow the party, notwithstanding “Majy’s” orders, as he could always find opossums in the trees. I was pleased with his independence on being told this, and allowed him to accompany the party, as well as his friend Tommy *Came-last*, whom he had picked up somehow in the woods.

Our female guide maintained, that there was a water-hole some miles onward at Pòmabil; and we accordingly proceeded in that direction, regaining first the firm plains outside the trees, growing on the river margin. We reached the part to which she had pointed, and she went forward to look for the water, but on her calling out soon after that natives were there, we advanced into the wood, when we observed smoke arising, and natives running away, pursued by the window. At length, perceiving that she stood talking to them, we went up. The strangers consisted of a family just come from the Murrumbidgee, and presented such a picture of the wild and wonderful, that I felt a strong desire to make a sketch of the whole group. One man, who was rather old, being in mourning, as I was told, for the death of a brother; had his face, head and breast so bedaubed with white, that he resembled a living skeleton; the others had large sticks, snakes and other reptiles in their hands, but they were perfectly naked, and crowding around him, presented a strange assemblage. I was anxious to learn from the principal personage the situation of the water; but, on this first meeting, it was necessary, as usual on all such occasions, to continue for some time patient and silent. This formality was maintained very remarkably by the old man and Piper. In vain did I desire the latter to ask him a question; each stood silent for a full quarter of an hour about eight yards apart, neither looking at the other. The female, however, became the intermediate channel of communication, for both spoke alternately in a low tone to her. At length Piper addressed the old man, raising his voice a little, but with his head averted; and the other answered him in the same way; until, at length, by slow degrees, they got into conversation. We were then informed that water was to be found a mile or two on, and the old man agreed to guide overseer Burnett and Piper to the place. I conducted the wheel-carriages along the firm plain outside, and after proceeding more than 2½ miles, I heard a shot from Burnett, announcing his arrival at the water. I accordingly proceeded with the party in that direction, and we encamped near the river, amid the finest verdure that we had yet seen, and after a journey of nine miles. We were informed that the Lachlan contained water in more abundance
one or two days’ journey lower down, and that the Murrumbidgee was not far to the southward.

May 8. — This day being Sunday I gave the cattle rest; but Mr. Stapylton went down the river with two men, to make sure of water at our next stage. They found a pond at the distance of about eleven miles; the way to it being over a fine hard plain, covered with mesembryanthemum and salsoleæ. The party saw a large kangaroo, the first observed on the banks of the Lachlan, during this journey. The old man and his family had proceeded across to Waljeers, in order to procure muscles, the object, as I understood, of his journey from the Murrumbidgee.

May 9. — We moved to the pond above-mentioned, named Yambarènga, and found near it, a number of large huts similar to those of the Darling. The water was very green and muddy, but the taste was good. The plain we traversed this day, exactly resembled the best of the ground on the Darling; and in some places, I observed the Quandàng bushes, having their branches covered with a parasitical plant, whose bright crimson flowers were very ornamental. South of the spot where we now encamped, the ground which consisted of firm red clay, gradually rose; and, from a tree, Burnett observed the tall yarras of the Murrumbidgee, at a distance of about eight miles. The latitude observed was 34° 14' 37" S., longitude 144° 25' E.

May 10. — A thick fog prevented the men from getting the cattle together as early as usual. In the mean time I made a drawing of the native female and the scenery around; and we finally left the encamping ground at a quarter before eleven. The first part of this day’s journey was over a rising ground, on leaving which, the country seemed as if it descended westward into a lower basin, so that I took the river Lachlan, which lay below, to be already the Murrumbidgee. We next travelled over a fine hard plain, covered very generally with small bushes of a beautiful orange-flowered, spreading under-shrub, with broad thin-winged fruit; but the mesembryanthemum æquilaterale grew almost everywhere, and seemed to take the place of grass. It crept over the light red earth, ornamenting it with a rich variety of bright green, light red, purple, and scarlet tints, which, when contrasted with the dead portions, that were all of a pale grey colour, produced a fine harmonious foreground, fit for any landscape. The plains were intersected by a small wood of “goborro” (dwarf box), and after crossing this and keeping the lofty “yarras” trees in view, we found these trees at length growing on ground which was intersected by hollows full of reeds; other parts of the surface bearing a green crop of grass. The banks of the river bore here a very different aspect from any parts which we had seen above; and I supposed that we were at length approaching its junction with the Murrumbidgee. The bed was broader but not so deep, and contained abundance of water at every turning. Ducks, pigeons, cockatoos and parrots were numerous; and we had certainly reached a better country, than any we had yet traversed.

On a corner of the plain, just as we approached the land of reedy hollows, I perceived, at some distance, a large, lonely hut, of peculiar construction, and I accordingly rode to examine it. On approaching it, I observed that it was closed on every side, the materials consisting of poles and large sheets of bark, and that it
stood in the centre of a plot of bare earth of considerable extent, but enclosed by three small ridges, the surface within the area having been made very level and smooth. I had little doubt, that this was a tomb, but on looking through a crevice, I perceived that the floor was covered with a bed of rushes, which had been recently occupied. On removing a piece of bark and lifting the rushes, I ascertained, on thrusting my sabre into the hollow loose earth under them, that this bed covered a grave.

Tommy Came-first, who was with me, pronounced this to be the work of a white man; but by the time I had finished a sketch of it, the widow had hailed him from the woods, and told him that it was a grave, after which I could not prevail on him to approach the spot. I carefully replaced the bark, anxious that no disturbance of the repose of the dead should accompany the prints of the white man’s feet. I afterwards learnt from the widow, that the rushes within that solitary tomb, were actually the nightly bed of some near relative or friend of the deceased, (probably a brother), and that the body was thus watched and attended in the grave, through the process of corruption, or, as Piper interpreted her account, until no flesh remains on the bones: “and then be yan (i. e. goes) away!” No fire, the constant concomitant of places of shelter, had ever been made within this abode, alike of the living and the dead, although remains of several recent fires appeared on the heath outside.

In the afternoon, we came upon the river, where rich weeds and lofty reeds enveloped a soft luxuriant soil. The yarra, or blue gum, not only grew on its banks, but spread over the flats; but I remarked that where the reeds grew thickest, most of the trees were dead; and that almost all bore on their trunks the marks of inundation. These dead trees among reeds suggest several questions: Were they killed by the frequent burning of the reeds in summer? — If so, how came they to grow first to such a size among them? Or did excess of moisture, or its long continuance, kill them? Are seasons now different from those which must have admitted of the growth of these trees for half a century? Or have changes in the levels of the deposits made by the larger rivers below, produced inundations above, to a greater extent than they had spread formerly?

I was returning with the overseer from examining the country some miles in advance of the carts, and with the intention of encamping, where I had left them halted, when I found the men had followed my track into some bad ground. After extricating them from it, I proceeded three miles further to Bidyéngoga, which we did not reach until dark. Water was found in the bed of the Lachlan, on our penetrating through a broad margin of reeds towards some lofty yarra trees. Latitude 34° 12' 17" S.; longitude 144° 18' E.

May 11. — Rising ground appeared on the horizon, about four miles to the north-west, and an intervening plain of firm clay covered with atriplex and salsołæ rose towards it, from the very margin of the reedy basin of the river. Although anxious to see the junction of the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee, curiosity irresistible led me to the rising ground; while Mr. Stapylton traced the supposed line of the Lachlan, and the overseer conducted the carts and party westward. Unlike the hills I
had seen on the limits of interior plains elsewhere, the ridge, I now visited, consisted of the same rich loam as the plains themselves. It was connected with other low ridges, which extended in a north-western direction, into a country finely diversified with hill, dale, and patches of wood, but in all probability at that time entirely without water. The dry bed of a lake lay in a valley immediately north of the hills on which I stood. A few trees of stunted appearance alone grew in the hollow. On the top of this ridge, I ate a russet apple, which had grown in my garden at Sydney, and I planted the seeds in a spot of rich earth, likely to be saturated with water as often as it fell from the heavens. Southward I could see no trace of the Lachlan, and I hastened towards the highest trees where I thought it turned in that direction. I thus met the track of the carts at right angles and galloped after them, as they were driving through scrubs and over heaths away to the westward. When I overtook them I found that Mr. Stapylton had crossed over to them, and told Burnett to say to me that he had not seen the Lachlan. A row of lofty yarra trees appeared to the southward, and as I expected to find the Murrumbidgee among them, I directed my course thither, travelling to the westward of south as well as any appearance of water would allow. We passed through a scrub which swarmed with kangaroos, bronze-wing pigeons, and cockatoos; also by a rather singular hollow resembling the bed of a dry lake, in which we found several grasses apparently new, and very beautiful, together with a low but wide-spreading bush, which bore a fruit resembling a cherry in size and taste, but with a more elongated stone.

After descending into what I had thought was the bed of a river, we found unequal ground, and saw, at a distance, patches of reeds, also lofty “yarra” trees growing all about. On reaching the reeds, we found they filled only very slight hollows in the surface, and after passing through them, we crossed another firm plain with atriplex and salsolae. No river was to be seen, but another line of trees bounded this plain, exactly like those on the banks of streams, and on reaching it, I felt confident of finding water; but on the contrary, there was only an open forest of goodly trees, without the least indication of it. The sun had now set, and I directed the people to encamp, while I rode forward in search of this river. Passing through a thick scrub, I observed another line of river trees, but I penetrated their shades with no better success than before. A dark and stormy night of wind and rain closed over us, and notwithstanding the want of water, which we were again destined to experience, we got wet enough before we regained the camp. Mr. Stapylton had arrived there before me, without having seen either the Lachlan or the Murrumbidgee in the course he had taken, and as the general bearings and directions I had given him did not admit of his deviating too far from the route of the carts, he had been obliged to return unsuccessful. After so long a day’s journey, the cattle were doomed to pass another night yoked up, although surrounded by luxuriant pasture, for thus only could we prevent them from straying in search of water. The rain, however, moistened the grass on this as on three former occasions, when we had suffered the same privation; and the cattle were ordered to be loosened to feed at the earliest dawn.
May 12. — It had rained heavily during the night, so that water was no longer scarce. The canoe, brought from Waljeers, had been placed to receive the rain and conduct it into a cask, which was thus filled. On getting up, I learnt that two men had set off in quest of water, and had been absent all night. That they should have taken this step, without first asking permission, was wrong, but that nobody had mentioned the circumstance to me till then was still more vexatious, as, by firing shots and throwing up rockets, these men might have found their way back in the dark. I was very glad, however, to hear them at length answer our shots, and not at all sorry to see them come in thoroughly drenched with the empty kettles on their shoulders. After this I learnt, when we were about to start, that six of the bullocks had got away; Piper, however, managed to trace and bring them back. The weather then cleared up, and we proceeded in a south-west direction as nearly as patches of scrub permitted, in search of the Murrumbidgee; for I was then convinced, from the different appearance of the country, that we had got beyond the junction of the Lachlan. On passing the scrubs, we crossed a plain of the same kind which we had so often met. It sloped towards a belt of large trees in a flat, where we also saw reeds, the ground there being very soft and heavy for the draught animals. Passing this flat, we again reached firm ground with stately yarra trees; and charming vistas through miles of open forest scenery, had, indeed, nearly drawn me away from the bearing which was otherwise most likely to hit the river. I, however, continued to follow it, and in the midst of such scenery, without being at all aware that I was approaching a river, I suddenly saw the water before me, and stood at last on the banks of the Murrumbidgee.

This magnificent stream was flowing within eight feet of its banks, with considerable rapidity, the water being quite clear; and it really exceeded so much my expectations (surpassing far the Darling, and all the Australian rivers I had then seen), that I was at first inclined to think it could be nothing less than the Murray; which, like the Darling, might have been laid down too far to the west. At all events, I was delighted to find that this corner of Australia could supply at least one river worthy of the name. After thirsting so long amongst the muddy holes of the Lachlan, I witnessed, with no slight degree of satisfaction, the jaded cattle drinking at this full and flowing stream, resembling a thing of life, in its deep and rippling waters. Now, at length, there was an end to the privations, we had so often suffered from want of water; and the bank was also clothed with excellent grass — a pleasing sight for the cattle. Reeds appeared in patches back from the river; but, unlike the banks of the Darling, the best and clearest ground was on the immediate margin of the Murrumbidgee.

Piper, with that keenness of vision so peculiar in savages, soon descried some natives on the other side; and pointed out to me a tribe, filing in a straggling line, through the woods at a distance. I made him cooy to them — they answered the call, and, in a short time, appeared on the opposite bank. Our first interview with these sons of the woods, was highly creditable to them. They advanced in a numerous group, but in a silent and submissive manner, each having a green bough twined round the waist or in his hand. They sat down on the opposite bank, and the
widow having taken a position exactly facing them, held a parley, which commenced, before I could get to the spot. It was now, that we learnt the full value of this female, for it appeared that while some diffidence or ceremony always prevents the male natives, when strangers to each other, from speaking at first sight, no such restraint is imposed on the gins; who, with the privilege of their sex, are ever ready to speak, and the strangers as it seemed to answer; for thus at least we held converse with this tribe across the river. Our female guide, who had scarcely before ventured to look up, stood now boldly forward, and addressed the strange tribe in a very animated and apparently eloquent manner; and when her countenance was thus lighted up, displaying fine teeth, and great earnestness of manner, I was delighted to perceive what soul the woman possessed, and could not but consider our party fortunate in having met with such an interpreter. At length, the strangers proposed swimming over to us, and we invited them to do so. They then requested that those wild animals, the sheep and horses, might be driven away, at which the window and Piper's gin laughed heartily, but they were removed accordingly. The warriors of the Murrumbidgee were about to “plunge into the angry flood,” desirous, no doubt, of showing off like so many Caesars before these females, but their fears of the sheep, which they could not hide, must have said little for their prowess in the eyes of the damsels, on our side of the water. The weather was cold, but the stranger who first swam across, bore in one hand a piece of burning wood, and a green branch. He was no sooner landed than he converted his embers into a fire to dry himself. Immediately after him followed a grey-haired chief (of whom I had heard on the Lachlan), and two others. It appeared, however, that Piper did not at first understand their language, saying it was “Irish;” but it happened that there was with this tribe a native of Cudjallagong (Regent’s lake), and it was rather curious to see him act as interpreter between Piper and the others. We learnt that the Murrumbidgee joined a much larger river, named the “Milliwa,” a good way lower down, and that these united streams met, at a still greater distance, the “Oölawambiloa,” a river from the north, which received a smaller one, bringing with it all the waters of “Wamboul,” (the Macquarie.) These natives proposed to amuse us with a corrobory dance, to which I did not object, but they postponed it until the following evening.

**May 13.** — Having been very anxious to complete my survey of the Kalâre, by determining the true situation of its junction with the Murrumbidgee, I set out this morning, with the intention of tracing this river upwards, to that point, which, I thought, could not be at a greater distance than ten or twelve miles. We sought it, however, in vain; until darkness put a stop to our progress, after we had measured full twenty miles. We lay down by the river side, and although entirely without either food or shelter, determined to prosecute our search at day-light next morning.

**May 14.** — Having laid down our work on the map last evening (by the light of the fire), I found, that we were to the eastward, not only of our late camp where we had wanted water, but also even of our last camp on the Lachlan, and to the southward of it thirteen miles. It thus appeared, that the river had taken a very
extraordinary turn to the south or south-east, probably near our last encampment upon it. After measuring three miles further this morning, by which I was enabled to intersect a low hill in the situation, where I expected to find the Kalâre, and being then on a bend of the Murrumbidgee, whence I could see no other indication of it, save the line of trees some miles off, in which, however, it no doubt was, the whole intervening space being covered with *polygonum junceum*, I was content with intersecting the point, where that line joined the Murrumbidgee, chiefly out of consideration for the men who were with me. It was well that I then determined to return, for one man became so faint, when within a few miles of the camp, that the two others had to remain with him, until I rode forward to it, and sent back the doctor with something for them to eat.

The course of the Murrumbidgee, as far as I traced it in that excursion, appeared to be about west, and I distinctly saw, from the highest point I attained on that river, rising ground at a great distance, also bearing east. Under these circumstances it was obvious that the long course of the river Lachlan is in no part better defined than where it enters the basin of the Murrumbidgee. Water, which had been so scarce in other parts, was abundant where its channel and immediate margins assumed the reedy character of the greater river. So far from terminating in a lagoon or uninhabitable marsh, the banks of the Lachlan, at fifty miles below the spot, where Mr. Oxley supposed he saw its termination as a river, are backed on both sides by rising ground, until the course turns finally southward into the Murrumbidgee.

On my arrival at the camp, I found that six of the party mounted, had set out in search of me at mid-day. A strong tribe had arrived soon after my departure, and, in conjunction with those natives whom we found there, it had been molesting the camp during the whole of the night. On first coming up, the men composing it boldly approached the fires and took their seats, demanding something to eat. It appeared that they had followed our cart track downwards, having with them a native of Cudjällagong. They inquired particularly why “Majy” had gone to the junction of the Kalâre with so few people; and they gave a very unfavourable account of the tribe at that place. This alarmed Mr. Stapylton, and when he observed the tribe set off in the morning, back along the cart track, he despatched the party on horseback under Burnett, with orders to observe the movements of the tribe, to look for my track, and, if possible, to join me. The party returned to the camp about eight in the evening, to my great satisfaction, for I had been apprehensive, that they might have proceeded to seek me at the junction, and I had despatched two men to recall them as soon as I returned. Burnett reported, when he returned, that he had found our track after making a considerable circuit five or six miles from the camp; and, as Piper, who accompanied him, was tracing my steps homewards, on perceiving some natives running along it, he concluded that we were just before them, and sounded the bugle, when they proved to be the tribe before mentioned, all armed with spears. What their object was I cannot say, for three of them had been trotting along the footmarks, while the rest of the tribe in a body, kept pace abreast of them. On hearing the bugle, it appeared, that they
seemed much alarmed, and drew up at a distance. They would not allow Piper to approach them, but one at length came forward and informed him, that “Majy” was gone home. Piper was so dubious about this, that he insisted on examining the points of their spears.

During the nights passed at this camp, the natives were on the alert; so that their various movements, cooys and calls, kept the party in a state of watchfulness, aware, as experience had taught us, of their thieving propensities. Some rockets sent up, about the time I was expected on the evening of our absence, had however scared them a little; and it is probable, that the man from Cudjållagong had given them new ideas about soldiers. Piper’s watch word, also, when taking up his carabine, usually was “Bell gammon soldiers.”* They left the neighbourhood of our camp on my return, and we saw no more of the tribe, which had followed me.
Chapter IV.

The Murrumbidgee compared with other rivers — Heaps of stones used for cooking — High reeds on the river bank — Lake Werombà — Native encampment — River banks of difficult access — Best horse drowned — Cross a country subject to inundations — Traverse a barren region at some distance from the river — Kangaroos there — Another horse in the river — Lagoons preferable to the river for watering cattle — High wind, dangerous in a camp under trees — Serious accident; a cart-wheel passes over the widow’s child — Graves of the natives — Choose a position for the depôt — My horse killed by the kick of a mare — Proceed to the Darling with a portion of the party — Reach the Murray — Its breadth at our camp — Meet with a tribe — Lake Benanee — Discover the natives to be those last seen on the Darling — Harassing night in their presence — Piper alarmed — Rockets fired to scare them away — They again advance in the morning — Men advance towards them holding up their fire-arms — They retire, and we continue our journey — Again followed by the natives — Danger of the party — Long march through a scrubby country — Dismal prospect — Night without water or grass — Heavy rain — Again make the Murray — Strange natives visit the camp at dusk.

May 15. — THE night had been stormy with rain, so that I had not been able to ascertain the latitude of the point, at which we had reached this important river. It was Sunday; and although the two men sent after Burnett’s party had come in early enough, we remained in the same camp. I had already been struck with the remarkable dissimilarity between the Murrumbidgee and all the interior rivers previously seen by me, especially the Darling. The constant fullness of its stream, its water-worn and lightly-timbered banks, and the firm and accessible nature of its immediate margin, unbroken by gullies, were all characters quite the reverse of those which I had seen elsewhere. Whatever reeds or polygonum might be outside, a certain space along the river, was almost everywhere clear, probably from its constant occupation by the natives. One artificial feature, not observed by me in other places, distinguishes the localities principally frequented by the natives, and consists in the lofty mounds of burnt clay, or ashes used by them in cooking. The common process of natives in dressing their provisions, is to lay the food between layers of heated stones; but here, where there are no stones, the calcined clay seems to answer the same purpose, and becomes better or harder, the more it is used. Hence the accumulation of heaps resembling small hills.* Some of them were so very ancient, as to be surrounded by circles of lofty trees; others, long abandoned, were half worn away by the river, which, in the course of ages, had so far changed its bed, that the burnt ashes reached out to mid-channel; others, now very remote from the river, had large trees growing out of them. I saw the first of these heaps, when near the end of the last day’s journey along the Lachlan, where this river partook of the reedy character of the Murrumbidgee. I understood that the
“Balyan” or bulrush-root, which is the chief food of the natives there, is prepared in those kilns, when a family or tribe are together. I ascertained the name of the place to be Wéyeba; its latitude is 34° 21' 34" S.; longitude 143° 56' 27" E.

May 16. — We commenced our journey down the Murrumbidgee. Our route passed occasionally through reeds, as we cut off the bends of the river; but they formed no serious impediment, although they stood so high, that we occasionally experienced some difficulty in following each other through them. Having found, after surveying the river a few miles down, that the general course was about south-west, as I had also found it to be above our camp, I followed that direction as a general line of route, leaving the river at length at some distance to the left. The country looked well; lofty yarra trees and luxuriant grass giving it the appearance of fine forest land; but most of these trees bore marks of inundation, and the water appeared to have reached several feet up their trunks. At length I came on a native path conducting west-ward; but as it led to rising ground, with *atriplex halimoides*, &c., I bent our course to the south, and reached the river at sunset. Burnett and Piper followed the native path, until they came to the bed of a fine lake, about half a mile across, and they met some natives who told them that the name of it was Werombá. Mr. Stapyton also discovered a small lake of the same sort, near our route and south of the other. Both sheets of water, like that of Waljeers, were surrounded by a ridge of rising ground, consisting of the red earth of the dry plains, and it was covered with the salsolaceous shrubs peculiar to them. These lakes seem to be supplied only from the highest floods of the river, and to constitute a remarkable and peculiar feature in the character of the surface. I had been informed of a very large one of the same kind, named “Quawingamè,” near the left bank of the Lachlan, and not far from its junction with the Murrumbidgee; but the singular turn of the first-mentioned river, prevented me from seeing it. As we drew near the river, I perceived the huts of a tribe with a fire smoking before each. I immediately sent back for the gins, but before they could come up, the natives, whom we saw there, noticed us, and immediately disappeared among the reeds, shrieking as if they had been mad. Our females soon after approached their huts, and called on them to return, but in vain.

A misfortune befell us this evening, which made the party better aware of the treacherous nature of the banks of this part of the Murrumbidgee. I had just time, before it got dark, to find a place where the cattle could approach the water, the banks being almost everywhere water-worn and perpendicular, and consequently inaccessible and dangerous to animals in descending to drink. To this point I had sent the sheep, and the men were leading the horses also towards it, when the foremost, which unfortunately was the best, made a rush to the water at a steeper place, and fell into the river. He swam, however, to the other side, but, in returning, sank in the middle of the stream, never to rise again. He had winkers on, and I think it probable, that he had put his foot into a short rein which was attached to the collar. This horse was of the Clydesdale breed, and drew the cart containing my instruments, throughout the journey along the Darling last year. His name was “Farmer” — an unfortunate appellation for surveying horses; — for Farmer’s
Creek, in the new road to Bathurst, was named after another horse which fell there and broke his neck, while I was marking out the line.

The land adjacent to the river was of the richest quality; and the grass on it was luxuriant, and the forest scenery fine. The lofty trees certainly bore marks of inundation one or two feet high; but as land, still higher, was not far distant, it cannot be doubted, notwithstanding its liability to become flooded, that the soil might supply the wants of an industrious population; especially, as its spontaneous productions are the chief support of the aboriginal inhabitants.

May 17. — A beautiful morning. The latitude of this camp being exactly that of the most southern bend of the river, in Arrowsmith’s map, I ventured upon a course nearly west, in order to clear the bends. The lofty trees, I had seen before me, were found to be situated, not on the banks of the river, but amongst scrubs. We afterwards came to sand-hills, and extensive tracts covered with that most unpleasing of shrubs, to a traveller, the *eucalyptus dumosa*, and the prickly grass mentioned by Mr. Oxley. We traversed ridges of sand, rising, perhaps, sixty feet above the plains, nearer the river; and, when viewed from trees, the same kind of country seemed unlimited in all directions. I, therefore, travelled south-south-west, and afterwards southward; until we once more entered among the yarra trees, on the more open ground by the river, and encamped after a journey of about twelve miles. The country, we had this day traversed, was of so unpromising a description, that it was a relief to get even amongst common scrubs, and escape from those of the *eucalyptus dumosa*. This species is not a tree, but a lofty bush, with a great number of stems, each two or three inches in diameter; and the bushes grow thickly together, having between them nothing but the prickly grass in large tufts. This dwarf wood approached to the very river, where we encamped, without leaving an intermediate plain, as on the Lachlan. In this country, however dreary it appeared, we found a beautiful grevillea, not previously seen by us. During the day we saw also a great many kangaroos, and killed two of them.

Notwithstanding every precaution in watering the cattle, and at a place selected too as the best that could be found, after a careful examination of two miles of the river, one of the horses fell in; but, on this occasion, it was safely got out again. The abundance of water, though a novelty to us, was a source of new trouble and anxiety, from the danger our cattle were in of being drowned, owing to the precipitous banks and soft mud of the river. This peril was indeed so imminent, that in the morning, it was thought most prudent to water all the horses with a bucket, and not to risk the loss of the bullocks by suffering them to drink at all.

May 18. — Being determined to keep the river in sight, we this day continued our journey along its margin. I found, we could follow the general course, without entering bends, by travelling at the base of a second bank, which seemed to divide the yarra-tree flats from the scrubby ground behind. We came thus upon some rain-water, in the clay of the plains, which, being sufficient to satisfy the bullocks, we gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity it afforded, of watering them without unyoking. After proceeding about three miles further, we saw a lagoon between us and the Murrumbidgee. It resembled a bend of the river, and contained abundance
of water, on which were three pelicans and a number of ducks. When we had travelled nearly far enough to encamp, we came on two other lagoons of the same kind, similarly situated, and both containing water. The grass being good, I determined to pitch our tents between them, as the cattle might thus be watered, for one night at least, without the risk of being bogged or drowned. These lagoons looked like different bends of a river, although we saw the ends of both, and passed on firm ground between them. It was evident, however, that they could only be supplied by the inundations of the river. On this day, we killed a kangaroo.

May 19. — During the night the weather was tempestuous; at three A. M. it blew a hurricane, and the rain fell heavily afterwards. I was not sorry when the wind abated, for we were so confined for room between the two lagoons, that my tent had been pitched, and most of our encampment placed, unavoidably under a large yarra tree, a very unsafe position during high winds, but fortunately no branches fell. In the morning, after proceeding about a mile, another lagoon lay before us, which was full of water and indeed terminated in the river. We avoided it by turning to the right, and gaining the higher ground above the level of floods. We continued along this upper land, thus crossing two small plains; but soon after, being apprehensive of going too far from the river, we again entered the open forest of yarra trees, which marked so distinctly its immediate margin. At 3½ miles we passed a bend of the river, full of dead trees, the banks being quite perpendicular and loose. After reaching another bend, three miles further, we noticed two lagoons, apparently the remains of an ancient channel of the river; and at ten miles we came upon a creek, as capacious as the Lachlan and full of large ponds of water. Mr. Stapylton examined this creek some way up, and he found that it came from the north-east; and on arriving at a favourable place, I crossed with the party and encamped, the day having been very rainy and cold. We soon discovered that this channel was only a branch of one from the north, and the latter being very deep, I determined to halt next day, that its course might be explored, while the men made a fit passage across it for the carts.

May 20. — This morning the weather appeared beautifully serene; and the barometer had risen higher than I had ever seen it, on this side of the mountains. Mr. Stapylton, who left the camp in the morning, returned about sunset, after exploring the creek, through a very tortuous course, more or less to the northward of west. He had also ascertained, that it supplied a small lake about eight miles to the west-ward of our camp, whence he had perceived its course bending again towards the river, of which he in fact considered it only a branch: and I, therefore, concluded, that the ponds of water so abundant in it, were but the remains of a flood in the Murrumbidgee.

May 21. — A good passage way having been made, we crossed the water-course, and proceeded towards Lake Stapylton, as I understood that there we might easily recross. I was informed by Burnett, that when the journey commenced this morning, the gins in the bush had not responded to Piper's call, until after such a search, as convinced him that both intended to leave the party. He said that in such cases, the law of the aborigines was, that the two first attempts of a wife to leave
her husband, might be punished by a beating, but that for the third offence, he might put her to death. On the way, we traversed the head of a creek somewhat similar to the last, at a place where it was nearly level with the plain, although, just below, it contained a fine reach of water obviously supplied by the river. Here an unfortunate accident befell the little native child “Ballandella,” who fell from a cart, and one of the wheels passing over, broke her thigh. On riding up, I found the widow her mother in great distress, prostrate in the dust, with her head under the limb of the unfortunate child. I made the doctor set it immediately; but the femora having been broken very near the socket, it was found difficult to bandage the limb so as to keep the bone in its place. Every care, however, was taken of the poor little infant, that circumstances would allow; and she bore the pain with admirable patience, though only four years old. In her cries on first meeting with the accident, she was heard to call for “Majy,” a curious instance of this child’s sense at so early an age.

I found that the ground near the lake afforded so good a position for a depot, that I encamped upon it, with the intention of ascertaining what grass the neighbourhood afforded, and how the situation was likely to answer this purpose in other respects. It had been latterly my intention to leave the carts, boats, and most of the cattle, in a depot at the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Murray; and to proceed with two light carts only and a month’s provisions, to complete the survey of the Darling. We were now, I considered, within three days’ journey, at most, of that junction (according to Arrowsmith’s map,) and as these rivers were dangerous to the cattle, and their banks much frequented by the natives, such a place as this seemed more convenient and secure for a temporary depot.

On the rising ground near our camp, were several graves, all inclosed in separate parterres of exactly the same remarkable double or triple ridges, as those first seen on the lower part of the Lachlan. There were three of these parterres all lying due east and west. On one, evidently the most recent, the ashes of a hut appeared over the grave. On another, which contained two graves, (one of a small child) logs of wood, mixed with long grass, were neatly piled, transversely; and in the third, which was so ancient that the enclosing ridges were barely visible, the grave had sunk into a grassy hollow. I understood from the widow that such tombs were made for men and boys only, and that the ashes over the most recent one were the remains of the hut, which had been burnt and abandoned, after the murder of the person, whose body was buried beneath, had been avenged by the tribe, to whom the brother or relative keeping it company, above ground, had belonged.

May 22. — This morning the bullock-drivers gave so favourable an account of the pasture, that I determined to leave a depot there, and to set out next morning, with the rest of the party, for the Darling. The day was, therefore, passed in making the necessary arrangements. I proposed leaving Mr. Stapylton, with eight trusty men; and to take with me the rest, consisting of fifteen, including Burnett and Piper. I calculated on being absent four weeks at most; and rations for the supply of the party, for that time, were immediately weighed out and packed, along with our tents, in two light carts, which were to be drawn by five bullocks each. Thus I
expected to be able to travel fifteen miles a day; and to have the men in better order
for dealing with the fire-eaters of the Darling, than when they were all occupied as
bullock-drivers, carters, &c. &c.

May 23. — Before I got up this morning, I was informed, that the same unlucky
mare which had already caused the death of one of the horses, had just broken the
thigh of my own horse; and thus I was forced to have it shot, when it was in better
condition than usual, having been spared from working much for some time, that it
might be fresh for this excursion. Such an inauspicious event, on the morning of
my intended departure for the Darling, was by no means encouraging. I left the
widow at the depot camp, having given directions, that she should have rations, and
that every care should be taken of the child, whose broken limb had been set, and
bound to a board in such a manner, that the little patient could not, by moving,
disturb the bone in healing. Mr. Stapylton was aware of the necessity for preventing
the widow from going back just then, lest she might have fallen into the hands of
any pilfering tribe, likely to follow us. The accident which had befallen Ballandella
(of whom she was very fond), was, however, likely to be a tie on her, at least until
our return; for it would have been very injurious to have moved the child in less
than several weeks. A stock-yard was to be erected for the cattle, that they might be
brought up there every night during our absence; and the men appointed to remain
at the depot, were told off in watches for the cattle and camp. Mr. Stapylton and I
then separated, with a mutual and most sincere wish, that we should meet again as
soon as possible. The position of the camp was excellent, being on the elevated
edge of a plain overlooking an extensive reach of water, and surrounded with grass
in greater abundance and variety, than we had seen in any part for some time.

During our progress this day, we were for some miles, in danger of being shut in
by the creek extending from the lake, as it increased prodigiously, and at length
resembled a still reach of the Murrumbidgee itself. After crossing it several times, I
was fortunate enough to be able to keep the right bank, by which we got clear,
passing along the edge of a slight fall, which looked like the berg of the main
stream. At 7½ miles, we crossed ground of a more open character than any we had
seen for some days; and it appeared to belong to the river margin, as it was marked
by some yarra trees. On approaching this river I judged, from the breadth of its
channel, that we were already on the banks of the Murray. Thus, without making
any detour, and much sooner than I had reason to expect from the engraved map,
we had reached the Murray, and our depot thus proved to be in the best situation,
for subsequently crossing that river at its junction with the Murrumbidgee, as
originally intended. Leaving a little plain on our right, we entered the “goborro,” or
box-forest, with the intention of keeping near the river; but from this we had to
recede on meeting with a small but deep branch of the stream with some water in
it. Proceeding next directly towards some high trees at the western extremity of the
plains, we reached a favourable bend of the Murray and there encamped.

This magnificent stream was 165 yards broad, its waters were whitish, as if tinged
with some flood; the height of the red bank, not subject to inundation, was 25 feet,
and by comparing these measurements with the Murrumbidgee, which at Wèyeba
was 50 yards wide, with banks 11 feet high, (and that seemed a fine river,) some
idea may be formed of the Murray.* At the place where we encamped, the river had
no bergs, for its bank consisted of the common red earth covered with the acacia
bushes and scrub of the interior plains. The land at the point opposite was lower,
and sandy, and a slight rapid was occasioned in the stream by a ridge of ironstone.

* May 24. — It was quite impossible to say on what part of the Murray, as laid
down by Captain Sturt, we had arrived; and we were therefore obliged to feel our
way, just as cautiously, as if we had been upon a river unexplored. The ground was
indeed a tolerable guide, especially after we found, that this river also had bergs,
which marked the line of separation between the desert plain or scrub, and the
good grassy forest-land of which the river-margin consisted. As we proceeded, I
found it best to keep along the bergs as much as possible, in order to avoid ana-
branches† of the river. Where the bergs receded, forest land with the “goborro” or
dwarf-box, intervened. In travelling over ground of this description, we crossed, at
two miles from the camp, a dry creek or branch, and another at a mile and a quarter
further. Soon after, we entered a small plain, bounded on the west by another dry
channel, and beyond this, we were prevented from continuing in the direction in
which I wished to travel, by a creek full of water obliging us to turn northward and
eastward of north, until I at length found a crossing place, and just as we perceived
smoke at some distance, beyond the other bank. To this smoke Piper had hastened,
and when I reached a plain beyond the creek, I saw him carrying on a flying
conversation with an old man and several gins, who were retiring in a north-west
direction, to a wood about a mile distant. This wood we also at length reached, and
we found, that it encircled a beautiful lake full sixteen miles in circumference, and
swarming with natives both on the beach and in canoes.

The alarm of our arrival was then resounding among the natives, whom I saw in
great numbers along its western shores. This lake, like all those we had previously
seen, was surrounded by a ridge of red earth, rather higher than the adjacent plains,
and it was evidently fed, during high floods, by the creek we had crossed. I travelled
due west from the berg of this lake along the plain, which extended in that direction
a mile and three-quarters. We then came to another woody hollow or channel, in
which I could, at first, see only a field of polygonum, although we soon found in it a
broad deep reach of still water. In tracing it to the left or from the lake towards the
river, we found it increased so much in width and depth, after tracing it three-
quarters of a mile, that a passage in that direction seemed quite out of the question.
Many of the natives, who had followed us in a body from the lake, overtook us
here. They assured Piper that we were near the junction of this piece of water with
the “Millewà” (Murray), and that in the opposite direction or towards the lake, they
could shew us a ford. We accordingly turned, and we came to a narrow place, where
the natives had a fish-net set across. On seeing us preparing to pass through the
ford, they told Piper that at a point still higher up, we might cross where the
channel was dry. Thither, therefore, we went, the natives accompanying us in
considerable numbers, but each carrying a green bough. Among them were several
old men, who took the most active part, and who were very remarkable from the
bushy fulness and whiteness of their beards and hair; the latter growing thickly on
the back and shoulders gave them a very singular appearance, and accorded well
with that patriarchal authority, which the old men seem to maintain to an
astonishing degree, among these native tribes. The aged chiefs from time to time
beckoned to us, repeating very often and fast at the same time, “gowây, gowây,
gowây,” which, strange to say, means, “come, come, come.” Their gesture and
action being also precisely such as we should use in calling out “go away!” We
crossed the channel, at length, where the bed was quite dry, and pitched our tents
on the opposite side. It will, however, be readily understood with what caution we
followed these natives, when we discovered, almost as soon as we fell in with them,
that they were actually our old enemies from the Darling! I had certainly heard,
when still far up on the Lachlan, that these people were coming down to fight us;
but I little expected, they were to be the first natives we should meet with on the
Murray, at a distance of nearly two hundred miles from the scene of our former
encounter. There was something so false in a forced loud laugh, without any cause,
which the more plausible among them would frequently set up, that I was quite at a
loss to conceive, what they meant by all this uncommon civility. In the course of
the afternoon, they assembled their women and children in groups before our
camp, exactly as they had formerly done on the Darling; and one or two small
parties came in, whose arrival they seemed to watch with particular attention,
hailing them while still at a distance, as if to prevent mistakes. We now ascertained
through Piper, that the tribe had fled precipitately from the Darling last year, to the
country westward, and did not return until last summer, when they found the two
bullocks we left there; which, having become fat, they had killed and eaten. We also
ascertained, that some of the natives then in the camp, wore the teeth of the
slaughtered animals, and that they had much trouble in killing one of them, as it
was remarkably fierce. This we knew so well to be the character of one of the
animals, that we had always supposed it would baffle every attempt of these savages
to take it.

In the group before me, were pointed out two daughters of the gin which had
been killed, also a little boy, a son. The girls exactly resembled each other, and
reminded me of the mother. The youngest was the handsomest female, I had ever
seen amongst the natives. She was so far from black, that the red colour was very
apparent in her cheeks. She sat before me in a corner of the group, nearly in the
attitude of Mr. Bailey’s fine statue of Eve at the fountain; and apparently equally
unconscious that she was naked. As I looked upon her for a moment, while deeply
regretting the fate of her mother, the chief who stood by, and whose hand had
more than once been laid upon my cap, as if to feel whether it were proof against
the blow of a waddy, begged me to accept of her in exchange for a tomahawk!

The evening was one of much anxiety to the whole party. The fiendish expression
of some of these men’s eyes shone horribly, and especially when they endeavoured
to disguise it by treacherous smiles. I did not see the tall man, nor the mischievous
old one of last year; but there were here many disposed to act like them. One
miserable looking dirty aged man was brought forward, and particularly pointed out
to me by the tribe. I accordingly shewed him the usual attention of sitting down, and smoothing the ground for him.* But he soon requested me to strip, on which I arose, mindful of a former vow, and perceiving the blacksmith washing himself, I called him up, and pointed out the muscles of his arm to the curious sage. The successor, and brother, as the natives stated, of king Peter, was also looking on, and I made Vulcan put himself into a sparring attitude, and tip him a touch or two, which made him fall back one or two paces, and look half angry. We distinctly recognised the man who, last year, threw the two spears at Muirhead; while on their part, they evidently knew again Charles King, who, on that occasion, fired at the native, from whose spears Tom Jones so narrowly escaped.

Night had closed in, and these groups hung still about us, having also lighted up five large fires, which formed a cordon around our camp. Still I did not interfere with them, relying chiefly on the sagacity and vigilance of Piper, whom I directed to be particularly on the alert. At length Burnett came to inform me, that they had sent away all their gins, that there was no keeping them from the carts, and that they seemed bent on mischief. Piper also took the alarm, and came to me, inquiring, apparently with a thoughtful sense of responsibility, what the Governor had said to me, about shooting blackfellows. “These,” he continued, “are only Myalls,” (wild natives). His gin had overheard them arranging, that three should seize and strip him, while others attacked the tents. I told him the Governor had said positively, that I was not to shoot blackfellows, unless our own lives were in danger. I then went out — it was about eight o’clock, — and I saw one fellow who had always been very forward, posted behind our carts, and speaking to Piper’s wife. I ordered him away, then drew up the men in line, and when, as preconcerted, I sent up a rocket, and the men gave three cheers, all the blacks ran off, with the exception of one old man, who lingered behind a tree. They hailed us afterwards from the wood at a little distance, where they made fires, saying they were preparing to corrobory, and inviting us to be present. Piper told them to “go on,” and we heard something like a beginning to the dance, but the hollow sounds they made resembled groans more than any sort of music, and we saw, that they did not, in fact, proceed with the dance. It was necessary to establish a double watch that night, and indeed none of the men would take their clothes off. The most favourable alternative, that we could venture to hope for was, that a collision might be avoided till daylight.

May 25. — The night passed without further molestation on the part of the natives; but, soon after day-break, they were seen advancing towards our camp. The foremost was a powerful fellow in a cloak, to whom I had been introduced by king Peter last year, and who was said to be his brother. Abreast of him, but much more to the right, two of the old men, who had reached a fallen tree near the tents, were busy setting fire to the withering branches. Those who were further back seemed equally alert in setting fire to the bush; and, the wind coming from that quarter, we were likely soon to be enveloped in smoke. I was then willing, that the barbarians should come again up, and anxious to act on the defensive, as long as possible; but when I saw what the old men were about, I went into my tent for my rifle, and ordered all the men under arms. The old rascals, with the sagacity of foxes, instantly
observed and understood this movement, and retired. I then ordered eight men to
advance towards the native camp, and to hold up their muskets, as if to shew them
to the natives, but not to fire unless attacked, and to return at the sound of the
bugle. The savages took to their heels before these men, who, following the
fugitives, disappeared for a time in the woods, but returned at the bugle call. This
move, which I intended as a threat, and as a warning, that they should not follow
us, had at least the effect of giving us time to breakfast, as Muirhead observed on
coming back to the camp. We afterwards moved forward on our journey as usual;
but we had scarcely proceeded a mile, before we heard the savages in our rear, and
on my regaining the Murray, which we reached at about three miles, they were
already on the bank of that river, a little way above where we had come upon it,
and, consequently, as we proceeded along its bank, they were behind us. They kept
at a considerable distance; but I perceived through my glass, that the fellow with the
cloak carried a heavy bundle of spears before him.

“He comes, not in peace, O Cairbar:
For I have seen his forward spear.” — Ossian.

We were then upon a sloping bank or berg, * which was covered backwards with
thick scrub; below it lay a broad reach of still water in an old channel of the river,
and which I, for some time, took to be the river itself. It was most painfully
 alarming to discover, that the knowledge these savages had acquired of the nature
of our arms, by the loss of several lives last year, did not deter them from following
us now with the most hostile intentions. We had endeavoured to prevent them, by
the demonstration of sending the men advancing with fire-arms, yet they still
persisted; and Piper had gathered from them, that a portion of their tribe was still
before us. Our route lay along the bank of a river, peopled by other powerful tribes;
and at the end of 200 miles, we could only hope to reach the spot, where the party
already following in our rear, had commenced the most unprovoked hostility last
season. I had then thought it unsafe to divide my party, it was already divided now,
and the cunning foe was between the two portions; a more desperate situation,
therefore, than this half of my party was then in, can scarcely be imagined. To
attempt to conciliate these people had last year proved hopeless. Our gifts had only
excited their cupidity, and our uncommon forbearance had only inspired them with
a poor opinion of our courage; while their meeting us in this place was a proof, that
the effect of our arms had not been sufficient to convince them of our superior
strength. A drawn battle was out of the question, but I was assured by Piper, and
the other young natives, that we should soon lose some of the men in charge of the
cattle. Those faithful fellows, on whose courage my own safety depended — some
of them having already but narrowly escaped the spears of these very savages on
the former journey. We soon discovered that the piece of water was not the river,
by seeing the barbarians passing along the other side of it; and I there-upon
determined to travel on as far as I could. The river taking a great sweep to the
southward, we proceeded some miles through an open forest of box, or goborro;
and when I at length met with sand-hills and the *eucalyptus dumosa*, I continued to
travel westward, not doubting, but that I should reach the Murray by pursuing that course. We looked in vain, however, during the whole day, for its lofty trees, and in fact crossed one of the most barren regions in the world. Not a spike of grass could be seen, and the soil, a loose red sand, was in most places covered with a scrub, like a thickset hedge of *eucalyptus dumosa*. Many a tree was ascended by Burnett, but nothing was to be seen on any side, different to what we found where we were. We travelled from an early hour in the morning until darkness and a storm appeared to be simultaneously drawing over us. I then hastened to the top of a small sand-hill, to ascertain whether there was any adjacent open space where even our tents might be pitched, and I cannot easily describe the dreariness of the prospect that hill afforded. No signs of the river were visible, unless it might be near a few trees, which resembled the masts of distant ships on a dark and troubled sea; and equally hazardous now was this land navigation, from our uncertainty as to the situation of the river, on which our finding water depended; and the certainty, that wherever it was, there were our foes before us, exulting perhaps in the thought, that we were seeking to avoid them in this vile scrub. On all sides, the flat and barren waste blended imperceptibly with a sky as dismal and ominous as ever closed in darkness. One bleak and sterile spot hard by, afforded ample room for our camp; but the cattle had neither water, nor any grass that night. A heavy squall set in, and such torrents of rain descended as to supply the men with water enough; and indeed this was not the only occasion during the journey, when we had been providentially supplied under similar circumstances.

*May 26.* — It appeared that we had not, even in that desert, escaped the vigilance of the natives, for Piper discovered, within three hundred yards of our camp, the track of two, who, having been there on the preceding evening, had that morning returned towards the river. At an early hour we yoked up our groaning cattle and proceeded, although the rain continued for some time. I pursued, by compass, the bearing of the high trees I had seen, though they were somewhat to the northward of west. Exactly at five miles, a green bank and, immediately after, the broad expanse of the Murray, with luxuriantly verdant margins, came suddenly in view, on the horizon of the barren bush, in which we had travelled upwards of twenty-three miles, and which here approached the lofty bank of the river. The green hill, I had first seen, afforded an excellent position for our camp; and as the grass was good, I halted for the rest of the day, to refresh the cattle. Towards evening, the natives were heard advancing along our track, and seven came near the camp, but remained on the river margin below, which from our post on the hill, we completely overlooked. Piper went to these natives, to ascertain if they were our enemies from the lake. He recognized several whom he had seen there, and he invited them to come up the hill; but when I saw them, I could not, from their apparently candid discourse, look upon them as enemies. They said, that the tribe which we had seen at Benanee, did not belong to that part of the country, but had come there to fight us, on hearing of our approach. One of them, who had been seen at the lake, asked Piper several times, why I did not attack them, when I had so good an opportunity, and he informed us, that they were the same tribe which intended to kill another
white man (Captain Sturt) in a canoe, at the junction of the rivers lower down. They also informed us, on the inquiry being made, that the old man who then behaved so well to the white men, was lately dead, and that he had been much esteemed by his tribe. I desired Piper to express to them, how much we white men respected him also. I afterwards handed to these people a fire-stick, and pointing to the flat below, gave them to understand, through Piper, that the tribe at Benanee had behaved so ill, and riotously about our camp, that I could not allow any natives to sit down beside us at night.
Chapter V.

New and remarkable shrub — Darling tribe again — Their dispersion by the party — Cross a tract intersected by deep lagoons — Huts over tombs — Another division of the Darling tribe — Barren sands and the eucalyptus dumosa — Plants which grow on the sand and bind it down — Fish caught — Aspect of the country to the northward — Strange natives from beyond the Murray — They decamp during the night — Reach the Darling and surprise a numerous tribe of natives — Piper and his gin explain — Search for the junction with the Murray — Return by night — Followed by the natives — Horses take fright — Break loose and run back — Narrow escape of some men from natives — Failure of their intended attack — Different modes of interment — Reduced appearance of the Darling — Desert character of the country — Rainy morning — Return of the party — Surprise the females of the tribe — Junction of the Darling and Murray — Effect of alternate floods there.

May 27. — IN the scrub adjoining our camp, we found a new and remarkably beautiful shrub, bearing a fruit, the stone of which was very similar to that of the quandang (*Fusanus acuminatus*) although there was no resemblance either in the form of the tree or of the flower. This shrub was not unlike the weeping willow in its growth, and the fruit, which grew at the extremities of the drooping branches, had the shape of a pear, and a black ring at the broad end. The crop then on the tree was unripe, and was probably a second one; the flower was also budding, and we hoped to see the full blossom on our return. Only three or four of these trees were seen, and they were all on the hill near our encampment. Here likewise grew a new shrubby species of Xerotes, with hard rush-like leaves, but allied to *X. gracilis*.

We proceeded on our journey as usual, but had not gone far, when we heard the voices of a vast body of blacks following our track, shouting prodigiously, and raising war cries. It now became necessary for me to determine, whether I was to allow the party, under my charge, to be perpetually subject to be cut off in detail, by waiting until these natives had again actually attacked, and slain some of my people, or whether it was not my duty, in a war which not my party, but these savages had virtually commenced, to anticipate the intended blow. I was at length convinced, that unless I could check their progress in our rear, and prevent them from following us so closely; the party would be in danger of being compelled to fight its way back against the whole savage population, who would be assembled at that season of drought, on the banks of the large rivers. But, in order to ascertain first, whether this was the hostile tribe, I sent overseer Burnett with Piper and half the party into the scrub, which skirted our line of route. We were travelling along the berg or outer bank of the river, a feature which not only afforded the best defensive position, but also guided me in tracing the river’s course. It was also in many parts the only ground clear of timber or bushes, and therefore the best for travelling upon. I directed the men to allow the tribes to pass along our track towards me, as I
intended to halt with the carts, after crossing the low hill. Piper recognized from this scrub the same people he had seen at Benanee. The natives however having immediately discovered our ambuscade, by the howling of one of their dogs, halted, and poised their spears; but a man of our party (King) inconsiderately discharging his carabine, they fled, as usual, to their citadel, the river, pursued and fired upon by the party from the scrub. The firing had no sooner commenced, than I perceived from the top of the hill, which I ascended, some of the blacks, who appeared to be a very numerous tribe, swimming across the Murray. I was not then aware what accidental provocation had brought on this attack, without my orders, but it was not the time to inquire; for the men, who were with me, as soon as they heard the shots of their comrades, and saw me ascend the hill, ran furiously down the steep bank to the river, not a man remaining with the carts. The hill behind which these were posted was about a quarter of a mile from the river, and was very steep on that side, while on the intervening space or margin below, lofty gum-trees grew, as in other similar situations. By the time, I had also got down, the whole party lined the river bank, the men with Burnett being at some distance above the spot at which I reached it. Most of the natives were then near the other side, and getting out, while others were swimming down the stream. The sound of so much firing must have been terrible to them, and it was not without effect, if we may credit the information of Piper, who was afterwards informed that seven had been shot in crossing the river, and among them the fellow in the cloak, who at Benanee appeared to be the chief. Much as I regretted the necessity for firing upon these savages, and little as the men might have been justifiable under other circumstances, for firing upon any body of men without orders, I could not blame them much on this occasion; for the result was the permanent deliverance of the party from imminent danger. Our men were liable in turn, to be exposed, singly, while attending the cattle, which often unavoidably strayed far from the camp during the night; and former experience had in my mind, rendered the death of some of these men certain. I was indeed satisfied, that this collision had been brought about in the most providential manner; for it was probable, that, from my regard for the aborigines, I might otherwise have postponed giving orders to fire, longer than might have been consistent with the safety of my men. Such was the fate of the barbarians, who, a year before, had commenced hostilities by attacking treacherously a small body of strangers, which, had it been sent from heaven, could not have done more to minister to their wants than it did then, nor endured more for the sake of peace and good-will. The men had then been compelled to fire in their own defence, and at the risk of my displeasure. The hostility of these savages had also prevented me from dividing my party, and obliged me to retire from the Darling sooner than I might otherwise have done. It now appeared, that they had discovered this, judging from their present conduct, and unappalled by the effect of fire-arms, to which they were no longer strangers, they had boastingly invaded the haunts of other tribes, more peaceably disposed than themselves, for the avowed purpose of meeting and attacking us. They had persisted in following us with such bundles of spears as we had never seen on other occasions, and they were on the
alert to kill any stragglers, having already, as they acknowledged, destroyed two of
our cattle.

This collision took place so suddenly, that no man had thought of remaining at
the heads of the horses and cattle, as already stated; nor was I aware of this until, on
returning to them, I found the reins in the hands of Piper’s gin; a tall woman who,
wrapt in a blanket, with Piper’s sword on her shoulder, and having a blind eye,
opaque and white, like that of some Indian idol, presented rather a singular gular
appearance, as she stood the only guardian of all we possessed. Her presence of
mind, in assuming such a charge on such an occasion, was very commendable, and
seemed characteristic of the female aborigines.

I gave to the little hill which witnessed this overthrow of our enemies, and was to
us the harbinger of peace and tranquillity, the name of Mount Dispersion.

The day’s journey was still before us. On leaving the river we soon encountered a
small creek, or ana-branch, and, though I made a practice of avoiding all such
obstructions by going round, rather than crossing them, yet in the present case, I
was compelled to deviate from my rule, on finding that this creek would take me
too far northward. Soon after, we approached a lagoon, and during the whole day,
turn wherever we would, we were met by similar bodies of water, or, as I
considered them, pools left in the turnings and windings of some ana-branch,
formed during high floods of the river. Nevertheless, I managed to preserve a
course in the desired direction; and at length we encamped on the bank of several
deep ponds, which lay in the channel of a broad water-course. I was anxious to
avoid, if possible, being shut up between ana-branches and the river, lest, as the
river seemed rising, I might be at length surrounded by deep water. I was in some
uncertainty here, about the actual situation of the Murray, and our position was any
thing but good; for, it was in the midst of scrubby ground, and did not command,
in any way, the place where alone grass enough was to be found for the cattle. The
bergs of the river were not to be seen, although the river itself could not be distant;
for the whole country traversed this day, was of that description which belongs to
the margin of streams, being grassy land under an open forest, containing goborro
and yarra trees. These are seldom found in that region at any considerable distance
from the banks of the river, the whole interior country being covered with eucalyptus
dunosa, and patches of “the pine” or callitris pyramidalis.

May 28. — A thick fog hung over us in the morning, but it did not impede our
progress. For the first three miles, our way was along the banks of the channel or
lagoon, beside which we had passed the night. It then crossed a polygonum flat and
several dry hollows, beyond which I at length saw the rising ground of the river-
berg; and, immediately after, the river itself, flowing by the base of a precipitous red
cliff, in which the scrubby flat country we were travelling upon, abruptly
terminated. We had cut off a great bend of the Murray, by our intricate journey
among the lagoons; and had again reached the river precisely at the point most
desirable. On this upper ground, we observed several tombs, all enclosed within
parterres of the same boat-like shape, first seen by us on the day we traced the
Lachlan into the basin of the Murrumbidgee. Two of the tombs here consisted of
huts, very neatly and completely thatched over, the straw or grass being bound down by a well-wrought net. Each hut had a small entrance on the south-west side, and the grave within was covered with dry grass or bedding, on which lay, however, some pieces of wood. There was a third grave with coverings of the same kind, but it was not so neatly finished, nor was it covered with net.* There were also graves without any covering; one, where it appeared to have been burnt; and two old-looking graves were open, empty, and about three feet deep.

We had not proceeded far through the scrub, on the top of the precipice overhanging the river, when the usual alarm term, “the natives,” was passed along to me from the people in the rear of our party. Piper had been told, that we should soon see the other division of the Darling tribe, which was still a-head of us; and I concluded that these natives belonged to it, and were awaiting us at this point, where, as they had foreseen, we were sure to come upon the river. Four or five advanced up to us, while the rest followed among the bushes behind. I recognised two men, whom I saw last year on the Darling. They begged hard for axes and held out green boughs, but I had not forgotten the treachery of their burning boughs on our former interview, and thinking I recognised the tall man, who had been the originator of the war, I went up to him with no very kind feeling; but I was informed, he was only that man’s brother. My altered manner, however, was enough for their quick glance; and indeed one of the best proofs, that these natives belonged to the Darling tribe, was the attention with which they watched me, when they asked for tomahawks, and their speaking so much to Piper about “Majy.” Of the evil tendency of giving these people presents, I was now convinced, and fully determined not to give more than. This resolution the natives having discovered very acutely, their ring-leaders vanished like phantoms down the steep cliffs, and we heard no more of the rest. It is possible, that this portion of the tribe, had not then received intelligence of what had befallen the others, or they would not have advanced so boldly up. Be that as it may, they followed us no more, having probably heard in the course of the day, from the division of the tribe which we had driven across the Murray.

The river taking a turn to the southward, we again entered the dumosa scrub, but it was more open than we had seen it elsewhere. The soil consisted of barren sand; there was no grass, but there were tufts of a prickly bush, which tortured the horses, and tore to rags the men’s clothes about their ankles. I observed, that this bush and the eucalyptus dumosa, grew only where the sand seemed too barren and loose for the production of anything else; so loose, indeed, was it, that, but for this dwarf tree, and prickly grass, the sand must have drifted so as to overwhelm the vegetation of adjacent districts, as in other desert regions where sand predominates. Nature appears to have provided curiously against that evil here, by the abundant distribution of two plants, so singularly adapted to such a soil. The root of the eucalyptus dumosa, resembles that of a large tree; but, instead of a trunk, only a few branches rise above the ground, forming an open kind of bush, often so low, that a man on horseback may look over it for miles. The heavy spreading roots, however, of this dwarf tree, and the prickly grass, together occupy the ground, and seem
intended to bind down the sands of the vast interior deserts of Australia. Their disproportionate roots also prevent the bushes from growing very close together; and the stems being leafless, except at the top, this kind of eucalyptus is almost proof against the running fires of the bush. The prickly grass resembles, at a distance, in colour and form, an overgrown bush of lavender; but the pedestrian and the horse both soon find, that it is neither lavender nor grass, the blades consisting of sharp spikes, which shoot out in all directions, offering real annoyance to men and horses.

On ascending a small sand-hill, about three P. M. I perceived, that I could not hope to reach the river in the direction I was pursuing. Accordingly I turned to the left, and entering a rather extensive valley, which was bounded on the south by the river-barges, at a distance of three or four miles; we encamped on the immediate bank of the Murray, shortly before sunset. There was little grass about the river, for the ferruginous, finely grained sandstone, formed still the river bank, and was exactly similar to the arenaceous rock on the eastern coast. The river had more the appearance of having a flood in it now, than at the time we first made it, and here we caught some good cod-perch (*Gristes Peelii*), one weighing seventeen pounds. As we came along the lagoons in the morning of this day, we shot a new kind of duck.

*May 29.* — The broad slopes of the river-berg, or second bank, were generally distinguished by a strip of clear ground, which we found the best for travelling upon; and it afforded us also the satisfaction of overlooking the friendly river at a greater or less distance, on the left. The Murray meandered between the opposite bergs of a valley or basin, which was here about four miles wide. From a hill situated between the river and the scrub, I this day saw, for the first time since we left the Lachlan, a ridge on the horizon. It appeared to the northward, the west end being distant about seven miles; and it was long, flat, and not much higher than the surrounding country. An extensive plain reminded us of those on the Darling, and in the more hollow part of it, I perceived the dry bed of a lake, bordered by some verdure. On proceeding, I observed, that the bergs fell off; and we descended into a valley where a line of yarra trees enveloped a dry creek, very much resembling the one seen by us on the Darling, and named Clover-creek. Crossing this dry course, we soon regained the berg of the river, and found it as favourable to our progress as before, but being of red sand, I at length led the party along the firm clay at the base of the higher ground.

As the dogs were chasing a kangaroo across a bit of open flat, four natives appeared at the other side. They came frankly up to us, and they were well painted, broad white patches marking out the larger muscles of the breasts, thighs, and arms, and giving their persons exactly the appearance of savages as I have seen them represented in theatres. Their hair was of a reddish hue, and they were altogether men of a different make from the tribe of the Darling. We accordingly allowed them to remain in the camp, which I took up on the margin of the Murray, soon after our meeting with them. They told us, that a creek named Bengallo, joined the Murray amongst the numerous lagoons, where we had been encamped two days before; and they supposed, it came from the hills near the Bogan, because natives
from that river sometimes came to the Murray by the banks of the creek. They also informed us that the name of a river to the southward was “Perräinga;” and (if we understood each other rightly by Piper’s interpretation), their name for lake Alexandrina was “Kayinga:” a lake which, however, had, according to them, a wide deep outlet to the sea. During that night it rained heavily, and the natives left us, without notice, during an interval of fair weather. There was much scrub about the river, and I was not quite satisfied with the position of our camp, but a strict watch was always kept up, and we had excellent watch-dogs, no bad protection against the midnight treachery of the aborigines.

May 30. — We heard our new acquaintance cooying in the bush, but we gave no attention to them, and proceeded on our journey. The smooth and verdant escarp of the riverberg guided us, while the river itself was sometimes at hand, and sometimes four miles off. This day, I recognised several shrubs which I had seen before only on the Darling. At length the berg terminated altogether in a smooth round hill, beyond which lay a low woody country, intersected by lines of yarra trees in almost every direction. I thought, I perceived in one of these lines, the course of the Darling, coming into the extensive valley from the northward; and the old hands exclaimed, when they saw the bare plains to the north-west of our camp, that we had got upon the Darling at last. Beyond this valley to the south-westward, I perceived that the bergs of the opposite bank of the Murray were continuous, and advanced to a point about west-south-west. Upon the whole, I was satisfied, that we were near the junction of the two rivers; and we encamped on the lower extremity of the point already mentioned, which overlooked a small lagoon, and was not above three hundred yards from an angle of the Murray.

May 31. — I now ventured to take a north-west course, in expectation of falling in with the supposed Darling. We crossed first a plain about two miles in breadth, when we came to a line of yarra trees which enveloped a dry creek from the north-east, and very like Clover-creek. We next travelled over ground chiefly open, and at four miles crossed a sand-hill, on which was a covered tomb, after the fashion of those on the Murray. On descending from the sandridge, we approached a line of yarra trees, which overhung a reach of green and stagnant water. I had scarcely arrived at the bank, when my attention was drawn to a fire, about a hundred yards before us, and from beside which immediately sprung up a numerous tribe of blacks, who began to jump, wring their hands, and shriek as if in a state of utter madness or despair. These savages rapidly retired towards others who were at a fire on a further part of the bank, but Piper and his gin going boldly forward, succeeded, at length, in getting within hail, and in allaying their fears. While he was with these natives, I had again leisure to examine the water-course, upon which we had arrived. I could not consider it the Darling, as seen by me above, and so little did it seem “the sister stream” to the Murray, as described by Sturt, that I at first thought it nothing but an ana-branch of that river. Neither did these natives satisfy me about Oolawambiloa, by which I had supposed the Darling was meant, but respecting which they still pointed westward. They, however, told Piper that the channel we had reached contained all the waters of “Wambool,” (the Macquarie),
“Callewatta” (the upper Darling), and I accordingly determined to trace it up, at least far enough to identify it with the latter. But I thought it right that we should endeavour first to recognise the junction with the Murray as seen by Captain Sturt. The natives said, it was not far off; and I accordingly encamped at two o’clock, that I might measure back to that important point. Thirteen natives set out, as if to accompany us, for they begged that we would not go so fast. Three of them, however, soon set off at full speed, as if on a message; and the remaining ten fell behind us. We had then passed the camp of their gins, and I supposed at the time, that their only object was to see us beyond these females, Piper being with us. I pursued the river through a tortuous course until sunset, when I was obliged to quit it, and return to the camp by moonlight, without having seen anything of the Murray. I had, however, ascertained that the channel increased very much in width lower down, and when it was filled with the clay-coloured water of the flood then in the Murray, it certainly had the appearance of a river of importance.

**June 1.** — The country to the eastward seemed so dry and scrubby, that I could not hope in returning to join Mr. Stapylton’s party or reach the Murray, by any shorter route, than that of our present track; and I, therefore, postponed any further survey back towards the junction of the Darling and Murray, until I should be returning this way. We accordingly proceeded upwards, and were followed by the natives. They were late in coming near us however, which Piper and his gin accounted for as follows: — As soon as it was known to them, the day before, that we were gone to the junction, the strong men of the tribe went by a shorter route; but they were thrown out and disappointed by our stopping short of that “promising” point. There, they had passed the night, and having been busy looking for our track in the morning, the earth’s surface being to them a book they always read, they were late in following our party.

Kangaroos were more numerous and larger here, than at any other part we had yet visited. This day one coming before me I fired at it with my rifle; and a man beside me, after asking my permission, fired also. The animal, nevertheless, ran amongst the party behind, some of whom hastily, and without permission, discharged their carabines also. At this four horses took fright, and ran back at full speed along our track. Several of the men, who went after these horses, fell in with two large bodies of natives coming along this track, and one or two men had nearly fallen into their hands twice. “Tantragee” (M’Lellan), when running at full speed, pursued by bands of savages, escaped, only by the opportune appearance of others of our men, who had caught the horses and happened to come up. The natives then closed on our carts, and accompanied them in single files on each side; but as they appeared to have got rid of all their spears, I saw no danger in allowing them to join us in that manner. Chancing to look back at them, however, when riding some way a-head, the close contact of such numbers induced me to halt and call loudly, cautioning the men, upon which I observed an old man and several others suddenly turn and run; and, on my going to the carts, the natives fell back, those in their rear setting off at full speed. Soon after, I perceived the whole tribe running away, as if a plan had been suddenly frustrated. Piper and his gin who had been watching them
attentively, now came up, and explained to me these movements. It appeared, that the natives entertained the idea, that our clothes were impervious to spears, and had therefore determined on a trial of strength by suddenly overpowering us, for which purpose they had “planted” (i.e. hidden) their spears and all encumbrances, and had told off for each of us, six or eight of their number, whose attack was to be sudden and simultaneous. A favourable moment had not occurred before they awoke my suspicions; and thus their motives for sudden retreat were to be understood. That party consisted of strong men, neither women nor boys being among them; and although we had little to fear from such an attack, having arms in our hands, the scheme was very audacious, and amounted to a proof, that these savages no sooner get rid of their apprehensions, than they think of aggression. I had, on several occasions, noticed and frustrated dispositions apparently intended for sudden attacks, for the natives seemed always inclined to await favourable opportunities, and were doubtless aware of the advantage of suddenness of attack to the assailants. Nothing seemed to excite the surprise of these natives, neither horses nor bullocks, although they had never before seen such animals, nor white men, carts, weapons, dress, or anything else we had. All were quite new to them, and equally strange, yet they looked at the cattle, as if they had been always amongst them, and they seemed to understand at once, the use of every thing.

We continued our journey, and soon found all the usual features of the Darling; the hills of soft red sand near the river, covered with the same kind of shrubs seen so much higher up. The graves had no longer any resemblance to those on the Murrumbidgee and Murray, but were precisely similar to the places of interment we had seen on the Darling, being mounds surrounded by, and covered with, dead branches and pieces of wood. On these lay, the same singular casts of the head in white plaster, which we had before seen only at Fort Bourke. It is, indeed, curious to observe the different modes of burying, adopted by the natives on different rivers. For instance, on the Bogan, they bury in graves covered like our own, and surrounded with curved walks and ornamented ground. On the Lachlan, under lofty mounds of earth, seats being made around them. On the Murrumbidgee and Murray, the graves are covered with well thatched huts, containing dried grass for bedding, and enclosed by a parterre of a particular shape, like the inside of a whale-boat. On the Darling, as above stated, the graves are in mounds covered with dead branches and limbs of trees, and are surrounded by a ditch, which here we found encircled by a fence of dead limbs and branches.

As we proceeded, the sand-hills became more numerous and their surface softer; while the scrub was at length so close, that it was difficult to follow any particular bearing in travelling through it. Near the river, the surface was broken up by beds of dry lagoons, which evidently became branches of the main stream in times of flood; and the intervening ground was covered with *Polygonum junceum*. At length, I reached an angle of the river, and encamped on a small flat beside a sand-hill. Here the Darling was only a chain of ponds, and I walked across its channel dry shod, the bed consisting of coarse sand, and angular fragments of ferruginous sandstone. The width and depth between the immediate banks, were about the same as I had found
them in the most narrow and shallow parts, during my former journey. While I
stood on the adverse side or right bank of this hopeless river, I began to think, I
had pursued its course far enough. The identity was no longer a question. The
country on its banks in this part presented also the same unvaried desert features
that it did in the districts examined by us during the preceding year. The Murray,
unlike the Darling, was a permanent river, and I thought it advisable to exhaust no
more of my means in the survey of deserts, but rather employ them and the time
still at my disposal, in exploring the sources of that river, according to my
instructions, and in hopes of discovering a better country. My anxiety about the
safety of the depot, brought me more speedily to this determination. During the
wet and cold weather, there might be less activity among the savage natives, but it
was not probable that the tribe which had collected 500 men to attack Captain
Sturt, would be quiet in my rear, after having lost some of their number. To be in
detached parties amongst a savage population, was perilous in proportion to the
length of time we continued separate; and I did not feel warranted in exhausting all
my means, in order to attain, by a circuitous route, the point where my survey
ought to have commenced; while a second duty, for which the means now left were
scarcely adequate, remained to be performed. I had already reached a point far
above where any boat could be taken, or even any heavy carts; and nothing was to
be gained by following the river further.

The natives were heard by Piper several times during the day’s journey, in the
woods beyond the river, as if moving along the right bank, in a route parallel with
ours; but they did not appear near our camp, although their smoke was seen at a
distance.

*June 2.* — For several days the barometer had been falling, and this morning the
weather was rainy and cold. After tracing the further course of the Darling for some
distance, and obtaining, during an interval of sunshine, a view from a sand-hill,
which commanded a very extensive prospect to the northward, I commenced the
retrograde movement along our route, which was but too deeply visible in the sand.
From what Piper had said, the men expected an engagement during the morning;
and it was doubtful, on account of the wetness of the day, whether their pieces
would go off, if the natives came on; but, fortunately, we continued our journey
unmolested. We reached our former encampment, notwithstanding the
unfavourable state of the ground, and again pitched our tents upon it. We found
among the scrubs this day, a new curious species of Beëkea with extremely small
scattered leaves not larger than grains of millet, plano-convex, and covered with
pellucid dots.*

*June 3.* — The natives had not again appeared, so that Piper’s conjecture, that they
were moving up the river by the opposite bank, with a view to assemble the tribes
higher up, appeared to be correct. Their gins had been left at their old camp; for as
the party crossed a flat not far from it, and I fired at a kangaroo, their voices were
immediately heard, signal columns of smoke arose in the air, and they hurried with
their children to the opposite side of the Darling. From this astonishment on their
part at our appearance, and especially from their flight, knowing well then who we
were, it was not improbable, that they knew the men were absent on some mischievous scheme, affecting us. I struck out of the former line of route for the purpose of extending my measurement to the junction of the rivers, and thus at length found the Darling within a zone of trees, which I had formerly taken for the line of the Murray. The banks were high and the channel was also much broader here. After tracing this river about four miles, I found that the still but turbid back-water, from the larger stream, nearly reached the top of the grassy bank of the other. At length I perceived the Murray before me, coming from the south-south-east, a course directly opposed to that in which I had followed the Darling for a mile. Both rivers next turned south-west, then westward, leaving a narrow tongue of land between, and from the point where they both turned westward, to their junction at the extremity of this ground between them, I found that the distance was exactly three-quarters of a mile. A bank of sand extended further, and on standing upon this and looking back, I recognised the view given in Captain Sturt’s work and the adjacent localities described by him. The state of the rivers was no longer, however, the same as when this spot was first visited. All the water visible now belonged to the Murray, whose course was rapid, while its turbid flood filled also the channel of the Darling, but was there perfectly still. We were then distant about a hundred miles from the rest of the party, who, before we could join them, might have had enough to do with the natives. I thought that in case it might ever be necessary to look for us, this junction was the most likely spot, where traces might be sought; and I therefore buried near the point, beside a tree marked with a large M and the word “Dig,” a phial, in which I placed a paper containing a brief statement of the circumstances under which we had arrived there, and our proposed route to the depot, adding also the names of the men with me. As the ground was soft, it was not necessary to dig; but merely to drop the phial into a hole made with the scabbard of my sabre; and I hoped that the bottle would escape in consequence, the notice of the natives.

The greater width and apparently important character of the Darling near its mouth, may perhaps be accounted for by supposing, that floods do not always occur in it and the Murray at the same time. The remoteness of the sources of the two rivers, and the consequent difference of climate, may occasion a flood in the one, while the waters of the other may be very low. That this is likely to happen sometimes, may be inferred from the difference between the relative state of the atmosphere on the eastern coast, and on the Darling. This difference seems to have been so considerable during the last journey, as materially to have affected our barometrical measurements, taken simultaneously with observations at Sydney. When the bed of the greater river is also the deepest, any flood descending by the other channel when the larger stream is low, must flow with greater force into that which is deeper, and in a soft and yielding soil may thus increase the width of its own channel. On the contrary, a flood coming down the greater river while the minor channel may happen to be dry, must first flow upwards some miles, and so fill this channel, and being thus affected both by the rising and subsidence of the greater stream, this process would have had a tendency to deepen and widen the
lower part of the Darling.
Chapter VI.

Return along the bank of the Murray — Mount Look-out — Appearance of rain — Chance of being cut off from the depôt by the river floods — A savage man at home — Tributaries of the Murray — A storm in the night — Traverse the land of lagoons before the floods come down — Traces of many naked feet along our old track — Camp of 400 natives — Narrow escape from the floods of the river — Piper overtakes two youths fishing in Lake Benanee — Description of the lake — Great rise in the waters of the Murray — Security of the depôt — Surrounded by inundations — Cross it in a bark canoe made by Tommy Camelast — Search for the junction of the Murrumbidgee and Murray — Mr. Stapylton reaches the junction of the rivers — Reception by the natives of the left bank — Passage of the cattle — Heavy rains set in — Row up the Murray to the junction of the Murrumbidgee — Commence the journey upwards along the left bank — Strange animal — Picturesque scenery on the river — Kangaroos numerous — Country improves as we ascend the river — A region of reeds — The water inaccessible from soft and muddy banks — Habits of our native guides — Natives very shy — Piper speaks to natives on the river — Good land on the Murray — Wood and water scarce — Junction of two branches — Swan hill.

RETURNING from the junction, towards our last camp on the Murray, we again crossed, when within a mile of that position, the dry channel, we had seen on proceeding towards the north-west. It contained some deep lagoons, on which were pelicans, but we crossed it where the bed was quite dry, and where it presented, like many other parts occasionally under water, striking proofs of the uncertainty of seasons in these parts of Australia. Numerous dead saplings of eight or ten years growth stood there, having evidently flourished in that situation, until the water again filled this channel, after so long an interval of drought, and killed them.

On reaching the firm ground beyond, we came upon some old graves, which had been disturbed, as the bones protruded from the earth. Piper said, that the dead were sometimes dug up and eaten; but this I could not believe.

By three P. M., we again occupied the remarkable point, where we had formerly encamped. It is at this point (Mount Look-out on the map), that the berg of the Murray terminates on the basin of the Darling, and thus commands, as before observed, an extensive view over the woody country to the westward. It would be an important position in any kind of warfare, and during my operations, I felt as strong upon it with my party, as if we had been in a citadel. I had now, I hoped, again got between the junction tribes and our old enemies, though the latter were still between us and our depôt; and thus any danger of the junction tribes uniting with those up the Murray, was less to be apprehended. Piper, however, discovered the track of a considerable number who had proceeded up the river the day before. Indeed, all the tracks of natives he found led upwards, and seeing no longer any of them there, we felt more anxious about the safety of the depôt. The barometer had
been falling gradually from the 1st inst., and this was another source of anxiety to me; for we were in no small danger of being separated from the other party by any such rise of the river, as might be expected after a heavy fall of rain.

June 4. — Notwithstanding the unpromising state of the mercurial column, the night had been fair, and in the morning the sky was clear. We lost no time in moving on, and we continued, until we were four miles beyond our former camp; and then crossing Gòlgol creek, we occupied a clear point of land between it and the Murray. As I was reconnoitring the ground for a camp, I observed a native on the opposite bank, and not being seen by him, I watched awhile the habits of a savage man “at home.” His hands were ready to seize any living thing; his step, light and noiseless as that of a shadow, gave no intimation of his approach; and his walk suggested the idea of the prowling of a beast of prey. Every little track or impression left on the earth by the lower animals, caught his keen eye, but the trees overhead chiefly engaged his attention; for deep in the heart of some of the upper branches he probably hoped to find the opossum on which he was to dine. The wind blew cold and keenly through the lofty trees on the river margin, yet that broad brawny savage was entirely naked. Had I been unarmed I had much rather have met a lion than that sinewy biped; but situated as I was, with a broad river flowing between us, while I overlooked him from a high bank, I ventured to disturb his meditations with a loud halloo: he stood still, looked at me for about a minute, and then retired with that easy bounding step, which may be termed a running walk, and exhibits an unrestrained facility of movement, apparently incompatible with dress of any kind. It is in bounding lightly, at such a pace, that with the additional aid of the “wàmmerah,” an aboriginal native can throw his spear with sufficient force and dexterity to kill the emu or kangaroo, even when at their speed. One or two families of natives afterwards appeared, huted on the river bank nearly opposite to our camp, and Piper opened a conversation with them, across the river. These people had heard nothing, of what had befallen the Benanee tribe. They had some years before seen white men go down and return up the river in a large canoe; and Piper also learnt from them, that the “Millewà” (Murray), had now a flood in it, having for some time previous been much lower than it was then; but they assured Piper, apparently with exultation, that it “flowed always.” The name of the creek, we had just crossed was Gòlgol, and it came from the low range of the same name, which I had observed on May 29. From what these natives said of Bengallo creek, I thought it might be that branch of the Lachlan, already mentioned as Boororàn, flowing westward under Wàrranary and other hills between the Murrumbidgee and the Darling.

June 5. — Rain had fallen during the night, but the day was favourable, though cloudy. I ventured on a straight line through the sand and bushes of eucalyptus dumosa, in order to cut off some miles of our beaten track, which was nearer the river, and rather circuitous. We crossed some sand-hills, the loose surface of which was bound down only by the prickly grass, already described. From these hills the view was extensive, and bounded on all sides by a perfectly level horizon. On one of them, a solitary tree drew my attention, and on examining it, I discovered with
much satisfaction, that it was of that singular kind, I had only once or twice seen last year in the country behind the Darling. The leaves, bark, and wood, tasted strongly of horseradish. We now obtained specimens of its flower and seed, both of which seemed very singular.* By the more direct route through the scrub this day, with what we gained yesterday, we were enabled to reach, at the usual hour for encamping, the red cliffs near the spot, where we formerly met the second division of the Darling tribe. I took up a position on the western extremity of the broken bank, overlooking an angle of the river, and commanding a grassy flat, where our cattle would be also secure. The weather became very boisterous after sunset, and our tents were so much exposed to the fury of the wind, that, at one time, I thought they would be blown into the river. The waters continuing to rise, the Murray now poured along nearly on a level with its banks, and how we should cross or avoid

“The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles”

that lay between us and the depot, if the river rose much longer, was a question for which I was prepared. On the other hand, the very cold and boisterous weather was in our favour, as being opposed to any assembling of the tribes, at points of difficulty along the line of our track, as they certainly ought to have done as good tacticians, for they never lost sight of our movements, while we were in that country.

*June 6.* — It had rained heavily during the night, but the morning was clear. As we continued our journey, the natives were heard in the woods, although none appeared. Fortunately for our progress, the floods had not reached the lagoons, and we succeeded in passing the whole of this low tract, so subject to inundations, without difficulty; and we finally encamped within four miles of the ground, where we had been obliged to disperse the Darling tribes. We pitched our tents on the eastern side of the lagoon, where we found an agreeable shelter from the storm in some scrub, which on former occasions, we should not have thought so comfortable a neighbour. We could now enter such thickets with greater safety; and in this we found a very beautiful, new, shrubby species of cassia, with thin papery pods, and numbers of the most brilliant yellow blossoms. On many of the branches the leaflets had fallen off, and left nothing but the flat leafy petioles to represent them. The pods were of various sizes and forms, on which account, if new, I would name it *C. heteroloba.*

*June 7.* — The ground had been so heavy for travelling during some days, that the cattle much needed rest; and as I contemplated the passage, in one day, of that *dumosa* scrub, occupying twenty miles along the tract before us, I made this journey a short one, moving only to our old encampment of May 26. The scrub here seemed more than usually rich in botanical novelties, for besides the *Murrayana* tree, we found a most beautiful Leucopogon allied to *L. rotundifolius* of Brown, with small heart-shaped leaves polished on the upper side, and striated on the lower, so as to resemble the most delicate shell-work.† Piper discovered, on examining the ground, where we had repulsed the Darling tribes, that they had left many of their spears, nets, &c. on our side of the river, and had afterwards returned for them, also
that a considerable number did not swim across, but had retired along the river bank. Upon the whole, it was estimated, that the numbers then in our rear, amounted to at least one hundred and eighty.

June 8. — As soon as daylight appeared this morning, we commenced our long journey through the scrub; and we discovered to our surprise, by the traces of innumerable feet along our track, that the natives had not, as I till then supposed, come along the river bank, but had actually followed us through that scrub. They have, nevertheless, a great dislike to such parts, not only because they cannot find any game there, but because the prickly spinifex-looking grass, is intolerable against their naked legs. While we were encamped in the scrub on May 25, they must have also passed that stormy night there, without either fire or water. On our way through it now, we discovered a new hoary species of Trichinium, very different from Brown’s *Tr. incanum*. The cattle, though they were jaded, accomplished the journey before sunset, and we halted beside the large lagoon adjacent to that part of the river, which was within three miles of our former camp; being the spot where the natives, in following us from lake Benanee, first emerged from the woods. The weather being still boisterous, we occupied a piece of low ground, where we were sheltered from the west or stormy quarter, by the river berg. On the brow of this height, and just behind our camp, I counted the remains of one hundred and thirty-five fires, at an old encampment of natives; and as one fire is seldom lighted for less than three persons, there must have been, at least, four hundred. The bushes placed around each fire, seemed to have been intended for that temporary kind of shelter, required for only one night.

June 9. — We proceeded this morning as silently as possible, for we were now approaching the haunts of the enemy, and I wished to come upon them by surprise, thinking that I might thereby sooner ascertain, whether any misfortune had befallen the depot. Two creeks lay in our way, and from the flood then in the Murray, it was likely, that they might be full of water, and the savages prepared to take advantage of the difficulty, we should then experience in crossing them. The first channel, we arrived at, which was quite dry when we formerly crossed, was now brimful of the muddy water of the Murray, and before we reached its banks, we heard the voices of natives on our right. We forded it, however, without annoyance, the water reaching only to the axles of the carts, but the current was very strong, and from the river, that is to say, upwards. We next reached our old camp, where we had passed that anxious night near Benanee. Here, to my great satisfaction, and indeed surprise, I found the bed of the larger creek, which occasioned us so great a detour, when we first met the natives, still quite dry at our old crossing place; being in the same state, in which it was then, although the flood water was now fast approaching it. We got over, however, with ease, and at length again traversed the plain which skirts the lake; and we were glad to find that tranquillity prevailed along its extensive shores. I perceived only one or two natives fishing, and I took Piper down to the beach to speak to them, being desirous also to examine at leisure, this fine sheet of water. We found on arriving there, that other natives had ran off from some huts on the shore, but Piper pursued those in the lake, for the purpose of obtaining information
about the tribe, until they ran so far out into the water, that they seemed at length up to their ears, and I was really afraid that the poor fellows, who were found to be only boys, would be drowned in endeavouring to avoid him. I could scarcely distinguish them at length from the numerous water-fowl floating around. In vain I called to their pursuer to come back, Piper was not to be baffled by boys, and continued to walk through the water like a giant, brandishing a short spear — as the boys would probably say to their tribe;

“Black he stood as night,
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shook a dreadful dart.”

At length, when apparently near the centre of the lake, he overtook one; and while leading him towards the shore, he ascertained, that the Darling tribe had returned to the lake only on the day before, having been ever since their dispersion on the 27th May, until this time, on the opposite bank of the Murray. That they were then fishing in a lagoon near the river, (where, in fact, we afterwards saw smoke, and heard their voices;) and that they had despatched three messengers to a portion of the tribe on the upper Darling, with the news of what had befallen them; of our progress in that direction; and requesting them to join them as soon as possible at the lake.

I perceived that the depth of water in this basin did not then, in any part, exceed 8 or 10 feet, although the surface was probably 20 feet below the level of the sandy beach, thus making 28 or 30 feet the extreme depth, when full. Now that I could examine it at leisure, I found that this fine lake was much more extensive than I had at first supposed. The breadth was about four miles, and I could see along it in a westerly direction at least six miles. Part of the north-western shore seemed to be clear of trees, but well covered with grass, and to slope gently towards the water. The whole was surrounded by a beach consisting of fine clean quartzose sand. This was an admirable station for a numerous body like that from the Darling. The cunning old men of that tribe seemed well aware, that there, they could neither be surrounded nor surprised; the approach to the lake from the river being also covered in both directions by deep creeks, passable only at certain places. Their choice of such a position was creditable to their skill in strategy, and consistent with their thorough knowledge of localities. I could spare no time to look at the country beyond this lake (or northward), as I wished to do. From what we learnt, however, we were satisfied that the dépôt was safe, and this fact relieved me from much anxiety. We had still to cross that creek or ana-branch which apparently supplies the lake, although it was then still dry. I had observed, that such ana-branches’ were deepest at the lower mouths, as if the river floods entered first there, and flowed upwards; although, before the river reached its maximum, a strong current would probably set downwards in the same channel, which would thus become at last a branch of the main stream. We reached our former camp on the Murray by 3 P.M., and once more pitched our tents on the bank of this river. By comparing its height, as measured formerly, with as much of it as remained above the waters, I found
that it had risen eight feet and a half. We were then within a short day’s journey of the depôt, but anxious enough still to know if it were safe.

June 10. — We started early, and by crossing a small plain, cut off half a mile of our former route. When within a few miles of the camp of Mr. Stapylton, we heard a shot, and soon discovered that it was fired by one of the men (Webb), rather a “mauvais sujet,” who had been transgressing rules by firing at a duck. We learnt from him, however, the agreeable news that the depôt had not been disturbed. It was now cut off from us by a deep stream which filled the creek it overlooked, and which flowed with a considerable current towards the Murray, having also filled Lake Stapylton to the brim. Mr. Stapylton and his party were well; and during the whole time, that we had been absent, the natives had never approached his camp. Such singular good fortune was more than I could reasonably have expected, and my satisfaction was complete, when I again met Stapylton, and saw the party once more united. The little native Ballandella’s leg was fast uniting, the mother having been unremitting in her care of the child. Good grass had also been found, so that the cattle had become quite fresh, and in deed looked well. I was ferried over Stapylton’s creek in a bark canoe, by Tommy Came-last, who also, by the same simple means, soon conveyed every article of equipment, and the rest of the party, across to the depôt camp.

We had now got through the most unpromising part of our task. We had penetrated the Australian Hesperides — although the golden fruit was still to be sought. We had accomplished so much, however, with only half the party, that nothing seemed impossible with the whole; and to trace the Murray upwards and explore the unknown regions beyond it, was a charming undertaking, when we had at length bid adieu, for ever, to the dreary banks of the Darling.

The first object of research was the actual junction of the Murrumbidgee with the Murray. I knew that the creek on which I had fixed the depôt camp, came from the former, and entered the latter; and that our depôt thus stood on a tract, surrounded by water, being between the creek and the main stream. We were already, in fact, on a branch-island, immediately adjacent to the junction we were in search of, and as I intended to cross the Murray either at or below that point, I determined to make an excursion in search of it next morning.

June 11. — Riding southward, I reached a bend of the river about two miles from our camp. While tracing the stream upwards from that point, we saw some natives running away from their fires. One of them, however, held up a green branch in each hand, and though as he ran he answered Piper, and a gin had left a heavy bag near us, yet he could not be prevailed on to stop. When Piper took the bag to the tribe, he was obliged to follow them nearly a mile, when a number at length stood still together, but at a considerable distance from us, and kept incessantly calling for tomahawks. From the number of huts along the river-bank, it was obvious that the inhabitants were numerous, and I was therefore the more surprised that our depôt could have continued so long near them, without their discovering it. After following the river upwards of eight miles, without meeting with the Murrumbidgee; I came to a place, where it seemed to have formerly had a different
channel, and to have left a basin, where the banks of the stream were of easy access, the breadth being only 110 yards. This spot was so favourable for effecting a passage, that I determined on moving the party to it at once; and to entrust to Mr. Stapylton, the further search for the junction of the Murrumbidgee, which could not be far from it.

June 12. — While I conducted the party to the point at which I intended to cross, Mr. Stapylton returned along our old route, to where we first traversed the now flooded creek, and by tracing it downward to the Murrumbidgee, and that river to the Murray, he ascertained the junction to be little more than a mile from the encampment, which I had taken up with the intention of crossing the Murray. Meanwhile no time had been lost there in pitching the boats and sinking them in the adjacent basin of still water, that the planks might swell and unite.

June 13. — I crossed early in the morning, and found the opposite bank very favourable for the cattle to get out; this being an object of much importance. I was met as favourably by the natives, on this first passage of the Murray, as I had been on our first approach to the Murrumbidgee. A small tribe came forward, and laid a number of newly made nets at my feet. I declined accepting anything, however, save a beautifully wrought bag, telling the owner, through Piper, that when the party should have passed to that side I would give him a tomahawk in return for it. As soon as the day had become rather warm, we endeavoured to swim the bullocks across, by driving them into the water at the mouth of the basin, where the river seemed most accessible. But the bank was soft and muddy, and the animals, when driven into the water, got upon an island in a shallow part, whence they could not be dislodged, much less compelled to swim from it to the opposite shore. Not a little time was thus lost, while only a few could be drawn over by ropes attached to the boats; and by which process one was accidentally drowned. This, was owing to the injudicious conduct of one of the men (Webb), who gave the animal rope instead of holding its head close aboard, so as to keep the mouth at least, above water. The drivers then represented, that the rest of the bullocks had been too long in the water to be able to cross before the next day; but having first tried their plan, I now determined to try my own; and I directed them to take the cattle to the steepest portion of the bank, overhanging the narrow part of the river, and just opposite to the few bullocks, which had already gained the opposite shore. Notwithstanding the weakness of the animals this measure succeeded, for on driving them down the steep bank, so that they fell into the water, the whole at once turned their heads to the opposite shore, and reached it in safety. We next swam the horses over by dragging each separately at the stern of a boat, taking care to hold the head above water. Thus by sunset everything except one or two carts and the boat-carriage, had been safely got across.

The natives beyond the Murray, were differently behaved people from those of the Darling; for although one group sat beside that portion of our party, which was still on the right bank: another, at a point of the opposite shore, to the eastward of our new camp, and a third near my tent, in the neck of a peninsula, on which I found we had landed; not one of them caused us any anxiety or trouble. It was to
the last party that I owed the tomahawk, and I went up with it, as they sat at their fires. They were in number about twenty, and unaccompanied by any gins. The man, who had given me the bag, seemed to express gratitude for the tomahawk by offering me another net, also one which he wore on his head; and he presented to me his son. He saw the two native boys who then accompanied me as interpreters, dressed well, and apparently happy, and I had no doubt the poor man was willing to place his own son under my care. I endeavoured to explain that we had no more tomahawks, that we had given none to any other tribe upon the Murray, and that our men were apt to be “very saucy” with their guns, if too much troubled. Experience had taught me the necessity for thus perpetually impressing on the minds, even of the most civil of these savages, that although inoffensive, we were strong; an idea not easily conceived by them. They, however, come forward and sat down near us, until very heavy rain, which fell in the night, obliged them to seek their huts.

June 14. — The morning dawned under the most steady fall of rain that I had seen during the journey; and this happened just after new moon, a time when I had hoped for a favourable change in the weather. Everything was got across the river this day, and we were prepared for the survey of a new region. I was occupied with the maps of the country, which we had just left, sufficiently to be regardless of the rain, even if it had continued to fall many days; and very thankful was I; that we had got thus far, without having been impeded by the weather.

June 15. — The rain ceased in the morning, and the barometer had risen so much, that no more was to be apprehended then; yet the blacksmith had still some work to do to the boat-carriage, and we were, therefore, obliged to halt another day. In the afternoon, I proceeded in one of the boats up the river to the junction of the Murrumbidgee; and I ascertained that there was a fresh in that river also. It was certainly narrower at the mouth than at Weyeba; and here indeed some fallen trees almost crossed the stream. There was a hollow or break in the bank of the Murray, about 100 yards lower down, which seemed to have been once an outlet of the Murrumbidgee. The opening formed a deep section through a stratum of ferruginous sandstone, and was fully equal to the present breadth of the tributary river. On pulling higher up, the Murray seemed rather smaller above this junction, although still a splendid stream. The natives on this side, told Piper that the Darling tribe from the other, had danced a corrobory with them about six weeks before, and promised to return in one moon. They also inquired whether Piper had seen any of that tribe, as they were waiting for us whitefellows, to which Piper answered that he had not. I blamed him for this reply, and asked why, he did not say that we had been obliged to fire upon and kill some of them: but he said he could not tell them that, “because they would hate him so.”

June 16. — We left our encampment, and commenced our travels up the left bank of the Murray, over ground which seemed much better than any we had seen on the right bank. We crossed grassy plains bounded by sand hills on which grew pines (callitris); and open forests of goborro (or box tree), prevailed very generally nearer the river. Where this tree grew, we found the ground still good for travelling upon,
notwithstanding the heavy rain, in consequence, apparently, of the argillaceous character of the soil; for in the plains of red earth, which before the last fall of rain we had found the best, the horses now sank above their fetlocks, and the carts could scarcely be dragged along. In the course of the day, we passed several broad lagoons, in channels which probably were ana-branches of the river in high floods. On the largest plain crossed by the party, four emus appeared, and one of them was killed after a fine chase, by the dogs. The river appeared to come from the eastsouth-east, but the course was very tortuous, and we encamped at a reach, where it seemed to come from the south. The most remarkable incident of this day’s journey, was the discovery of an animal, of which I had seen only the head among the remains found in the caves at Wellington Valley. This animal was of the size of a young, wild rabbit, and of nearly the same colour, but had a broad head, terminating in a long very slender snout, like the narrow neck of a wide bottle; and it had no tail. The fore-feet were singularly formed, resembling those of a hog; and the marsupial opening was downwards, and not upwards, as in the kangaroo and others of that class of animals. This quadruped was discovered on the ground by our native guides, but when pursued it took refuge in a hollow tree, from which they extracted it alive, all of them declaring that they had never before seen an animal of that kind.

June 17. — The cattle were not brought up until ten o’clock, an unusual circumstance, and one which curtailed the day’s journey. The course of the river compelled us to travel southward, and even to the westward of south; but we found better ground by keeping on the open forest-land of box or goborro, which in general occupied a very extensive space, between the river and the bergs of soft red sand-hills on which grew the *callitris*. The plains covered with *salsolœ*, which, as I have just remarked, before the rain, were considered to afford the best surface for travelling on, had now become so soft as to be almost impassable, at least by our wheels, and I this day avoided them as much as I could. The margin, where the box or “goborro” grew, was, in many parts, hollowed into lagoons or ana-branches of the river, so that it was desirable to shape our line of route as closely by the base of these *bergs* or sand-hills, as possible. On crossing a point of one of them, we came upon a most romantic looking scene, where a flood branch had left a serpentine piece of water, enclosing two wooded islands of rather picturesque character; the whole being overhung by the steep and bushy slope of the hill. The scenery of some lakes thus formed, was very fine, especially when their rich verdure and lofty trees were contrasted with the scrub, which covered the sandhills nearest the river, where a variety of shrubs, such as we had not previously seen, formed a curious foreground. Amongst them was a creeper with very large pods, two of which were brought to me last year while on the Darling, by one of the men, who could not afterwards find the tree again, or say what it was like. We also found one *Eucarya Murrayana* with young, unripe fruit. (See plate 28, which represents the general character of the scenery on the Murray.) The country abounded with kangaroos. On ascending some grassy ridges, I perceived a verdant plain which extended as far as I could see to the westward. It was bounded on the south, not by scrub, but by a
forest of large trees; and the horizon beyond presented something like an outline of hills, a refreshing sight, accustomed as we had been for several months to a horizon as level as that of the ocean. After travelling about three miles, we were obliged to turn westward by a creek or ana-branch of the river, having on its banks large yarra trees, resembling those in the main stream. It prevented us from approaching the Murray during the rest of the day, and we finally encamped on its margin, having found there most excellent grass.

June 18. — Continuing along the firm ground between the bergs and this creek, we pursued a course, which for some miles, bore to the westward of south. We passed through forests of the box or goborro, under which grew a luxuriant crop of grass, and two of these flats, (on which we saw yarra trees also,) stretched away to the westward, breaking the elsewhere unvaried wilderness of sand-hills and scrub. On crossing one of these forest flats, we heard the sound of the natives’ hatchet on some hollow trees before us; and Piper, as usual, hastened forward to communicate with them, but in vain; for as soon as they saw him, they ran like kangaroos, leaving the fortunate opossum, which they had been seeking, still alive in his hole in the tree. At length we got clear of the creek, on reaching a bend of the river, not far beyond the spot where we had seen the natives. The Murray was flowing rapidly in a narrower channel, and within two or three feet of the top of the banks. The country appeared, on the whole, superior to any that we had seen on the other side of this river. The grassy flats backed by hills covered with callitris seemed very eligible for cattle runs, the chief objection to them being only, that the banks of the river were so steep and yielding, that the water was in general inaccessible. The breadth seldom exceeded 60 or 70 yards; and I suspected, that we might be already above the junction of some stream on the right bank, especially as the course came now so much from the southward. On crossing the extremity of a sandhill, about two miles from the spot where we afterwards encamped, I perceived that reeds covered a vast region before us. They grew everywhere, even under the trees, and extended back from the channel of the river as far as I could see; and no alternative presenting itself, we endeavoured to face them. The lofty ash-hills of the natives, used chiefly for roasting the “balyan” (or bulrush), a root found only in such places, again appeared in great numbers. We soon came upon a lagoon about a mile in circumference, and surrounded on all sides by high reeds. One or two smooth grassy hills arose among them, but the ground, even where they grew, was as firm and good for travelling upon as any that we had recently crossed. They were no impediment to a man or bullock in motion, but grew to the height of about seven or eight feet. Grass was also to be found among them, and I was willing to encamp there; but the difficulty was in finding a spot where the cattle could approach the water. The flood ran high in the deep and rapid river; yet the margin was covered with high reeds; and, although I ultimately encamped near a small lagoon within the reeds, the cattle would not venture to drink at it, instinctively shrinking back from the muddy margin. In the course of the evening, one animal fell into the river, and was extricated with great difficulty, and after much digging in the bank. One remarkable difference between this river and the Murrumbidgee was, that in the
latter, even where reeds most prevailed, a certain space near the bank remained tolerably clear: whereas, on this river, the reeds grew most thickly and closely on its immediate banks, thus presenting a much less imposing appearance than the Murrumbidgee, with its firmer banks, crowned with lofty forests of “yarra.” Each Australian river seems to have some peculiar character, sustained with remarkable uniformity throughout the whole course.

June 19. — Piper, although so far from his country, could still point directly to it, but he had grown so homesick, that he begged Burnett not to mention Bathurst. To return, except with us, was quite out of the question, and as we still receded, he dragged, as the phrase is, a lengthening chain. He studied my visage, however, and could read my thoughts too well, to doubt that I too hoped to return. The whole management of the chase now devolved on him and the two boys, his humble servants; and this native party usually explored the woods with our dogs, for several miles in front of the column. The females kept nearer the party, and often gave us notice of obstacles, in time to enable me to avoid them. My question on such occasions was, Dāgo nyöllong yannāgary? (Which way shall we go?) to which one would reply, pointing in the proper direction, Yalyāi nyöllong-yannār! (Go that way.) Depending chiefly on the survey for my longitude, my attention was, for the most part, confined to the preservation of certain bearings in our course, by frequent observations of the pocket compass; but in conducting carts where no roads existed, propitiating savage natives, taking bearings and angles, observing rocks, soil and productions, so much care and anxious attention was necessary, that I believe I was indebted to the sympathy even of my aboriginal friends, for the zealous aid they at all times afforded.

Notwithstanding the obvious necessity for closely watching the cattle, they had been suffered to ramble nine miles up the river, during the night; and were not brought back to the camp until noon. This unusual and untoward circumstance was the more surprising, as the whole country along the river bank was covered with good grass. Whether they had instinctively set off towards the upper country, where most of them were bred; or that want of water, after a hard day’s work, had occasioned such restlessness, it was difficult to say; but they wandered even beyond the camp, that we reached this day, in a journey commenced, however, only at half-past 12. The natives peeped over the reeds at us, from a considerable distance; and some of those whom Piper saw, when in search of the men with the cattle, immediately jumped into the river, carrying their spears and bommerengs with them. We had not proceeded above a mile and a half, when I perceived among the reeds close to the berg, on which we were travelling, a small, deep and still branch of the river, apparently connected with numerous others, in all of which the water was quite still, although it had the same muddy colour, as that flowing in the river, and they seemed to be equally deep. These still channels wound in all directions among the reeds. Further on, the water was not even confined to such canals, large spaces between them being inundated, and lofty gum (or yarra) trees stood even in the water. Light appeared at length, through the wood before us, which soon terminated on a sea of reeds, bounded only by the horizon. On ascending some
sand-hills confining this basin of reeds on our side, I observed a low grassy ridge, with pines upon it, and forming a limit to the reedy basin, except in a part of the horizon which bore 14° S. of E. A broad sheet of water (probably only an inundation occasioned by the late rain), filled the centre of the reedy space. About six miles from our last camp, we came upon the river flowing with a strong current; and at its full width, the water not more than a foot below the level of the right bank. Thus the Murray seemed to flow through that reedy expanse, unmarked in its course by trees or bushes, although one or two distant clumps of yarra probably grew on the banks of the permanent stream. At two miles further on, these trees again grew plentifully, close under the berg along which we travelled, and where I hoped again to see the river. We found, however, that the yarras only enclosed shallow lagoons; and on a small oasis of dry ground near one of them, we encamped for the night. A species of solanum forming a very large bush, was found this day in the scrub, also several interesting shrubs, and among them some fine specimens of that rare one, the Eucarya Murrayana. But in all these scrubs on the Murray, the Fusanus acuminatus is common, and produces the “quandang” nut (or kernel), in such abundance, that it and gum acacia may in time, become articles of commerce in Australia.*

June 20. — The morning was frosty and clear. Soon after we left our encampment, we came to a ridge or berg, bare of trees, with the exception of a fine clump on the highest part; and behind it was an extensive flat which was also destitute of wood, only a few atriplex bushes appearing upon it. I sent the carts across this flat, while I rode along the crest of the ridge. The sea of reeds skirted this ridge on the north, and a meandro-serpentine canal, full of water, intersected the reedy expanse in almost all directions. The river flood had not reached it, at least, if it had, the water continued unmoved by any current. I perceived some smoke arising from the reeds at the distance of a mile, and at the extreme point of a tongue of firmer ground, which extended into them. Piper went boldly up to the fire, and found three families of blacks, in as many canoes on the river. They told him, there was a junction of rivers some way a-head of us; and I understood him to say, that part of these natives had come across from Waljeers. The country opened more and more as we proceeded, and the basin of reeds was more extensive. The bergs on the opposite side (on which I had fixed several points) were distant, on an average, about eight miles, which was the breadth, therefore, of that low margin of reeds. The winding borders of this plain terminated on our side, in rich grassy flats, some of which extended back farther than I could discover; and on two of these plains, I perceived fine sheets of water, surrounded by shining verdure, and enclosed by sheltering hills clothed with callitris pyramidalis. One or two spots seemed very favourable for farms or cattle stations. The soil in these grassy flats was of the richest description: indeed the whole of the country covered by reeds, seemed capable of being converted into good wheat land, and of being easily irrigated, at any time by the river. This stream was also navigable when we were there, and produce might be conveyed by it at such seasons to the sea shore. There was no miasmatic savannah, nor any dense forest to be cleared; the genial southern
breeze played over these reedy flats, which may one day be converted into cloverfields. For cattle stations, the land possessed every requisite, affording excellent winter grass, back among the scrubs to which cattle usually resort at certain seasons; while at others they could fatten on the rich grass of the plains, or during the summer heat enjoy the reeds amid abundance of water. We found on these plains an addition to the common grasses.* The fine open country afforded extensive views, and to the eastward and south-east, we saw hills with grassy sides, and crowned with callitris. Through the intervening valley flowed the Murray, the course of which was seldom visible, as no trees grew along its border. Under such circumstances we could not encamp upon the bank, neither could it be safely approached by cattle; and our prospect of obtaining wood, and watering our animals was this day rather uncertain. At length we came upon a path, which Mr. Stapylton pursued amongst high reeds for a mile, without reaching the river, as we both expected. I continued to travel towards four trees on the side of a green hill, still at a great distance, but in the direction in which I wished to proceed. When we arrived there, just before sunset, we had the good fortune to find close under the hill a bend of the Murray, and to discover the junction of another river or branch with it, at this point. Within the margin, we found a small pond quite accessible to the cattle, and behind the hill was an extensive flat covered with the richest grass. Here, therefore, we could encamp most contentedly, beside a clear hill, always a desirable neighbour, and an accessible river. We were also thus enabled to determine the junction, perhaps, of two rivers; an important object in geography. The latitude was 35° 19' 43" S.

The lesser stream was about 50 yards wide, but below the junction, the main stream divided into two branches, so that I was doubtful whether this might not be only the termination of an ana-branch. From the falling off of the bergs on the distant right bank, and the approach of a line of lofty trees from the same quarter, I was almost convinced that some junction took place thereabouts, as indeed the natives last seen had informed us. During the day columns of smoke arose behind us in the direction where we had seen these natives, and further eastward we perceived a widespread conflagration, doubtless caused by them, although this expression of ire troubled us but little, so long as the flames did not approach our route. The scrubs now receded from the river, but the curious variety of acacias, they contained, still drew our attention towards them. We found this day several which were new. One with a rigid hard leaf, not in flower, resembled, in many respects, the A. *farinosa* met with two days later, but it was perfectly smooth in all its parts.* Another appeared to be related to A. *hispidula*, but with much narrower leaves, without the ragged cartilaginous margin of that species.
Chapter VII.

Exploring through a fog — Lakes — Circular lake of Boga — Clear grassy hills — Natives on the lake — Scarcity of fuel on the bank of a deep river — Different character of two rivers — Unfortunate result of Piper’s interview with the natives of the lake — Discovery of the Jerboa in Australia — Different habits of the savage and civilized — A range visible in the south — Peculiarities in the surface of the country near the river — Water of the lakes brackish or salt — Natives fly at our approach — Arrival in the dark, on the bank of a water-course — Dead saplings of ten years’ growth in the ponds — Discovery of Mount Hope — Enter a much better country — Limestone — Curious character of an original surface — Native wears for fish — Their nets for catching ducks — Remarkable character of the lakes — Mr. Stapynton’s excursion in search of the main stream — My ride to Mount Hope — White Anguillaria — View from Mount Hope — Return of Mr. Stapynton.

June 21. — AMONG the reeds on the point of ground between the two rivers, was a shallow lagoon, where swans and other wild fowl so abounded that, although half a mile from our camp, their noise disturbed us through the night. I, therefore, named this somewhat remarkable and isolated feature, Swan-hill; a point which may probably be found to mark the junction of two fine streams.

I wished to devote the day to meteorological observations, as pre-arranged with my friends in the Colony, Mr. Dunlop and Captain King; but a thick fog in the morning promised a day of clear settled weather, and I was obliged to proceed; I observed the barometer, however, every hour during the journey. For several miles, we travelled through the mist, over plains partly covered with reeds and partly with grass. Having reconnoitred the country, on the previous evening, I had no difficulty in pursuing the direction, I then chose for this day’s route. At eleven A. M. when the fog arose, I perceived a low grassy ridge before us; and a fine lake covered with black swans, ducks and other water-fowl, was afterwards discovered beyond it. We passed along the southern shore of this lake, thus keeping it between us and the river. It was surrounded with reeds and bulrushes, and appeared to be supplied by a small feeder from the river, like other similar lakes, which we had seen near rivers elsewhere: but the water could pass by such small channels only during the highest floods, for the lake was even then very low, although the flood in the river was evidently high. This lake was about three miles in circumference. As I ascended a grassy hill two miles beyond it, I perceived on my left another smaller lake; with no reeds about it, but with grass growing to the water’s edge; and there we also found a curious little plant, covered with short, imbricated silvery leaves, but not in flower. Behind the lake, or away from the river, was the low scrub of the back country, in which I again saw, just coming into flower, the *Cassia heteroloba* discovered on the 6th instant. On reaching the top of the hill, I discovered to the eastward a third lake, much larger than either of the others, and apparently of a different character;
for its banks were higher, and it contained one or two small islets, while the surface of the water was covered with some brown aquatic weed. It was bounded on the east, by a ridge which seemed green, smooth, and quite clear of trees. A low neck of firm ground separated the lake first seen from this; and it was also connected with the hill on which I then stood. In one place, a narrow line of high reeds appearing likely to impede us, Mr. Stapylton rode forward to examine it. As he reached the spot much smoke suddenly arose, evidently from natives, whom he had thus accidentally disturbed. He nevertheless pressed forward amongst the reeds, and soon reappeared on the green hill beyond, thus shewing us, there was no obstruction, and the carts proceeded through. These reeds enveloped a small creek or hollow, through which the floods of the river supplied the lake. In one part was a pool of water, and in another the bottom was so soft that the united strength of two teams was necessary to draw out the wheel of a cart which sunk into it. We found there the huts of natives, who had fled on Mr. Stapylton’s approach, having left their fishing spears, skin cloaks, shields, &c. They soon appeared on the lake in twenty-four canoes, all making for the little isle in the centre; which being covered with reeds, was probably their stronghold, according to their modes of warfare. The aquatic tribes, as I have elsewhere observed, invariably take to the water in times of alarm, and from among the reeds in their little island, these people could easily throw their spears at any assailant, without being themselves exposed, or even seen. Piper found in their huts some fragments of blue earthenware, nicely attached with gum to threads, by which it would appear, that the gins wore them in their hair as ornaments.

Being desirous to learn the native names of these lakes, and to obtain some information respecting the rivers; I requested Piper and “the two Tommies” to remain behind for the purpose of obtaining a parley, if possible. I should indeed have encamped by this lake, had not the environs been entirely destitute of wood. Before us, however, although at the distance of some miles, was a line of majestic trees which appeared to mark the course of a river; and I had directed Mr. Stapylton to lead the party through the reeds, along an interval which appeared to be chiefly covered with grass, and by which I expected, he would arrive at the line of high trees. Meanwhile I was occupied alone to the southward of the lake, surveying it. Near the margin I found a small fragment of highly vesicular lava. The ground traversed by the party was firm, and when I overtook it within a mile and a half of the line of trees, we came suddenly on a river full to the very margin, and flowing slowly to the westward; its width being about 50 yards. Not a tree grew near it, nor did I see any indication of a river, until I reached the bank.

The ground presented an unbroken level, or declined slightly towards the line of trees which still marked, as I supposed, the course of the Murray. We had no means of reaching it, however, nor any alternative left but to change our route towards the east-south-east, and travel along the bank of this river, in hopes it might at last approach the trees. We found, on the contrary, that it receded from them towards a country without a single bush; and thus while the sun was setting on a raw frosty evening, we could not encamp for want of fuel, although water and grass were
abundant. One solitary group of trees seeming to be on our side of the stream, though distant about two miles, Mr. Stapylton and myself galloped towards them, the party following. There too we found the river, separating us even from these trees, three very small ones only being on our side, and likely to fall, when cut, into the stream. It had become quite dark before we got to them, but by lighting some reeds, the rest of the party found its way to us; and there we encamped, although the green wood could not be made to burn, while the thermometer stood so low as 29°. We were perhaps more sensible of the want of fuel, from the abundance so apparent on the banks of what seemed another river at so small a distance across the open plain. These streams flowing so near each other, seemed in this respect distinctly different; the one being edged with only reeds, the other with lofty trees, like almost every interior river of New South Wales. Piper came in soon after the carts arrived, bringing a sad account of his interview with the natives. It appeared, that as soon as our party had proceeded to some distance from the lake, twelve men sprang from among the reeds, armed with spears, boomerangs, &c. and when Piper accosted one of them, inquiring the name of the lake, “I wont tell you,” was the answer (“murry coolah,” i.e. very angrily). They then told him, there was “too much ask” about him, — and they blamed him for bringing the whitefellows there; adding that they did not like him; and an old man calling to the rest to kill him, for that he was no good, two spears were immediately thrown. These Piper parried with his carabine, and then instantly discharged it at the foremost, wounding him in the right jaw. The rest immediately disappeared among the reeds. The wounded savage fell; but Piper loaded again, and killed him by another shot through the body. Such was Piper’s story. I blamed him very much for firing at the wounded man, and I regretted exceedingly the result of his interview. I was besides most anxious to maintain a good understanding with these people.

The spears used on this occasion were made of reed, and pointed with bones of the emu; but we saw at their huts several heavy jagged ones, of very hard wood, for the purposes of fishing. The natives wore cloaks made of kangaroo skins.

A very curious and rare little quadruped, was this day found by the two Tommies, who had never before seen such an animal. Its fore and hind legs resembled in proportion those of the kangaroo; and it used the latter by leaping on its hind quarters in the same manner as that animal. It was not much larger than a common field-mouse, but the tail was longer in proportion to the rest of the body, even than that of a kangaroo, and terminated in a hairy brush about two inches long.* (Pl. 29.)

We also discovered a beautiful new species of the Cape genus Pelargonium, which would be an acquisition to our gardens. I named it *P. Rodneyanum*, † in honour of Mrs. Riddell at Sydney, grand-daughter of the famous Rodney.

At this camp, where we lay shivering for want of fire, the different habits of the aborigines and us, strangers from the north, were strongly contrasted. On that freezing night, the natives, according to their usual custom, stripped off all their clothes, previous to lying down to sleep in the open air, their bodies being doubled up around a few burning reeds. We could not understand how they could lay thus naked, when the earth was white with hoar frost; and they were equally at a loss to
know, how we could sleep in our tents without a bit of fire to keep our bodies warm. For the support of animal heat, fire and smoke are almost as necessary to them, as clothes are to us. The naked savage, however, is not without some reason on his side, for fire is the only means he possesses to warm his body when cold, and it is, therefore, the only comfort he ever knows; whereas we require both fire and clothing, and have no conception of the intensity of enjoyment imparted to the naked body of a savage by the glowing embrace of a cloud of smoke in winter. In summer also, he may enjoy, unrestrained by dress, the luxury of a bath in any pool, when not content with the refreshing breeze that fans his sensitive body during the intense heat. Amidst all this exposure, the skin of the Australian native remains as smooth and soft as velvet, — and it is not improbable, that the obstructions of drapery would constitute the greatest of his objections, in such a climate, to the permanent adoption of a civilized life.

June 22. — A night of hard frost was succeeded by a beautifully clear morning. The refraction brought the summits of a distant range above the south-east horizon; and the sight was so welcome to us, after having found Australia a mere desert from the want of hills, that I was at a loss for a name to give these, that should sufficiently express my satisfaction. I found the breadth of the river at our camp, to be 50 yards; and the velocity, 4 chains (or 88 yards) in 127 seconds, being something less than a mile and a half per hour; and the height of the bank above the water to be 18 inches.

The entirely open country through which the nearer river or branch continued to flow, and the lofty and remarkable trees on the banks of the other, enabled me, in chaining along our route, to survey the course of both, by fixing points on the more distant, and tracing the nearer. At length, we approached a better wooded country, where clear green hills appeared to our right. I ascended the highest of these and discovered a vast plain beyond, which appeared to be, or rather, to have been, the bed of an extensive lake. I was now struck with the uncommon regularity of the curve described by the hill or ridge, having previously observed the same peculiarity in that which overlooked the lake of the savage tribe. We passed over some slight undulations, covered with luxuriant grass, and were not sorry to see a wood of pines (or callitris) on our left. Large gum-trees (yarra) grew beyond, and the general course, I wished to pursue, leading towards them, I hoped to reach there an angle of the river. We found, however, that they hung over a small ana-branch only, in which the muddy flood-water of the river was then flowing. This stream was nevertheless exactly what we wanted, being safely accessible to our cattle, which the river itself was not. We, therefore, pitched our tents on a spot, where there was excellent grass, and wood was again to be had in great abundance. We found in the adjacent scrub, a remarkably rigid bush, with stiff sickle-shaped blunt leaves, and mealy balls of flowers not quite expanded; * also an acacia resembling A. hispidula, but the leaves were quite smooth and much smaller. † In approaching this spot we had passed along a low sandy ridge, every way resembling a beach, but covered with pines and scrub. A bare grassy hill extended southward from each end of it; and the intervening hollow, containing some water, was evidently the bed of a lake, nearly
June 23. — The most eastern of these smooth, bare ridges, was immediately above our camp, and observing in it the regularity of curve which I had noticed in others, I was struck with the analogy, and in these ridges being always on the eastern shore of hollows or lakes, while the western was irregularly indented, and was in some parts so abrupt as to have the character of cliffs. The southern end of the ridges was generally the highest. Perceiving no reeds near the lake nor any birds upon it, I sent Mr. Stapylton to taste the water, which he found to be quite salt, like that of the sea. This and several of the other basins, were surrounded by high ground, and were without any communication with the river.

I passed soon after another of these circular basins, which, although much smaller, presented similar features; and had some rather brackish water in pools in the deepest part. During the day’s journey we passed several ridges, connected with extensive basins in a similar manner, and in the bottom of one of these, I perceived *polygonum junceum* growing amongst yarra trees. On the western shore, we saw the remains of large native ash-hills. They were old and overgrown with bushes, but they proved, that this lake had once contained muscles, and the balyan or bulrush, a root eaten by the natives, and cooked in such ovens as these. The other lake was surrounded by a circle of yarra trees, and had but recently become dry, the earth in it being still without vegetation, and covered with innumerable native companions, and white cockatoos. Finding no indication of the river, notwithstanding the presence of so many yarra trees, I turned to the east towards another line of them, which appeared still more promising. There, however, we encountered the dry bed only, of a small creek, which we crossed and continued eastward, passing over much grassy land, and through much wood of the box or goborro species of eucalyptus. We travelled thus, upwards of seven miles beyond the dry creek, without discovering any sign of the river, although we had previously traced it so far, in pursuing a much more southerly direction. The natives were heard in this wood chopping with their stone hatchets; but they fled at our approach. On entering a small plain, we saw their deserted fire on the opposite side. Beyond this, another plain, still more extensive, appeared before us, and a few yarra trees on the horizon gave some promise of water, though not of the river. Before I reached the spot, and while far a-head of the party, darkness had overtaken us; but I found there a deep creek, with some water in large ponds; and by lighting a fire the carts at length came up to us, after a journey of nineteen miles. This seemed, by moonlight, such a singular place, that I was anxious for daylight to see at what we had arrived.

June 24. — I expected to find the main stream not far from the ponds, but the morning light shone over a plain, which extended in a north-western direction to the very horizon. It was bounded on the north by very distant trees, which had not the usual appearance of trees distinguishing the river. The country, on all sides, seemed perfectly level, and if there was any exception at all, it was in the box forests to the southward whence we had come, and where the land seemed lower than the plain on which we had encamped. The bed of the creek was full twenty feet below the general surface. The symmetry of the curves described by it was remarkable,
and it was rendered still more striking by a narrow line of rushes, which had grown on the margin of the water, when it had stood at a much higher level. A concentric border of grass of uniform breadth, grew on the slope above the rushes, and one of fragrant herbs below the line of rushes, all being at nearly equal distances; while a single row of bare poles, measuring from three to five inches in diameter, stood where a row of saplings had grown in what had, at one time, been the very centre of the stream. These poles were the remains of yarra trees eight or ten years old, and marked the extent, doubtless, of a long period of drought, which had continued, until some high flood killed them. The grass was excellent over the whole of the plains on both sides; and from a tree near the camp, Burnett descried a goodly hill bearing 36½° E. of S., and distant, as afterwards ascertained, twenty-two miles.

Near our camp we found some recent fire-places of the natives, from which they must have hastily escaped on our approach, for in the branches of a tree, they had left their net bags containing the stalks of a vegetable that had apparently undergone some culinary process, which gave them the appearance of having been half boiled. Vegetables are thus cooked, I was told, by placing the root or plant between layers of hot embers, until it is heated and softened. The stalks found in the bag resembled those of the potato, and they could only be chewed, such food being neither nutritious nor palatable, for it tasted only of smoke.* A very large ash-hill, raised no doubt by repeated use in such simple, culinary operations, and probably during the course of a great many years, was close to our camp. On its ample surface were just visible the vestiges of a very ancient grave, once encompassed by exactly the same kind of ridges that I had observed around the inhabited tomb, near the junction of the Lachlan and Murrumbidgee. The natives were at length seen about two miles off, on the skirts of the wood; and although I sent forward the overseer and Piper, each carrying a large green bough, they all ran away, leaving behind them their spears and skin cloaks.

While the party proceeded eastward along the bank of Moonlight creek, as we named it, I sent Mr. Stapylton across the wide plain to ascertain, if possible, whether the river flowed through it, without the usual indication of trees on its banks, as we had found to be the case below. Mr. Stapylton found beyond the northern limits of the plain, amongst yarra trees, an ana-branch only, but containing quite clear and still water.

The course of the creek, which I in the meantime traced, first led me to the north-east, where high trees seemed to mark its course, to the bed of the river; but a smaller branch, still dry, extended southward from it, which, on returning to the main party, I found it desirable that the carts should cross. We next passed for three miles through a forest of gaborro, and then crossed a plain three miles in extent. Beyond the plain we approached a promising line of lofty yarra trees, but found it shaded only a hollow subject to inundations. Two miles and a half further we came to another similar line of trees, and we found within its shade an ana-branch full of clear water. A little in advance, a much deeper branch afforded a good spot for our camp, as I intended to cross it, by some means in the afternoon, and seek for the
river. The plains we had crossed this day, were covered with excellent grass; and in many places, detached groups of trees gave to the country a park-like appearance, very unlike anything on the banks of the Darling.

After crossing the creek by means of a fallen tree, I found the ground beyond to be of the richest description, with excellent grass and lofty yarra trees growing upon it. I passed through two separate strips of high reeds, extending north-east and south-west; but I found they only enveloped lagoons of soft mud; and seeing no appearance of the river at two miles from the camp, I returned. We found on the hills a little bush, very like European heaths, having the branches covered with small three-cornered leaves, and tipped with clusters of small pink flowers.*

June 25. — The country, we passed over this day, was upon the whole richer in point of grass, than any we had seen since we left Sydney; I, therefore, suspected that the soil had some better rock for a basis than sandstone; and, I had reason to believe, that it was limestone, from indications of subsidence which I observed on the surface. We had discovered no similar country during either of the two former journeys. There were none of the acacia trees we had seen on the lower Bogan; while the grasses were also different from any of those on the Darling. A fine new species of Daviesia very like a Grevillea, and forming a most singular bush, grew here. It had no leaves, but green branches formed into short, broad, thick, vertical plates arranged spirally, and much lower than the little axillary clusters of flowers, which were just beginning to open.† We also met with bushes of the rare Trymalium majoranafolium, a hoary bush, with clusters of small grey flowers, enclosed, when young, in a bright, large membranous involucre. Once or twice, distant rows of lofty gum-trees appeared to indicate the line of the river; but on approaching them, we found either dry hollows, or the same ana-branch, as it seemed, on which we last encamped. I observed at several places, that the more dense box-forests near this branch of the river, were skirted with ground broken into low undulations, six or eight feet square. These appeared where there was great depth of soil, and were probably caused by deep rents or cracks opened at the first induration of the deposit, and subsequently modified by rain, and other atmospheric agents. This seems to be the state of the deep deposits at the present day, where, from the absence of trees, the surface of tenacious soils remains visible. I was first struck with this effect in the clays near the Darling, where alternate saturation and desiccation seemed to check all vegetation. On the upper parts of the Bogan also, I saw these inequalities on a very large scale, but there, the hollows still exist under dense forests of casuarinæ, and are so deep and extensive, that I, for some time, was induced to examine them in hopes of finding water; but from a small hole or fissure still remaining there, I soon learnt that any such search was hopeless.

When we had travelled some miles, the hill, we had seen from the camp on Moonlight creek, bore exactly south by compass, and appeared to be about half the distance, that it was from us when discovered. At 3½ miles, we again came upon the ana-branch; a slight current now appeared in it, and the water was tinged with the turbid colour of the main stream. After winding around several of its turnings, we encamped at one P.M. beside a large pool. This day’s journey was nearly
fourteen miles.

June 26. — The barometer being unusually low, and some long journeys having prevented me from laying down my surveys of the lakes, as well as having fatigued the cattle, I halted here with the intention of filling up my maps, refreshing the animals, and reconnoitring the country to the south-west, in which direction a vast extent was unexplored. The river we had endeavoured to trace thus far, was now so shut in by ana-branches, that it could rarely be seen at all; but I had now brought the survey of it so far upwards, that I should be able to trace it, or its several tributaries, downwards upon the same point, when returning to the northward, under the western extremities of the Snowy Range. I hoped then also to obtain a better knowledge of the branches composing the Murray, than we possessed at this time.

This day I requested Mr. Stapylton to cross the piece of water where we had encamped, and endeavour to find the river in a north-east direction; but he ascertained that the water-course turned northward, and to the west of north, without entering the river, as far as he traced it. He then returned, after having followed its course five miles, without falling in with the main stream. His party saw some of the natives, who could not be induced to stop, by all the calls of Piper. Mr. Stapylton observed in the channel he traced, a net or fence of boughs, which the natives had that morning set up; and which shewed not only that they expected a flood, but also, from the manner in which it was placed, that the water would flow first up the channel. This circumstance, as already observed, is not unusual in ana-branches, where the lower end is naturally on a lower level, having been worn by the currents into a deeper channel there, than at the upper end; where the water not unfrequently leaves the river by overflowing its banks in various channels of small depth.

The natives had left in one place, a net suspended across the river, between two lofty trees, evidently for the purpose of catching ducks and other water-fowl. The meshes were about two inches wide, and the net hung down to within five feet of the surface of the stream. In order to obtain water-fowl with this net, some of the natives proceed up, and others down the river, to scare the birds from other places; and, when any flight comes into the net, it is suddenly lowered into the water; thus entangling the birds beneath, until the natives go into the water and secure them.

Among the few specimens of art manufactured by the primitive inhabitants of these wilds, none come so near our own as the net, which, even in quality, as well as in the mode of knotting, can scarcely be distinguished from those made in Europe. As these natives possess but little besides what is essentially necessary to their existence, we may conclude, that they have used spears for killing the kangaroo, stone-axes for cutting out the opossum, and nets for catching birds, or kangaroos, or fish, since their earliest occupation of Australia. Almost every specimen of art they possess, is the result of urgent necessity. Perhaps the iron-tomahwk is the only important addition made to their implements, during many centuries.

On laying down my survey of the country, which we had lately passed over, I found that the lakes were nearly all circular or oval, and that a very regularly curved
ridge, as before stated, bounded the eastern shore of all of them. The number of lakes or hollows of this character, already seen by us to the south-west of the Murray, amounted to eleven. In three of them the water was salt, and the greater number had no communication with the river; but between it and the others, there was a narrow creek or gully, but accessible only to the highest floods. The northern margin of one of the salt lakes consisted of a bank of white sand, on which grew thickly a kind of pine, different from the trees around. The channels between the river and the lakes seemed neither to belong to the original arrangement of water-courses, nor to ana-branches of the rivers; for they frequently extended upwards, in directions opposed to that of the river’s course. The fact being established, that some of these lakes have no obvious connection with the river, it becomes probable that they are the remains of what the surface was, before the fluviatile process began to carry off its waters. I had no difficulty in referring to an early system of this kind, other lakes which we had seen elsewhere, the anomalous peculiarities of which were equally remarkable. Among these were Cudjallagong and others adjacent; Waljeers; the two smaller on the Murrumbidgee named Weromba; also Lake Benanè and Prooa its neighbour; in all which, the peculiarities accorded with what I had observed in those on the left bank of the Murray.

June 27. — The morning was clear, and Mr. Stayplton set out with a party of six men, to trace, if possible, the branch on which we were encamped, into the main stream. At ten the weather became hazy; at noon the sky was overcast; and at two P.M. a steady rain set in, which continued until six P.M. when the barometer began to rise; and the moon soon after shining out, the sky became once more serene. A hill apparently covered with good grass, was within sight of our present camp, but inaccessible from it, because a reach of deep and still water intervened. This day, I sent Burnett with Piper to the hill, and they brought me some of the soil, which I found consisted of loose, red sand.

June 28. — The morning being fine, I at length proceeded towards the hill, which we had already twice seen from great distances. It bore 206° 45' (from N.) and was exactly ten miles from our camp. After riding six miles through box-forest, we crossed a dry creek, and immediately entered upon an extensive plain, beyond which, I had the satisfaction of seeing the hopeful hill straight before me.

Mount Hope from the north.

This hill consisted of immense blocks of common granite, composed of white felspar and quartz and black mica; and it appeared to form the western extremity of a low range. It was indeed a welcome sight to us all, after traversing for several months so much flat country; and to me it was particularly interesting, for from its summit, I expected to obtain an extensive view over the unknown region, between us and the southern coast. I accordingly named the hill Mount Hope. On the verdant plain, near its foot, we found a beautiful, white anguillaria, a flower we had not seen elsewhere, and which, notwithstanding the season, was in full bloom and had a pleasing perfume. It might indeed be called the Australian Snowdrop, for its hardy little blossom seemed quite insensible to the frost. On reaching the summit of Mount Hope, I saw various higher hills extending from south-south-west to
west-south-west, at a distance of about 35 miles. They were not all quite connected, and I supposed them to be only the northern extremities of some higher ranges still more remote. I perceived along their base, a line of lofty trees, but it was most apparent on the horizon to the westward of the heights. The intervening country consisted, as far as the glass enabled me to examine it, of open, grassy plains, beautifully variegated with serpentine lines of wood. In all other directions, the horizon was unbroken, and, as the trees of the Murray vanished at a point bearing 143½° (from N.) on the border of a very extensive plain, I concluded that an important change took place there, in the course of that river or the Goulburn (of Hovell and Hume); for it was uncertain, then, which river we were near. The granitic range of Mount Hope terminates in the plains; one or two bare rocks only projecting above ground on the flats west-ward of the hill. On its summit, we found some plants quite new to us; and, among the rocks on its sides, a species of anguillaria different from that on the plains, being larger in the stem, and having a dark brown ring within the chalice; the edge of the leaves being tinged with the same colour.* We found here again the *Bæckea micrantha*, seen on the 24th instant, also a remarkable new species of Eriostemon, forming a scrubby, spiny bush, with much the appearance of a Leptospermum, † and a new and very beautiful species of Pleurandra, with the aspect of the yellow Cistus of the Algarves. ‡ A remarkable hill of granite appeared, 5&frac13; miles from Mount Hope, bearing 30° 10' W. of S. It is a triangular pyramid, and, being quite isolated, it closely resembles the monuments of Egypt.

Soon after my return to the camp, Mr. Stapylton came in with his party, having succeeded in finding the river, by tracing the branch upwards of thirteen miles. This branch was connected with others on both sides, so that Mr. Stapylton was obliged at last to cross it, and make direct for the river, which at the point where he fell in with it, was running at the rate of 2940 yards per hour, and was 99 yards wide, being therefore, probably, still the Murray itself.

The country which I had seen this day beyond Mount Hope, was too inviting to be left behind us unexplored; and I, therefore, determined to turn into it without further delay, and to pursue the bearing of 215° from N. as the general direction of our route, until we should fall in with the line of river trees before mentioned.
Chapter VIII.

The party quits the Murray — Pyramid Hill — Beautiful country seen from it — Discovery of the river Yarrayne — A bridge made across it — Covered by a sudden rise of the river — Then cross it in boats — Useful assistance of Piper — Our female guide departs — Enter a hilly country — Ascend Barrabungâle — Rainy weather — Excursion southward — The widow returns to the party — Natives of Tarrây — Their description of the country — Discover the Loddon — The woods — Cross a range — Kangaroos numerous — The earth becomes soft and impassable, even on the sides of hills — Discover a noble range of mountains — Cross another stream — Another — General character of the country — Proposed excursion to the mountains — Richardson's creek — Cross a fine stream flowing in three separate channels — A ridge of poor sandy soil — Cross another stream — Trap-hills and good soil — Ascend the mountain — Clouds cover it — A night on the summit — No fuel — View from it at sunrise — Descend with difficulty — Men taken ill — New plants found there — Repose in the valley — Night's rest — Natives at the camp during my absence.

June 29. — THE party moved forward in the direction of Mount Hope, and leaving it on the left, we continued towards Pyramid Hill, where we encamped at about three-quarters of a mile from its base. We were under no restraint now in selecting a camp, from any scarcity of water or grass; for all hollows in the plains contained some water, and grass grew everywhere. The strips of wood which diversified the country as seen from the hills, generally enclosed a depression with polygonum bushes, but without any marks of having had any water in them, although, in very wet seasons, some probably lodges there, as in so many canals, and this indeed seemed to me to be a country where canals would answer well, not so much perhaps for inland navigation, as for the better distribution of water over a fertile country, enclosed as this is by copious rivers.

June 30. — Having seen the party on the way, and directed it to proceed on a bearing of 215° from N., I ascended the rocky pyramidal hill, which I found arose to the height of 300 feet above the plain. Its apex consisted of a single block of granite, and the view was exceedingly beautiful over the surrounding plains, shining fresh and green in the light of a fine morning. The scene was different from anything I had ever before witnessed, either in New South Wales or elsewhere. A land so inviting, and still without inhabitants! As I stood, the first European intruder on the sublime solitude of these verdant plains, as yet untouched by flocks or herds; I felt conscious of being the harbinger of mighty changes; and that our steps would soon be followed by the men and the animals for which it seemed to have been prepared. A haziness in the air prevented me, however, from perceiving clearly the distant horizon from that summit, but I saw and intersected those mountains to the southward, which I had observed from Mount Hope.

Pyramid Hill.
The progress of the party was still visible from that hill, pursuing their course over the distant plains, like a solitary line of ants. I overtook it when a good many miles on; and we encamped after travelling upwards of fourteen miles, in one uninterrupted, straight line. Our camp was chosen on the skirts of a forest of box, having a plain on the east covered with rich grass, and where we found some small pools of rain water.

July 1. — Proceeding still on the bearing followed yesterday, we reached at three miles from our camp, a fine chain of ponds. They were deep, full of water, and surrounded by strong yarra trees. Passing them, we met a small scrub of casuarinaë, which we avoided; and we next entered on a fine plain, in which the anthistiria or oatgrass appeared. This is the same grass which grows on the most fertile parts of the counties of Argyle and Murray, and is, I believe, the best Australian grass for cattle: it is also one of the surest indications of a good soil and dry situation. Beyond the plain, the line of noble yarra trees, which I had observed from Mount Hope, gave almost certain promise of a river; and at 6½ miles our journey was terminated by a deep running stream. The banks were steep, and about twenty feet high, but covered thickly with grass to the edge of the water. The yarra trees grew by the brink of the stream, and not on the top of the bank. The water had a brown appearance as if it came from melted snow, but from the equality of depth (about nine feet), and other circumstances, I was of opinion that it was a permanent running stream. The current ran at the rate of four chains in 122 seconds, or near 1½ mile per hour; thus it would appear, from what we had seen, that there is much uniformity in the velocity of the rivers, and consequently in the general inclination of the surface. The banks of this little river were, however, very different in some respects from any we had previously seen, being everywhere covered thickly with grass. No fallen timber impeded its course, nor was there any indication in the banks, that the course was ever in the least degree affected by such obstructions. It was so narrow, that I anticipated little difficulty in making a bridge by felling some of the overhanging trees. Finding a large one already fallen across the stream, where the slopes of the banks could be most readily made passable, we lost no time in felling another, which broke against the opposite bank and sunk into the water. No other large trees grew near, but the banks were, at that place, so favourable for the passage of the waggons, that I determined to take advantage of the large fallen tree; and to construct a bridge by bringing others of smaller dimensions to it, according to the accompanying plan, and not unmindful of the useful suggestions of Sir Howard Douglas, respecting temporary bridges.

July 2. — Late in the evening of this day we completed a bridge formed of short but strong sleepers, laid diagonally to the fallen tree, which constituted its main support, and the whole was covered with earth from cuttings made in the banks to render it accessible to the carts. At length every thing was ready for crossing, and we had thus a prospect of being able to advance beyond the river, into that unknown but promising land of hill and dale.

July 3. — This morning our bridge was no longer to be seen, the river having risen so much during the night, that it was four feet under water. Yet no rain had
fallen for five days previous, and we could account for this unexpected flood only by supposing that the powerful shining of the sun, during the last two days, had melted the snow near the sources of the stream. At noon, the water had risen fourteen feet. A whispering sound, much resembling wind among the trees, now arose from it, and, however inconvenient to us, the novelty of a sudden rise in the river was quite refreshing, accustomed as we had been so long, to wander in the beds of rivers, and to seek in vain for water. Our little bridge continued to be passable even when covered with four feet of water, but as it had no parapets, we could not prevent some of the bullocks from going over the side, on attempting to cross, when it was thus covered. The river still continuing to rise, we were compelled at last to launch the boats, and by this means, we effected the passage of the whole party and equipment before sunset; the boats having been also again mounted on the carriage the same evening. The carts and boat-carriage were drawn through the bed of the river by means of the drag-chains, which reached from the carriage on one side, to a strong team of bullocks on the other. This was a very busy day for the whole party — black and white; I cannot fairly say savage and civilized, for in most of our difficulties by flood and field, the intelligence and skill of our sable friends made the “white-fellows” appear rather stupid. They could read traces on the earth, climb trees, or dive into the water, better than the ablest of us. In tracing lost cattle, speaking to “the wild natives,” hunting, or diving, Piper was the most accomplished man in the camp. In person he was the tallest, and in authority he was allowed to consider himself almost next to me, the better to secure his best exertions. When Mr. Stapylton first arrived, Piper came to my tent and observed that “That fellow had two coats,” no doubt meaning that I ought to give one of them to him! The men he despised, and he would only act by my orders. This day, he rendered us much useful assistance in the water; for instance, when a cart stuck in the bottom of the river, the rope by which it was to be drawn through having broken, Piper, by diving, attached a heavy chain to it, thereby enabling the party to draw it out with the teams.

At this place the widow, being far beyond her own country, was inclined to go back; and although I intended to put her on a more direct and safe way home after we should pass the heads of the Murrumbidgee on our return, I could not detain her longer than she wished. Her child, to whom she appeared devotedly attached, was fast recovering the use of its broken limb; and the mother seemed uneasy under an apprehension, that I wanted to deprive her of this child. I certainly had always wished to take back with me to Sydney an aboriginal child, with the intention of ascertaining, what might be the effect of education upon one of that race. This little savage, who at first would prefer a snake or lizard to a piece of bread, had become so far civilized at length, as to prefer bread; and it began to cry bitterly on leaving us. The mother, however, thought nothing of swimming, even at that season, across the broad waters of the “Millewá,” as she should be obliged to do, pushing the child before her, floating on a piece of bark.

July 4. — At the distance of about a mile to the southward, a line of trees marked the course of another channel, which, containing only a few ponds, we crossed
without difficulty. Beyond it, we traversed a plain five miles in extent, and backed by low, grassy hills, composed of grey gneiss. The most accessible interval between these hills still appeared to be in the direction I had chosen at Mount Hope, as leading to the lowest opening of a range, still more distant: I, therefore, continued on that bearing, having the highest of those hills to our left, at the distance of five or six miles. On entering the wood skirting the wide plain, our curiosity was rather disappointed at finding, instead of rare things, the black-butted gum and casuarine, trees common in the colony. The woolly gum also grew there, a tree much resembling the box in the bark on its trunk, although that on the branches, unlike the box, is smooth and shining. In this wood we recognised the rosella parrot, and various plants, so common near Sydney; but not before seen by us in the interior.

At ten miles, we travelled over undulating ground, for the first time, since we left the banks of the Lachlan; and we crossed a chain of ponds watering a beautiful and extensive valley, covered with a luxuriant crop of the anthistiria grass. Kangaroos were now to be seen on all sides, and we finally encamped on a deeper chain of ponds, probably the chief channel of the waters of that valley. A ridge of open foreshills appearing before us, I rode to the top of one of the highest summits, while the men pitched the tents; and from it, I perceived a hilly country, through whose intricacies I, at that time, saw no way, and beyond it, a lofty mountain-range arose in the south-west. To venture into such a region with wheel-carriages, seemed rather hazardous, when I recollected the coast ranges of the colony; and I determined to examine it further, before I decided, whether we should penetrate these fastnesses, or travel westward round them, thus to ascertain their extent in that direction, and that of the good land watered by them.

July 5. — I proceeded with several men mounted, towards the lofty hill to the eastward of our route, the highest of those I had intersected from Mount Hope and the Pyramid-hill, its aboriginal name, as I afterwards learnt, being Barrabungále.* Nearly the whole of our way was over granite rocks. We had just reached a naked mass, near the principal summit, when the clouds, which had been lowering for some time, began to descend on the plains to the northward, and soon closing over the whole horizon, compelled me to return, without having had an opportunity of observing more than that the whole mass of mountains in the south, declined to the westward. This was, however, a fact of considerable importance with respect to our further progress; for I could enter that mountain-region with less hesitation, as I knew, that I could leave it, if necessary, and proceed westward by following down any of the vallies which declined in that direction.

July 6. — The morning being rainy, I could learn nothing more by ascending Barrabungále as I intended; but I rode into the country to the southward, in order to examine it in the direction, in which I thought it most desirable to lead the party. After passing over several well-watered, grassy flats or vallies, each bounded by open forest-hills; we crossed at six miles from the camp, a range, the summit of which was covered by a low scrub, but it did not much impede our way. Beyond this range, we again found open forest land, and we saw extensive flats still more open to our right, in which direction all the waters seemed to fall. At length, after
travelling about twelve miles, we came upon a deep chain of ponds, winding through a flat thickly covered with anthistiria, and resembling a field of ripe grain. Smoke arose in all directions from an extensive camp of natives; but, although I cooyed and saw them at a distance, they continued to crouch behind trees, and would not approach. I did not disturb them further, but returned with the intention of leading the party there the next day, when I hoped to see more of these natives. An abundance of a beautiful white or pale yellow-flowered, herbaceous plant, reminding me of the violets of Europe, to which it was nearly allied, grew on the sides of hills.*

In the evening, the widow returned with her child on her back. She stated, that after we left our late encampment, a numerous tribe arrived on the opposite bank of the river, and seeing the fires on her side, called out very angrily, as Piper translated her tale, “Murry coola,” (very angry); inquiring, who had made those fires; and that, receiving no reply, (for she was afraid, and had hid herself,) they danced a corrobory in a furious style, during which she and the child crept away, and had passed two nights without fire and in the rain. Piper seemed angry at her return, but I took particular care, that she should be treated with as much kindness as before. She was a woman of good sense, and had been with us long enough to feel secure under our protection, even from the wrath of Piper, as displayed on this occasion; and I discovered, that her attempted return home had been suggested by Piper’s gin, who probably anticipated a greater share of food, after the widow’s departure.

July 7. — The party moved to the creek, where I had before seen the natives; and Piper found at their fires an old woman and several boys. They said, pointing far to the south-east, doubtless to Port Phillip, that a station of white-fellows was there, and that they had been themselves to the sea, which was not very distant. The old woman spoke with expressive gestures, of a part of the coast, she called “Cadông,” where the waves raged; and of a river, she named Woollamäee, running into it. It appeared that the rest of the tribe were at that time in search of opossums; but she promised, that when they returned in the evening or next day, some of them should visit our camp.

July 8. — This morning, Piper prevailed on an old man, with his gins and some boys, to come to us. The former pointed towards “Cadông,” in the direction of 232° from N. and in reply to my queries, through Piper, said it was not “Geelong” (Port Phillip), but a water like it; and that no white men had ever been there. On mentioning lake Alexandrina, by its native name Kéyinga, he said, that it was a place filled sometimes with rain (i.e. river-) water, and not like “Cadông” which was salt-water. He described the whole country before us as abounding in good water and excellent grass; and he said, that in the direction I was pursuing, there was no impediment between me and the sea-coast. Piper’s countenance brightened up with the good news this man gave him; assuring me that we should “find water all about: no more want water.” In return for all this intelligence, I presented the old man with an iron tomahawk, which he placed under him as he sate; and he continued to address me with great volubility for some time. I was told by Piper, that he was merely saying “how glad he was,” and enumerating
(apparently with a sort of poetic fervour), the various uses to which he could apply
the axe, I had given him. I left these natives with the impression on my mind, that
they were quiet, well-disposed people.

Proceeding a little west of south-west, we intersected this creek (Tarry) three
times, leaving it finally flowing southward, and to our left, into that of Dyoonboors,
which it joined, at a mile and a half from where we had been encamped. At three
miles, having crossed a low ridge of forest land, we entered a fine valley, backed on
the west by romantic, forest hills, and watered by some purling brooks, which
united in the woods on the east. The flat itself had a few stately trees upon it, and
seemed quite ready to receive the plough; while some round hillocks, on the north,
were so smooth and grassy, that the men said they looked, as if they had already
been depastured by sheep. From an extremity of the clear ridge, I obtained an
extensive view of the mountain chain to the south-east; and I intersected most of its
summits. The whole seemed smooth (i.e. not rocky), grassy, and thinly timbered.
Crossing the lower or outer extremity of this forest ridge, we entered another fine
valley watered by a creek which we passed at six miles from the commencement of
the day’s journey. This little channel was grassy to the water’s edge, and its banks
were firm and about eight feet high; the course being eastward. In the valley I saw
the Banksia for the first time, since we left the Lachlan. A calamifolia, or needle-
leaved wattle, occurred also in considerable quantity. After crossing two more
brooks and some flats of fine land, with grassy forest-hills on our right, we reached
the crest of a forest-range, which afforded an extensive view over the country
beyond it. The surface seemed to be low for some distance, but then to rise
gradually towards some rocky points, over which were partially seen the summits of
a higher range, still further southward. The descent to the low country, was easy for
our carts; and we found there, a beautifully green and level flat, bounded on the
south by a little river, flowing westward. The banks of this stream consisted of
rounded acclivities, and were covered with excellent grass. The bed was 18 or 20
feet below the level of the adjacent flats, and from its resemblance in some respects
to the little stream in England, I named it the Loddon. We encamped on its bank in
latitude 36° 36' 49" S., longitude 143° 35' 30" E.

July 9. — By continuing the same line of route, we crossed several minor rivulets,
all flowing through open grassy vales, bounded by finely undulating hills. At about
three miles, we came to a deep chain of ponds, the banks being steep and covered
with grass. Keeping a tributary to that channel on our left, we passed some low hills
of quartz; and a little beyond them, we crossed poor hills of the same rock, bearing
an open box-forest. After travelling through a little scrub, we descended on one of
the most beautiful spots I ever saw: — The turf, the woods, and the banks of the
little stream which murmured through the vale, had so much the appearance of a
well kept park, that I felt loth to injure its surface by the passage of our cart wheels.
Proceeding for a mile and a half along the rivulet, and through a valley wholly of
the same description, we at length encamped on a flat of rich earth (nearly quite
black), and where the anthistiria grew in greater luxuriance than I had ever before
witnessed in Australian grasses. The earth indeed seemed to surpass in richness, any
that I had seen in New South Wales; and I was even tempted to bring away a specimen of it. Our dogs killed three kangaroos, and this good fortune was most timely, as I had that very morning, thought it advisable to reduce the allowance of rations.

July 10. — Tracing upwards the rivulet of the vale we left this morning, we passed over much excellent grassy land watered by it, the channel containing some very deep ponds, surrounded by the white barked eucalyptus. A hill on its bank, consisted of a conglomerate in which the ferruginous matter predominated over the embedded fragments of quartz. The ground beyond was hilly, and we at length ascended a ridge, apparently an extremity of a higher range. On these hills grew the varieties of eucalypti known in the colony, such as iron-bark, blue-gum, and stringybark. The lower grounds were so wet and soft, and the water-courses in them so numerous, that I was desirous to follow a ridge as long as it would take us in the direction, in which we were proceeding; and this range answered well for the purpose. Its crest consisted of ferruginous sandstone much inclined, the strike extending north-north-west. I found the opposite side much more precipitous, and that it overlooked a much lower country. In seeking a favourable line of descent for the carts, I climbed a still higher forest-hill on the left, which consisted chiefly of quartz-rock. I not only recognised from that hill, some lofty points to the eastward, and obtained angles on them, but I also perceived very rugged summits of a range at a great distance in the south-west. Having selected among the various hills and dales before me, that line of route which seemed the best, and having taken its bearing, I returned to conduct the carts by a pass along one side of that hill, having found it, in a very practicable state for wheel carriages. At three miles beyond the pass, we crossed a deep creek running westward, which I named the Avoca, and we encamped on an excellent piece of land beyond it. This day, we had even better fortune in our field sports than on the one before, for besides three kangaroos, we killed two emus, one of which was a female and esteemed a great prize, for I had discovered, that the eggs, found in the ovarium, were a great luxury in the bush; and afforded us a light and palatable breakfast for several days.

July 11. — At the end of two miles on this day’s journey, we crossed a deep stream running westward. The height of its banks above the water was twelve feet, and they were covered with a rich sward. The land along the margins of the stream was as good as that we were now accustomed to see everywhere around us, so that it was no longer necessary to note the goodness or beauty of any place in particular. At four miles, we passed over a forest-hill composed of mica-slate, and after crossing another good valley at six miles, I saw before us, on gaining a low forest ridge, other grassy hills of still greater height, connected by a rock, that cost us less trouble to ascend than I expected. It was in the vallies now, that we met most difficulty; the earth having become so soft and wet, that the carts could be got through some places only by the tedious process of dragging each successively, with the united strength of several teams.

From a high forest-hill, about a mile east of our route, I first obtained a complete view of a noble range of mountains, rising in the south to a stupendous height, and
presenting as bold and picturesque an outline as ever painter imagined. The highest
and most eastern summit was hid in the clouds, although the evening was serene. It
bore W. of S. 26° 54'; and the western extremity, which consisted of a remarkably
round hill, bore 16° 30' S. of W. Having descended from the range by an easy slope
to the southward, we passed through a beautiful valley, in which we crossed, at a
mile and a quarter from the hills, a fine stream flowing also westward; and in other
respects similar to those we had already met. I named it Avon water, and we
encamped on its left bank.

July 12. — At two miles and a half from the spot, where we had slept, we crossed
another stream flowing west-north-west, which I named the Small-burn. Beyond it,
the ground was good and grassy, but at this season very soft, so that the draught
was most laborious for the cattle. At seven miles, we crossed a wet flat with ponds
of water standing on it, and beyond we entered on a clay soil, altogether different
from any hitherto passed on this side the Yarrawyne. About eight miles from our
camp, we reached a fine running brook with grassy banks, its course being to the
north-west. The bed consisted of red-sand and gravel, and the banks were about
fourteen feet high, presenting fine swelling slopes covered with turf. On this
stream, which I named the Dos casas, I halted, as it was doubtful, whether some of
the carts could be brought, even so far, before night; the ground having proved soft
and rotten to such a degree, especially on the slopes of low hills, that in some cases
the united strength of three teams had been scarcely sufficient to draw them
through. It was night, before the last cart arrived, and two bullocks had been left
behind, in an exhausted state.

July 13. — We had at length discovered a country ready for the immediate
reception of civilized man; and destined perhaps to become eventually a portion of
a great empire. Unencumbered by too much wood, it yet possessed enough for all
purposes; its soil was exuberant, and its climate temperate; it was bounded on three
sides by the ocean; and it was traversed by mighty rivers, and watered by streams
innumerable. Of this Eden I was the first European to explore its mountains and
streams — to behold its scenery — to investigate its geological character — and, by
my survey, to develope those natural advantages, certain to become, at no distant
date, of vast importance to a new people. The lofty mountain range, which I had
seen on the 11th, was now before us, but still distant between thirty and forty miles;
and as the cattle required rest, I determined on an excursion to its lofty eastern
summit. Such a height was sure to command a view of the country between these
mountains and the sea, in the direction of Lady Julia Percy's Isles; and of that
region between the range and those less connected forest-hills, I had seen to the
eastward.

When I first discovered these mountains, I perceived that the land immediately to
the eastward of them, was very low, and that if I found it necessary, I might
conduct the party in that direction to the coast. I was, however, more desirous to
level my theodolite on that summit first, and thus obtain valuable materials for the
construction of an accurate map of the whole country around it. I accordingly left
the party encamped, and proceeded towards the mountain, accompanied by six
men on horseback; having previously instructed Mr. Stapylton to employ the men, during my absence, in forming a way down the bank, and a good ford across the stream, in order that there might be no impediment to the immediate advance of the party, on my return.

Pursuing the bearing of 193°, we crossed, at three miles from the camp, a deep creek, similar to that on which it was placed; and the first adventure of the morning occurred here. The fordable place was so narrow, that the horse of one of the party plunged into the deep water with its rider, who, while the animal was swimming, incautiously pulled the bridle, and of course overturned it, so that they parted company in the water, the horse reaching one bank, the rider the other. The latter, who was my botanical collector, Richardson, took his soaking on a cold frosty morning so philosophically, talking to his comrades as he made his way to the bank, partly swimming, partly floating on two huge portfolios, that I gave his name to the creek, the better to reconcile him to his wet jacket. We entered soon after, upon one of the finest tracts of grassy forest land, we had ever seen. The whole country recently crossed was good, but this was far better, having several broad and deep ponds, or small lakes in the woods, and all full of the clearest water. At eight miles, I perceived a forest-hill on my left (or to the eastward), and the country before us was so open, sloping and green, that I felt certain, we were approaching a river; and we soon came upon one, which was full, flowing, and thirty feet wide, being broader than the Yarrawyne, but not so uniformly deep. Unlike the latter river, reeds grew about its margin in some places, and its banks, though grassy and fifteen feet high, were neither so steep as those of the Yarrawyne, nor so closely shut together. We swam our horses across, but our progress had scarcely commenced again on the other side, when it was impeded by another similar stream or channel. In this we managed, with Piper’s assistance to find a ford, but at less than a quarter of a mile, we met a third channel, more resembling the first in the height of its banks and velocity of the current, and also from its flowing amongst bushes. This we likewise forded, and immediately after we ascended a piece of rising ground, which convinced me, that we had at length crossed all the branches of that remarkable river. It is probable we came upon it where it received the waters of tributaries, and some of these channels might be such.

We next fell in with some undulating ground, different in many respects from any, that we had traversed during the morning. The soil was poor and sandy; and the stunted trees and shrubs of the Blue mountains grew upon it, instead of the novelties we expected at such a great distance from home. We also recognized the birds, common about Sydney. On reaching the higher part of this ground (at nine miles), I again saw the mountain which then bore 196°. The intervening ground seemed to consist of a low ridge rather heavily wooded, its crest presenting a line as level as the ocean. At eleven miles, I supposed we were upon the dividing ground between the sea-coast country and that of the interior, and on what appeared to be the only connection between the forest mountains to the eastward, and the lofty mass then before us. We found upon this neck, huge trees of iron-bark and stringybark; some fine forest-hills appeared to the eastward, and distant only a few miles.
At the end of sixteen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty-one, and twenty-three miles, we crossed small rivers, all flowing west-ward, and the third over sandstone. After passing the last or fifth stream, we halted on a very fine, open, dry and grassy flat. We found a large fallen tree, which we set on fire, and passed the night, a very mild one, most comfortably, on the ground beside it, with the intention of renewing our journey at daylight in the morning.

July 14. — On leaving our bivouac we crossed some hills of trap-rock which were lightly wooded, and covered with the finest grass, in great abundance. The scenery around them, the excellent quality of the soil, the abundance of water and verdure, contrasted strangely with the circumstance of their lying waste and unoccupied. It was evident that the reign of solitude in these beautiful vales was near a close; a reflection which, in my mind, often sweetened the toils and inconveniences of travelling through such houseless regions. At the foot of the last hill, and about a mile on our way, we crossed a chain of deep ponds running to the south-west. Beyond them was a plain of the very finest open forest-land, on which we travelled seven miles; and then came upon a river with broad deep reaches of very clear water, and flowing towards the north-west. We easily found a ford, and on proceeding, entered upon a tract of white sand, where *banksia* and *casuarina* were the chief trees. There was also some good grass, but it grew rather thinly upon it. The next water we crossed was a small mountain-torrent, hurrying along to the eastward in a deep and rocky channel, overhung with bushes. Being now close under the mountain, we dismounted, and sent our horses back for the sake of food, to the bank of the last mentioned river. The first part of our ascent, on foot, was extremely steep and laborious, although it was along the most favourable feature I could find. Above it, the impediments likely to obstruct our further ascent, were two high and perpendicular rocky cliffs; but I had observed before ascending, those crevices and intervals between rocks, where we might most easily effect an ascent; and through these we accordingly penetrated without much difficulty. The upper precipice consisted of cliffs, about 140 feet in perpendicular height. Fortunately the ablest of the men with me, was a house carpenter, and, being accustomed to climb roofs, he managed to get up, and then assist the rest. Having gained the top of this second precipice, we found winter and desolation under drizzling clouds, which afforded but partial and transient glimpses of the world below. The surface at the summit of the cliffs was broad, and consisted of large blocks of sandstone, separated by wide fissures, full of dwarf bushes of *banksia* and *casuarina*. These rocks were inclined but slightly towards the north-west, and the bushes being also wet and curiously encrusted with heavy icicles, it was by no means a pleasant part of our journey to travel nearly half a mile upwards, either on the slippery rock or between fissures among wet bushes. At length however we reached the highest point, and found that it consisted of naked sandstone. The top block was encrusted with icicles; and had become hoary under the beating of innumerable storms. At the very summit I found a small heath like, bushy Leucopogon, from six inches to a foot high. It was in flower, although covered with ice.* Also a variety of *Leucopogon villosus*, with rather less hair than usual, and another species of the same genus,
probably new. Near the highest parts of the plateau, I found a new species of eucalyptus with short broad viscid leaves, and rough-warted branches. All around us was hidden in mist. It was now within half an hour of sunset, but the ascent had cost so much trouble, and the country, this summit commanded, was so interesting to us, that I was unwilling to descend without trying, whether it might not be clear of clouds at sunrise. We had not come prepared in any way to pass the night on such a wild and desolate spot, for we had neither clothing, nor food, nor was there any shelter; but I was willing to suffer any privations, for the attainment of the object of our ascent. One man, Richardson, an old traveller, had most wisely brought his day’s provisions in his havresack, and these I divided equally among five. No rocks could be found near the summit, to shelter us from the piercing wind and sleet. The thermometer stood at 29°, and we strove to make a fire to protect us from the piercing cold; but the green twigs, encrusted with icicles, could not by our united efforts be blown into a flame sufficient to warm us. There was abundance of good wood at the foot of the cliffs — huge trees of iron-bark, stringy-bark, and blue gum; but had we descended, a second ascent might have appeared too laborious, on a mere chance of finding the summit clear; so we remained above. The men managed to manufacture some tea in a tin pot, and into the water as it boiled, I plunged a thermometer, which rose to exactly 95° of the centigrade scale. We got through that night of misery as well as might have been expected under the circumstances, and we succeeded in keeping the fire alive, although while twigs were blown into red heat at one end, icicles remained at the other, even within a few inches of the flame. In order to maintain it through the night, we divided, at eleven o’clock, the stock of branches which had been gathered before dark, into eight parcels; this being the number of hours we were destined to sit shivering there; and as each bundle was laid on the dying embers, we had the pleasure at least of knowing, that it was an hour nearer daylight. I coiled myself round the fire in all the usual attitudes of the blacks, but in vain; to get warm was quite impossible, although I did once feel something like comfort, when one of the men gave me for a seat, a flat stone on which the fire had been blown for some hours. Partial cessations in the fall of sleet were also cheering occasionally; but the appearance of stars, two hours before daylight, promised to reward our enterprise, and inspired me with hope.

July 15. — At six o’clock, the sky became clear, the clouds had indeed left the mountain, and as soon as it was day, I mounted the frozen rock. In the dawn, however, all lower objects were blended in one grey shade, like the dead colouring of a picture. I could distinguish only a pool of water, apparently near the foot of the mountain. This water, I afterwards found to be a lake eight miles distant, and in my map I have named it Lake Lonsdale, in honour of the Commandant then, or soon after, appointed at Port Phillip. I hastily levelled my theodolite, but the scene, although sublime enough for the theme of a poet, was not at all suited to the more common-place objects of a surveyor. The sun rose amid red and stormy clouds, and vast masses of a white vapour concealed from view both sea and land, save where a few isolated hills were dimly visible. Towards the interior, the horizon was clear,
and during a short interval, I took what angles I could obtain. To the westward, the view of the mountain ranges was truly grand. Southward, or towards the sea, I could at intervals perceive plains clear of timber, and that the country was level, a circumstance of great importance to us; for I was apprehensive that between these mountains and the coast, it might be broken by mountain gullies, as it is in the settled colony and all along the Eastern coast. If such had proved to be the case, the carts could not have been taken there; and I must have altered the plan of my intended route. Before I could observe the angles so desirable, clouds again enveloped the mountain, and I was compelled to quit its summit without completing the work. The wind blew keenly, the thermometer stood as low as 27° and in the morning the rocks were more thickly encrusted with ice. The difficulty of our descent under such circumstances was, therefore, increased, but no impediment could have arrested us then, the lower regions having so many attractive charms for such cold and hungry beings. That night on the summit materially injured the health of two of my best men, and who had been with me on all three of my expeditions. Muirhead was seized with ague, and Woods with a pulmonary complaint; and although both recovered in a few weeks, they were never so strong afterwards. We found upon the mountain, besides those already mentioned, various interesting plants, which we had seen nowhere else. Amongst them a most beautiful downy-leaved Epacris, with large, curved, purple flowers, allied to E. grandiflora, but much handsomer.* A most remarkable species of Phebalium, with holly-like leaves and bright red flowers, resembling those of a Boronia. It was related* to P. phylicifolium, but quite distinct. A new Cryptandra remarkable for its downy leaves.‡ A beautiful species of Bæckea, with downy leaves, and rose-coloured flowers, resembling those of the dwarf almond.‡ A new Pultenæa allied to P. biloba, but more hairy, and with the flowers half concealed among the leaves.§ A new species of Bossiæa which had the appearance of a Rosemary bush, and differed from all the published kinds in having linear pungent leaves. A beautiful, new, and very distinct species of Genetyllis, possessing altogether the habit of a Cape Diosma, the heath-like branches being terminated by clusters of bright pink and white flowers.¶ Several species of Grevillea, particularly a remarkable kind, with leaves like those of an European holly, but downy;* another fine new species, with leaves like those of an European oak;§ and a third with brownish red flowers and hoary leaves, varying from an erect straight-branched bush, to a diffuse entangled shrub;¶ lastly a new Leucopogon, besides that found on the summit as already mentioned.‡

In adding this noble range of mountains to my map, I felt some difficulty in deciding on a name. To give appellations that may become current in the mouths of future generations, has often been a perplexing subject with me, whether they have been required to distinguish new counties, towns, or villages, or such great natural features of the earth, as mountains and rivers. I have always gladly adopted aboriginal names, and in the absence of these, I have endeavoured to find some good reason for the application of others, considering descriptive names the best, such being in general the character of those used by the natives of this and other
countries. Names of individuals seem eligible enough, when at all connected with the history of the discovery, or that of the nation by whom it was made. The capes on the coast, I was then approaching, were chiefly distinguished with the names of naval heroes; and as such capes were but subordinate points of the primitive range, I ventured to connect this summit with the name of the sovereign in whose reign the extensive, valuable, and interesting region below was first explored; and, I confess, it was not without some pride, as a Briton, that I, “more majorum,” gave the name of the Grampians, to these extreme summits of the southern hemisphere.

We reached the banks of the little river, where the horses awaited us, in three hours, the distance being eight miles from the summit of Mount William. There, we found a large fire, and under a wide spreading casuarina, during a delightful interval of about twenty minutes, I enjoyed the pleasures of eating, sleeping, resting, and warming myself, almost all at the same time. To all who would know how to enjoy most intensely a good fire, shelter, sunshine and the dry soft turf, I would recommend, by way of whet, a winter night on a lofty mountain, without fire, amidst frost-covered rocks and clouds of sleet. I shall long remember the pleasure of those moments of repose, which I enjoyed on my arrival in the warm valley, after such a night. We could afford no longer delay, however, having brought provisions only for one day with us, whereas this was the morning of the third of our absence from the camp. Retracing our steps, we reached the little river only at eight in the evening, and as I hoped to find a ford in it at day-light, we lay down on its bank for the night.

July 16 — I slept on a snug bit of turf, within two feet of the stream; so that the welcome murmur of its rippling waters, assisted my dreams of undiscovered rivers. As soon as morning dawned, I succeeded in finding a ford on that branch across which we swam our horses on the 13th. We thus met with less cause of delay, and reached the camp at an early hour, with excellent appetites for breakfast.

Two natives had visited the party during my absence; and had slept by the fires. They had been at cattle-stations, and could say “milk.” They consequently approached our camp boldly, and during the night shewed much restlessness, endeavouring to decoy the gins away with them. But the widow gave the alarm, and very properly handed over these insidious wooers to the especial surveillance of the man on duty. Notwithstanding they were vigilantly watched, they contrived to steal a tomahawk, and went off leaving their wooden shovels at our camp, saying they should return. I had now several men on the sick-list, but under the treatment of Drysdale, our medical attendant, they speedily recovered.
Chapter IX.

Plains of stiff clay — The Wimmera — Difficult passage of its five branches — Ascend Mount Zero — Circular lake, brackish water — The Wimmera in a united channel — Lose this river — Ascend Mount Arapiles — Mr. Stapylton’s excursion northward — Salt lakes — Green Hill lake — Mitre lake — Relinquish the pursuit of the Wimmera — The party travels to the south-west — Red lake — Small lakes of fresh water — White lake — Basket work of the natives — Muddy state of the surface — Mr. Stapylton’s ride southward — Disastrous encounter with a native — A tribe makes its appearance — More lakes of brackish water — Escape at last from the mud — Encamp on a running stream — Fine country — Discovery of a good river — Granitic soil — Passage of the Glenelg — Country well watered — Pigeon ponds — Soft soil again impedes the party — Halt to repair the carts and harness — Natives very shy — Chetwynd rivulet — Slow progress over the soft surface — Excursion into the country before us — Beautiful region discovered — The party extricated with difficulty from the mud.

July 17. — THE ground on the sides of the low hills was still so soft, (and in this respect, I had found the country we had lately crossed, even worse than that previously traversed by the carts), that the only prospect which remained to us of being able to continue the journey, was by proceeding over the plains, extending along the interior side of the Grampians of the South. The soil of such plains consisted chiefly of clay, and we had recently found, that it bore the wheels of the waggons much better during the winter season, than the thin and loose soil on the sides of hills; apparently, because this lay on rock, or a substratum so tenacious as to support the water in, or just under, the surface. The wheels, and also the feet of the cattle, sunk at once to this rocky subsoil whatever its depth, and up came the water, so that on level parts, our track resembled a ditch of mud and water, and on slopes it formed a current of water, and a drain from the sides of hills. I had observed the plains during my reconnoissance of the interior from the side of Mount William, and I now directed our course towards them. We crossed without difficulty the little river, by the passage Mr. Stapylton had prepared during my absence; and after travelling about four miles, first west and then north-west, we came upon an extensive plain. The soil consisted of good strong clay on which the cattle travelled very well, and it was covered with the best kind of grass. On reaching it I resumed my former course, which was nearly west-south-west, towards Mount Zero, a name I applied to a remarkable cone, at the western extremity of the chain of mountains. After travelling 2½ miles over the plain, we again reached the banks of Richardson’s creek, and forded it after some delay and considerable difficulty, on account of the softness of the bottom. We next entered on a tract of grassy, forest land, the trees being chiefly box and *casuarina*. At 2½ miles beyond Richardson’s creek we crossed a small run of water, flowing west-north-west,
apparently towards it. After passing over similar ground for some miles further, and having had another plain on our right, we at length encamped near a large serpentine pond or lake, which was broad, deep, and bordered with lofty gum-trees.

July 18. — We continued for five miles along good firm ground, on which there was an open forest of box and gum-trees; and part of the bold outline of the Grampians appeared to our left. At 9 miles we fell in with a flowing stream, the water being deep and nearly as high as the banks I did not doubt, that this was the channel of the waters from the north-side of these mountains, and, I was convinced, that it contained the water of all the streams we had crossed on our way to Mount William, with the exception of Richardson’s creek, already crossed by the party, where it was flowing to the north-west. The richness of the soil, and the verdure near the river, as well as the natural beauty of the scenery, could scarcely be surpassed in any country. The banks were in some places open and grassy, and shaded by lofty yarra trees, in others mimosa-bushes nodded over the eddying stream.

Continuing along the right bank in a north-west direction, we travelled two miles on a grassy plain; and we then turned towards the river, encamping on its banks, in latitude 36° 46' 30" S., longitude 142° 39' 25" E. Magnetic variation 5° 21' 45" E.

Some natives being heard on the opposite bank, Piper advanced towards them as cautiously as possible; but he could not prevail on them to come over, although he ascertained, that the name of the river was the “Wimmera.”

July 19. — On examining the Wimmera with Piper’s assistance, I found, that it was fordable in some places; but, in order to effect a passage with greater facility, we took over several of the loads in one of the boats. Thus, the whole party had gained, what I considered to be the left bank, by ten A. M. On proceeding, I perceived some yarra trees before me, which grew, as we soon discovered, beside a smaller branch, the bottom of which was soft. We had however the good fortune to pass the carts across this branch also. At a quarter of a mile further, we came upon another flowing stream, apparently very deep, and having steep but grassy banks. The passage of this, occupied the party nearly two hours, one of the carts having sunk up to the axle in a soft bank or channel island. While the men were releasing the cart, I rode forward and found a fourth channel, deep, wide, and full to the brim. In vain did Tally-ho (trumpeter, master of the horse, &c. to the party), dash his horse into this stream in search of a bottom; though at last, one broad, favourable place was found, where the whole party forded, at a depth of not more than 2½ feet. Beyond these channels another similar one still obstructed our progress; but this we also successfully forded, and at length we found rising ground before us, consisting of an open plain which extended to the base of the mountains. On its skirt, we pitched our tents, at a distance of not quite one mile and a half from our last camp; a short journey certainly, but the passage of the five branches of the Wimmera was, nevertheless, a good day’s work. I had frequently observed in the Australian rivers, an uniformity of character throughout the whole course of each, and the peculiarities of this important stream were equally remarkable, it being obviously the same, we had crossed in three similar channels, when on our way to
Mount William, twenty miles above this point. The shrubs on the banks at the two places were also similar.

*July 20.* — While Mr. Stapylton conducted the party across the plains in a west-south-west direction; I proceeded towards Mount Zero, the most western extremity of the mountain range, and distant from our camp 8½ miles. I found this hill consisted also of highly micaceous sandstone; the whole being inclined towards the north-west. Having planted my theodolite on the summit, I intersected various higher points to the eastward, and also a very remote, isolated hill, on the low country, far to the northward, which I had also seen from Mount William, and from several stations on our route. Several specimens of shrubs and flowers, that had not been previously seen by us, were gathered on the sides of this rocky hill. Among them, was a very singular, hairy Acacia, covered with a profusion of the most brilliant yellow flowers. In some respects it resembled *A. lanigera*, but it proved upon examination to be undescribed.* An isolated mass appeared to the westward, having near its base a most remarkable rock resembling a mitre. Beyond this, the distant horizon was not quite so level as the plains of the interior usually are; and, as far as I could see northward with a good telescope, I perceived open forest-land and various fine sheets of water. I observed with great satisfaction, that the Grampians, terminated to the westward, on a comparatively low country. This was an important object of attention to me then, as it comprised all that intervened between us and the southern coast; in which direction, I perceived only one or two groups of conical hills. I resolved, however, before turning southwards, to extend our journey to the isolated mass already mentioned, which I afterwards named Mount Arapiles. After descending from Mount Zero, I proceeded towards the track of the carts, and found that the plains, unlike any hitherto seen, undulated so much, that in one place, I could perceive only the tops of trees in the hollows. On these plains, I found small nodules of highly ferruginous sandstone, apparently similar to that which occurs near Jervis Bay and in other places, along the eastern coast. Reaching at length a low green ridge of black soil very different from that of the plains, I found it formed the eastern bank of another of those remarkable circular lakes, of which I had seen so many near the Murray. The bed of this hollow consisted of rich black earth, and was thirty-two feet below the level of the adjacent plain. It seemed nearly circular; the diameter being about three-quarters of a mile. One peculiarity in this lake was a double bank on the eastern side, consisting first of a concentric break or slope from the plain, the soil not being clay as usual, but a dry red sand; and then arose the green bank of black earth, leaving a concentric fosse or hollow between. A belt of yarra trees grew around the edge of this singular hollow, which was so dry and firm, that the carts, in the track of which I was riding, had traversed it without difficulty. I learnt from Mr. Stapylton, on reaching the camp, that the party had previously passed near two other lakes, the largest containing salt water; and in the neighbourhood of these, he had also remarked a great change of soil; so that what with the verdure upon it, the undulating surface, and clumps of *casuarina* on light soil, or lofty yarra trees growing in black soil, that part of the country looked tolerably well.
July 21. — At a quarter of a mile from the camp, we crossed a running stream, which also contained deep, and apparently permanent pools. Several pine or *callitris* trees grew near its banks, being the first we had seen for some time. I named this mountain stream the Mackenzie. Beyond it, were grassy, undulating plains, with clumps of *casuarina*, and box trees (*eucalypti*). At three miles and a half, we crossed another chain of ponds, and at four miles, we came to a deep stream, running with considerable rapidity, over a bed of sandstone rock. It was overhung with mimosa-bushes; and it was not until after considerable search, that I could find a convenient place for fording it. This I named the Norton. Good grassy hills arose beyond, and after crossing them, we found an undulating country and sandy soil, where there were shallow lagoons and but little grass. At nine miles, I was aware, from the sloping of the ground, of the vicinity of a river; and we soon came once more upon the Wimmera, flowing in one deep channel nearly as broad as the Murrumbidgee, but in no other respect at all similar. The banks of this newly discovered river were not water-worn, but characterised by verdant slopes, the borders being fringed with bushes of mimose. The country was indeed fine adjacent to the Wimmera, and at the point where we came to it, the river was joined by a running creek from the south, which we crossed, and at two miles and a quarter further, we encamped on a spot overlooking a reedy lagoon, from which some long slopes, descended towards the river, distant from our camp about half a mile. When we thus again intersected the Wimmera, I was travelling due west, partly with a view to ascertain its ultimate course. The isolated hill lay before me, and it was now to be ascertained, whether the course of the stream was to the south or north of it. The appearance of the country from Mount Zero certainly afforded no prospect of our falling in with the river where we did, but at this camp, Burnett having climbed to the top of a high tree, thought he could trace the course to the southward of the hill before us, which bore nearly west. This prospect accorded with my wishes, and I hoped to trace it to the coast, without deviating too far to the westward of my intended route.

July 22. — A small stream from the south crossed our way, when we had proceeded about half a mile. At six miles and a half, we met with another; and three miles beyond it, I perceived a change in the appearance of the country. We had been for some time travelling through forest land, which now opened into grassy and level plains, variegated with belts and clumps of lofty trees, giving to the whole the appearance of a park. We had now the hilly mass of Mount Arapiles on our right, or north of us, but to my surprise there was no river flowing between us and those heights, as I had reason to suppose from what had been seen from the tree by Burnett. Turning towards the north-west, therefore, and at last northward, we finally encamped on a spot to the westward of the hill, after a journey of sixteen miles. Much of the ground near this hill was so soft, that one of the carts could not be brought in before midnight, although assisted by several teams, sent back from the camp. We were now encamped on a dark coloured soil, from which arose the same peculiar smell, that I had remarked at Cudjällagong (Regent’s Lake of Oxley). What had become of the Wimmera, I could scarcely imagine, but anxious to ascertain its course, I hastened, before sunset, to a western extremity of the hill; but
instead of the river, of which I could see no trace, I beheld the sun setting over numerous lakes: the nearest, two miles and a half to the northward, being apparently six miles in circumference. It seemed to be nearly circular, and a group of low grassy hills formed a concentric curve around the eastern margin, and from the total absence of any reeds, trees, or smoke of natives, it was too obvious that the water was salt. From the spot where I then stood, I counted twelve such lakes, most of them appearing to have a crescent-shaped mound or bank on the eastern side. This certainly was a remarkable portion of the earth’s surface, and rather resembled that of the moon as seen through a telescope. The eastern and principal summit of the hill was at some distance; and I returned to the camp, in hopes of being able to discover from that point, in the morning, some indication of the further course of the Wimmera.

July 23. — Having ascended the highest summit, I counted from that height, twenty-seven circular lakes, two of the largest being about seven miles to the north-east, the direction in which I expected to see the river. Beyond these, however, I observed an extensive woody valley, whence much smoke arose, marking, to all appearance, the course of the Wimmera, which must have taken a turn in that direction, not far below the junction of the last creek, crossed by the party. Beyond that supposed bed of the Wimmera, the country appeared to be undulated, open, and grassy; and it was probably covered with lakes similar to those on this side, for I had observed from Mount Zero, patches of water in that direction. From this summit, I had a good view of the Grampians of the South, and discovering that a lofty range extended from them southward, I named it the Victoria range, having also recognised and intersected Mount William, distant 53½ miles. I could see no high land to the westward, and the hill on which I stood seemed to divide the singular lacustrine country, from that where the character of the surface was fluviatile. Mount Arapiles is a feature which may always be easily recognised, both by its isolated position, and by its small companion the Mitre Rock, situated midway between it and the lake to the northward, which I named Mitre Lake after the little hill, its neighbour. Like the mountains in the east, Mount Arapiles consists of sandstone passing into quartz, the whole apparently an altered sandstone, the structure being in one part almost destroyed; in others perfectly distinct, and containing pebbles of quartz. At the western extremity, this rock occurs in columns, resembling, at a distance, those of basalt (See Pl. 31). On the steep slopes grew pines, casuarine, and a variety of shrubs, among which we found a fine new species of Bæckea, forming a handsome evergreen bush, the ends of whose graceful branches were closely covered with small white delicate flowers.* This mass occupies about two square miles, its highest summit being elevated above Mitre Lake 726 feet. I ascended this hill on the anniversary of the battle of Salamanca, and hence the name.

July 24. — While Mr. Stapylton rode northward in search of the Wimmera, I proceeded to examine and survey some of these remarkable lakes. On the margin of one of them, bearing 55½° W. of N. from our camp, a green hill of rather singular shape rose to a considerable height, above the surrounding country. I
found the water in the lake beside it, shallow and quite salt. The basin was nearly circular, though partially filled with firm level earth, which was water-worn at the brink, its surface being about three feet higher than the water. This was surrounded by a narrow beach of soft white mud or clay, in which we found no change, on digging to the depth of several feet. The green hill was the highest of several semicircular ridges, whose forms may perhaps be better understood by the accompanying plan.‡ There was a remarkable analogy in the form and position of all these hills; the form being usually that of a curve, concentric with the lake, and the position invariably on the eastern or north-eastern shores, a peculiarity I had previously observed, not only in the lakes near the banks of the Murray, but also in others on the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan, where the ridge consisted of red sand. The country on the western shore of these lakes is, on the contrary, low and wooded like the surrounding country. In such hills concretions of indurated marl frequently occur, but the earth they consist of is sometimes light coloured, in other cases very dark, like the soil from trap-rock, and the ridges beside the lakes on the Murrumbidgee, consisted of red sand. The water of Mitre lake was also salt, but there were numbers of ducks and black swans upon it. The western shore was low, and the soil where it had been thrown up, in the roots of fallen trees, was nearly as white as chalk. A gray rather fine quartzose sand occurred in some places; and along the water’s edge a very minute shell had been cast up in considerable quantities by the waves.† The hills to the eastward of this lake were arranged in a crescent around the basin, but this being composed of a number of hills almost separate from each other, had a less regular or uncommon appearance, although they were, apparently, the remains of a curve equally as symmetrical as the others. The basin of this lake was very extensive, but partly filled on the side next the low hills, by a level tract of dry land, covered with a brown bush, (Salicornia arbuscula of Brown); and the concentric curves in which it grew, as if closing on the lake, seemed to record its progressive diminution. The breadth of this heathy-looking flat, between the water and the crescent of low hills, was nearly half a mile. A small rill of fresh water oozed into the lake from the sides of Mount Arapiles. The bed of this water-course was soft and boggy near the lake, so that I could cross only by going up its channel much nearer to the hill, and at a point where some rocks protruded and prevented our horses from sinking.

Mr. Stapylton, in his search for the Wimmera, rode about six miles to the northward without reaching the river, although he saw the valley, through which he thought it flowed; and where the river seemed likely to resume a course to the southward of west. Upon the whole, I think that the estuary of the Wimmera will most probably be found either between Cape Bernouilli and Cape Jaffa, or at some of the sandy inlets laid down by Captain Flinders to the northward of the first of these capes. The country which Mr. Stapylton crossed, assumed the barren character of the lower parts of the Murray. He actually passed through a low scrub of the eucalyptus dumosa; but I have no doubt that the country on the immediate banks of the Wimmera continues good, whatever its course may be, even to the sea-coast. At all events, I here abandoned the pursuit of that river, and determined
to turn towards the south-west, that we might ascertain what streams fell in that
direction, from the Grampians; and also the nature of the country between these
mountains and the shores of the Southern Ocean.

July 25. — Proceeding accordingly about south-west, we crossed at less than a
mile from our camp, the dry bed of a circular lake. The ground on the eastern shore
was full of wombat holes, which had been made in a stratum of compact tuff, about
a foot in thickness. The tuff was irregularly cavernous; and it was loose, calcareous
or friable in the lower part, where the wombats had made their burrows. On the
opposite margin of this dry lake, the surface was covered with concretions of
indurated marl; and the burrows of the wombat were even more numerous there
than in the other bank; the stratum of compact tuff occurring also, and being three
feet in thickness. At 2¼ miles, we came upon the shores of Red lake, which I so
named from the colour of a weed growing upon its margin. The lake was nearly a
mile in length and half a mile broad; the water was so slightly brackish, that reeds
grew upon the borders, which were frequented by many swans and ducks. A very
symmetrical bank overlooked the eastern shore, the ground on the westward being
low and wooded with the ordinary trees of the country. We next crossed a flat of
dry white sand, on which banksia grew thickly; and then we reached some low
white sand-hills, on which were stunted iron-bark trees (eucalypti). In the higher part
of those hills, we crossed a small dry hollow or lake which had also its bank on the
eastern side. At the end of 5½ miles, we passed two small lakes of fresh water,
about half a mile to the right, and soon after, another about the same distance to
the left. On completing seven miles, we crossed a low ridge of white sand, on which
grew stunted trees of stringy-bark, and black butted gum-trees (both belonging to
the genus eucalyptus). Beyond this we crossed a country, in which wet, reedy swamps
of fresh water, white sand-hills, and fine flats of good forest-land, occurred
alternately. Towards the end of our day’s journey, the barren sand-hills seemed to
prevail, but at length we descended from them rather suddenly to a smooth firm
plain, clothed with the finest grass, and, on the edge of this, we pitched our tents
for the night.

July 26. — We proceeded through a thick fog, and found the plain studded with
clumps of casuarina. About a mile from the camp, we came upon an extensive
swamp or lake, full of grass and rushes. Turning this, by the left, we crossed some
more good country, and then reached the banks of an extensive lagoon, also full of
green rushes and water. The western bank was high, and consisted of rich grassy
land, very open; a small stream of water fell into the lake on the north-west side,
and another on the south-east. It was surrounded by lofty gum-trees, and had a
wood on the south and east. We met with sand-hills and stunted timber beyond.
They enclosed a long grassy flat covered with water, stretching away to the south-
est. We next entered on a fine flat of forest-land, bounded by a low ridge, with
callitris pyramidalis, or pine trees. From this, I perceived a circular lake a little to our
right, and on riding to it, I found the water salt and of a very white colour. No trees
grew on the margin, and the surrounding scene was so dreary, that it resembled a
mountain-tarn. Two solitary ducks were upon it, apparently of a species new to us,
but this I could not ascertain, having had only my rifle with me, and the cap missing
fire, I lost even that chance of killing them. The bed of the lake also consisted of a
very white marl. A high semi-circular bank swept round the eastern shore; that
opposite, or towards the west, being low and swampy. On that side, I saw two
natives at a distance, making the best of their way to the southward. We had this
day noticed some of their huts, which were of a very different construction from
those of the aborigines, in general, being large, circular, and made of straight rods
meeting at an upright pole in the centre; the outside had been first covered with
bark and grass, and then entirely coated over with clay. The fire appeared to have
been made nearly in the centre; and a hole at the top had been left as a chimney.
The place seemed to have been in use for years, as a casual habitation. In this hut,
the natives had left various articles, such as jagged spears, some of them set with
flints; and an article of their manufacture which we had not before seen, namely,
bags of the gins, very neatly wrought, apparently made of a tough small rush. Two
of these also resembled reticules, and contained balls of resin, flints for the spear-
heads, &c. The iron bolt of a boat was likewise found in one of these huts. The
natives invariably fled at our approach; a circumstance to be regretted, perhaps, on
account of the nomenclature of my map; but otherwise their flight was preferable
to the noisy familiarity of the natives of the Darling, perplexing us between their
brands of defiance, and treacherous invitations to dance. Indeed the two regions
were as different in character as the manners of their respective inhabitants. Instead
of salsolaceous deserts and mesembryanthemum, we now found a variety of every
thing most interesting in a newly discovered country. Every day we passed over
land, which, for natural fertility and beauty, could scarcely be surpassed; over
streams of unfailing abundance, and plains covered with the richest pasturage.
Stately trees and majestic mountains adorned the ever-varying scenery of this
region, the most southern of all Australia, and the best. Beyond the White lake,
which may be the distinguishing name of the last-mentioned, we passed over
several tracts of open forest-land, separated by dry sand-hills, and at length
encamped on a rich flat. The cattle were very much fatigued from the heaviness of
the draught, owing to the extreme softness of the surface, especially on the more
open forest-lands; and one bullock-driver remained behind with a cart, until we
could send back a team by moonlight to his assistance.

July 27. — The cart which had fallen behind came in about three o’clock in the
morning. The natives had soon been heard about the solitary driver, and four of
them came up to him and demanded tomahawks; but, being an old bushranger, he,
on their approach, laid out all his cartridges one by one before him on a tarpaulin,
with his pistol and carabine, ready for action; but, fortunately, his visitors did not
proceed to extremities. The morning was very foggy, and as this weather did not
admit of my choosing a good line of route, and as the surface of the country was so
soft, that it was imperatively necessary to look well before us, I halted. I could thus
at least bring up my maps and journals, and rest the jaded cattle after so much long-
continued daily toil in travelling through the mud. I directed Mr. Stapylton to ride
in the direction of 30° W. of S. (my intended route), and ascertain whether we were
approaching any river. The country we were in, being still lacustrine, I hoped to find the surface more favourable for travelling upon, where it was drained by rivers; for on that amongst the salt lakes, although the land was very good in point of fertility, there was evidently a deficiency of slope, and consequently much more water retained in the soil. Still the ground presented undulations, being rarely quite level like the plains, except indeed in the beds of swamps. Recent experience had taught us to avoid the very level parts, and to seek any kind of rising ground. The hills we occasionally fell in with consisted of white sand, and at first looked like connected ridges, where we might find streams; but we ascertained that they always parted without enclosing any channels, and left us in the mud. The sand itself still consisted of the same rock (decomposed), which appeared to be so generally spread over the country then between us and the eastern shores of New Holland. Mr. Stapyton did not return this evening, a circumstance which very much alarmed me, as he had taken only one man with him, and was to have come back before sunset.

July 28. — Supposing that Mr. Stapyton had gone past our camp, in returning, the afternoon having been very rainy, I this morning sent out two parties, the one to proceed east, the other west, in search of his track, which, if found by either, was to be followed until he was overtaken. Mr. Stapyton returned, however, before mid-day, having ridden twenty miles in the direction pointed out, without having seen any river. He had passed a number of circular lakes, similar to those already described; the seventh and most remote having appeared the largest. Just then, as he turned his horse, he perceived that the land beyond became higher, indicating a change of country. The party, which had gone eastward, heard our signal shot on Mr. Stapyton’s arrival, and returned, having also seen four similar lakes; but the party sent westward did not reach the camp until some hours after the other. They had unfortunately come upon some huts of the natives, where one of them remained, and who, refusing to listen to Piper’s explanations, was about to hurl his spear at Pickering, when this man, at Piper’s desire, immediately fired his carabine and wounded the native in the arm. I regretted this unlucky collision exceedingly, and blamed Pickering for having been so precipitate; but his defence was, that Piper told him unless he fired, he would be instantly speared.

July 29. — We endeavoured to proceed to-day in a direction more to the eastward, than the route of Mr. Stapyton, in the hope of finding firmer ground than he had seen, by following that which was highest and sandy. But even in this way we could not accomplish five miles and a half, although the last of the carts did not arrive at the spot, where we were at length compelled to re-encamp, until long after it became dark. The wheels sank up to the axles, and the cattle, from wallowing in the mud, had become so weak as to be scarcely able to go forward when unyoked, much less to draw the laden carts. I had with difficulty found a spot of firm ground where we could encamp, but during that evening, I had reconnoitred a more favourable looking line, which I meant to try in the morning.

Soon after we commenced this day’s journey, while I was watching in some anxiety the passage of a soft hollow by the carts, a man was sent back by the chaining party to inform me, that a number of natives had come before them,
pointing their spears. On going forward, I found they had retired, having probably, with their usual quickness of perception, observed the messenger sent back, and guessed his errand. But their conduct, as I then explained it to the men, was quite reasonable on this occasion. One (I was told), had spoke very loud and fast, pointing west towards where the man had been fired at the day before, and then touching his shoulder, in allusion to the wound, he finally poised his spear at Blanchard, as if in just resentment.

While awaiting the slow progress of the carts through the mud, I found a most curious new genus allied to Correa, with the habit of C. speciosa, and with long tubular four-petaled, green flowers. It had been previously observed by Mr. Cunningham, who called it Sida correoides; it was, however, not a Sida, nor even a Malvaceous plant, but a new form of Australasian Rutaceæ, differing from Correa in having the petals each rolled round a pair of stamens, in its quadripartite conical calyx, and in there being constantly two seeds in each cell of the fruit.*

July 30. — By pursuing a course towards the base of the friendly mountains, I hoped that we should at length intercept some stream, channel or valley, where we might find a drier soil, and so escape, if possible, from the region of lakes. We could but follow such a course, however, only as far as the ground permitted, and after travelling over the hardest that we could this day find for a mile and a half, I discovered a spacious lake on the left, bounded on the east by some fine-looking green hills. These separated it from a plain where I found the ground firm, and also from several smaller lakes to the right of my intended route. I accordingly proceeded along the ground between them, and I found that it bore the wheels much better than any, we had recently crossed. The lakes were, however, still precisely similar in character to those of which we had already seen so many. The water in them was rather too brackish to be fit for use, and the ridges were all still on the eastern shores. From the highest of these ridges, the pinnacled summits of the Victoria range presented an outline of the grandest character. The noble coronet of rocks was indeed a cheering object to us, after having been so long half immersed in mud. We had passed between the lakes, and were proceeding as lightly as we could across the plain, when down went the wheel of a cart, sinking to the axle, and the usual noise of flogging (cruelty which I had repeatedly forbidden), and a consequent delay of several hours, followed. In the mean-time, I rode to some grassy hills on the right, and found behind them on the south-west, another extensive lake, on which I saw a great number of ducks. Its bed consisted of dark-coloured mud, and the water was also salt. The green hills before mentioned, were curiously broken and scooped out into small cavities, much resembling those on Green-hill Lake, near Mount Arapiles. The plain rose gradually towards the east, to some scrubby ground nearly as high as these hills, and in a fall beyond this scrub, I found at length, to my great delight, a small hollow sloping to the south-east, and a little water running in it. Following it down, I almost immediately perceived a ravine before me, and at a mile and a quarter from the first fall of the ground, I crossed a chain of fine ponds, in a valley where we finally encamped on a fine stream, flowing to the south-west over granite rocks.* Thus suddenly were we at length relieved,
from all the difficulties of travelling in mud. We had solid granite beneath us; and
instead of a level horizon, the finely rounded points of ground, presented by the
sides of a valley thinly wooded and thickly covered with grass. This transition from
all that we sought to avoid, to all we could desire in the character of the country,
was so agreeable, that I can record that evening as one of the happiest of my life.
Here too the doctor reported, that no men remained on the sick-list, and thus we
were in all respects prepared for going forward, and making up for so much time
lost.

July 31. — We now moved merrily over hill and dale, but were soon, however,
brought to a full stop by a fine river flowing, at the point where we met it, nearly
south-west. The banks of this stream were thickly overhung with bushes of the
mimosa, which were festooned in a very picturesque manner with the wild vine.
The river was everywhere deep and full, and as no ford could be found we prepared
to cross it with the boats. But such a passage required at least a day, and when I saw
the boats afloat, I was tempted to consider, whether I might not explore the further
course of this river in them, and give the cattle some rest. It was likely, I imagined,
soon to join another, where we might meet with less obstruction. During the day
every thing was got across save the empty carts and the boat-carriage, our camp
being thus established on the left bank. One bullock was unfortunately drowned in
attempting to swim across, having got entangled in the branches of a sunken tree;
which, notwithstanding a careful search, previously made in the bottom of the
stream, had not been discovered.

The river was here, on an average, 120 feet wide, and 12 feet deep. Granite*
protruded in some places, but in general the bold features of the valley through
which this stream flowed, were beautifully smooth and swelling; they were not
much wooded, but on the contrary almost clear of timber, and accessible
everywhere. The features were bold and round, but only so inclined, that it was just
possible to ride in any direction without obstruction; a quality of which those who
have been shut up among the rocky gullies of New South Wales, must know well
the value. I named this river the Glenelg, after the Right Hon. the Secretary of State
for the Colonies, according to the usual custom.

Aug. 1. — The first part of this day was taken up in dragging the carts and boat-
carriage through the river. At one P.M. I embarked in the boats, taking in them a
fortnight’s provisions, and leaving Mr. Stapylton in a strong position, with nine
men, the stores and the cattle. We proceeded for two miles without encountering
much obstruction, but we found on going further, that the river ran in several
channels, all of these being overgrown with bushes, so that it was not without great
difficulty, that we could penetrate about a mile farther by the time it had become
nearly quite dark. It was no easy matter, to push through the opposing branches
even to reach the bank. Many similar branches had been cut during this day’s
navigation; Woods, Palmer, and most of the other men, having been more in the
water than in the boats during the last mile. Every article having been at length got
to land, we encamped on the side of a steep hill for the night, and I made up my
mind to resume our land journey next day, unless I saw the river more favourable a-
head. By the banks of the Glenelg, we found a stiff furze-like bush, with small purple flowers, spiny branches, and short stiff spiny leaves. It proved to be a new Daviesia allied to *D. colletioides.* *Bossiaea cordifolia,* a hairy shrub, with beautiful purple and yellow flowers, was common.

Aug. 2. — There was a noble reach, a quarter of a mile below the point to which we had brought the boats, and it was terminated by a rocky fall, which we had heard during the night. Beyond that point, the river turned southward, and this being the direction of our intended journey, I perceived that we could more conveniently and in less time pursue its course by land. The country on its banks was, as far as I could see, the finest imaginable, either for sheep and cattle or for cultivation. A little rill then murmured through each ravine,

“Whose scattered streams from granite basins burst,
Leap into life, and sparkling woo your thirst.”

But it was in returning along a winding ridge towards the camp, that I was most struck with the beauty and substantial value of the country on the banks of this river. It seemed, that the land was everywhere alike good, alike beautiful; all parts were verdant, whether on the finely varied hills or in the equally romantic vales, which seemed to open in endless succession on both banks of the river. No time was lost this morning in raising the boats out of the water; and having proceeded myself to the camp at an early hour, and led the carts round, and the carriage to take up the boats, the whole party was once more in movement by eleven o’clock.

As far as I had yet traced the course of the river, it appeared to flow towards the west-south-west, and it was thus doubtful, at that stage of our progress, whether the estuary might not be to the westward of Cape Northumberland; whereas my chief inducement in looking for a river on this side of the Grampians, was the promising situation afforded by the great bay to the eastward of that cape, for some harbour or estuary, and this being more likely, considering the position of the mountains. I had little doubt that under such circumstances, some river would be found to enter the sea there; and having left the Wimmera flowing westward, and crossed as I imagined the highest ground, that could extend from the mountain range to Cape Bernouilli, I expected to meet at length with rivers falling southward. The ultimate course of the Glenelg, could only be ascertained by following it down, and to do this by land was not easy; first, because it was joined by many small tributaries flowing through deep valleys, and from all points of the compass; and secondly, because the general horizon was so level, that no point commanding any extensive view over the country could be found. Thus, while our main object was to pursue the river, we were obliged to grope our way round the heads of ravines often very remote from it, but which were very perplexing from their similarity to the ravine in which the main stream flowed. A more bountiful distribution of the waters, for the supply of a numerous population, could not be imagined, nor a soil better adapted for cultivation. We this day crossed various small rivulets or chains of ponds, each watering a grassy vale, sheltered by fine swelling hills. The whole country consisted of open forest land, on which grew a few gum-trees (or *eucalypti*), with *banksia,* and,
occasionally, a few casuarina.  

Aug. 3. — The ponds where we had encamped, were large and deep, and I endeavoured to ascertain whether the codperch (Gristes Peelii) inhabited these waters. Neither this fine fish, nor either of the two others found in the streams flowing towards the interior from the eastern coast range, have ever been seen in the rivers which reach the eastern shores; and I had now ascertained, that all the waters in which we had procured the fish in question belonged to the extensive basin of the Murray. We were at length on channels evidently distinct, both from those leading to the eastern coast, and those belonging to the basin of the Murray. The beds of the rivers flowing to the east coast are chiefly rocky, containing much sand but very little mud, consequently no reeds grow on their banks, nor is the freshwater muscle found in them, as in rivers on the interior side, which in general flow over a muddy bed, and are not unfrequently distinguished by reedy banks. Judging therefore from the nature of the soil of this southern region, the fishes peculiar to the Murray might be looked for in the rivers of the south, rather than those fishes known in the rivers falling eastward. It was important to ascertain at least, what point of the coast separated the rivers containing different kinds of fish. In these ponds we caught only some very small fry, and the question could not be satisfactorily determined, although the natives declared that none of them were the spawn of cod-perch.

It was no easy matter now to ascertain in what direction the waters of the valley ran, but by the tendency of the hollows on each side, they appeared to decline, in general, to the left or northward. In proceeding on our route, the heads of other similar ravines rendered our course very intricate: to have been shut in between any such ravine and the river must have been rather embarrassing, and seemed then almost inevitable. We had the good fortune however to avoid this; and at length, keeping along dry ground, a beautiful scene appeared on the left, in an open valley about two miles in width, where the hills sloped gradually to the confluence of two streams, brimful of water, which shone through some highly ornamental wood. Both streams came from valleys of a similar character; and beyond them I saw hills of the finest forms, all clothed with grass to their summits, and many entirely clear of timber. A bronze-winged pigeon flew up just as I discovered the stream, and as this bird had not been before seen by us on that side of the mountains, I named the waters “Pigeon” ponds. We descended to that part of the valley which lay in our proposed course, and found that some of these ponds rather deserved to be styled lakes. The soil was everywhere black and rich.

Aug. 4. — Proceeding over ground of a similar character, we crossed several fine streams, some flowing in shallow channels over rocks, others in deep ravines. The ground on the higher parts was, however, still so soft as to yield to the wheels, and very much impeded the progress of the party, especially at one place, where an extensive lake, full of reeds or rushes, appeared to the right. The drays sunk to the axles, the whole of the soil in our way having become so liquid, that it rolled in waves around the struggling bullocks. The passage of some of the streams could not be accomplished, until we had filled up the bed with large logs, covered them
with boughs, and strewed over the whole, the earth cut away from the steep banks. Under such circumstances, I considered six miles a good day's journey, and indeed, too much for the cattle. I halted for the night, with a small advanced party only, on a fine little stream running over a rocky bed; while the main body was compelled to remain with the carts several miles behind, having broken, in the efforts made to extricate the carts and boat-carriage, many of the chains, and also a shaft. The small river I had reached, ran in a bed of little width, but was withal so deep, that it seemed scarcely passable without a bridge. At the junction, however, of a similar one, some rocks, favourably situated, enabled us to effect a passage by bedding logs between them, and covering the whole with branches and earth, leaving room for the water to pass between.

Aug. 5. — A halt was this day unavoidable, but the necessity was the less to be regretted, as the weather was very unfavourable. Indeed, we had scarcely seen one fine day for some weeks. Mr. Stapylton set out to trace the rivulet downwards, and returned in the evening, after having reached its junction with the Glenelg, at the distance of nine miles in a north-west direction. The course of the river, thus determined to that junction, appeared to be more to the westward than I had previously expected, and I begun again to think its estuary might still be to the westward of Cape Northumberland, and this prospect induced me to alter our course. The carts having come up about one P.M., the blacksmith was set to work, and wrought throughout the night to repair all the claw-chains. While other men were employed at the log-bridge, some natives were heard coming along the most southern of the two streams; whereupon Piper went towards them as usual, and found they were females, with children; but from the moment they discovered us, until they were fairly out of hearing, their shrieks were so loud and incessant, that it seemed, for once, our presence in that country had been unknown to the surrounding natives, a proof perhaps of the smallness of their numbers. In the evening, other natives (men), were heard approaching along the creek, and we at first supposed they had come to that place, as their rendezvous, to meet the gins and their families, whom we had unwillingly scared; but Mr. Stapylton, during his ride home along one side of the ravine, had observed four natives very intent on following the outward track of his horses' hoofs on the other; and these were doubtless the same men guided by his tracks to our camp. They could not be brought to a parley, however, although Piper and Burnett at first invited them towards the camp, and when they set off, pursued them across the opposite ridge. On the bank of this little stream, I found a charming species of Tetratheca, with large rich purple flowers, and slender stems growing in close tufts about a foot high. It was perhaps the most beautiful plant we met with during the expedition.*

Aug. 6. — The passage of the rivulet, which I named the Chetwynd, after Stapylton, who had explored it at considerable risk, was effected with ease by the temporary bridge, and we proceeded, soon crossing by similar means two other running streams, probably tributaries to this. When we had travelled four miles we came to a swamp, where a considerable current of water was flowing into it through some ponds; the margin of this running water being broad, flat, and grassy, and
having also lofty gum-trees (white bark *eucalypti*) growing on it. Unfortunately, it was so soft and *rotten*, as the men described it, that all the wheels sunk to the axles, and although in such cases it was usual to apply the combined force of several teams to draw each vehicle through in turn, we found that the rising ground opposite was equally soft and yielding, so that the cattle could have no firm footing to enable them to pull. It was night before we could, with the strength of all the teams united by long chains and yoked to each vehicle successively, bring the whole through, the broad wheels of each cart actually ploughing to the depth of the axle in soft earth; the labour of the cattle may therefore be imagined. We encamped on a small barren plain much resembling a heath, and just beyond the swamp which had proved so formidable an impediment.

_Aug. 7._ — Our progress this day was still less than that made during the preceding one, for it did not much exceed a mile. To that distance we had proceeded tolerably well, having crossed two small running brooks, and all appeared favourable before us. But a broad piece of rising ground, which being sandy with *banksia* and *casuarinae* trees on it, I had considered firm, proved so very soft, that even my own horse went down with me and wallowed in the mud. There was no way of avoiding this spot, at least without delay, and I ordered the men immediately to encamp; being determined to go forward with a party on horseback, and ascertain the position of some point where the ground was more favourable, and then to adopt such a mode of extricating the carts and proceeding thither, as circumstances permitted. I took with me provisions for three days, that I might explore the country, if necessary, to the coast. I had not proceeded above five miles southward, when I perceived before me a ridge in bluey distance, rather an unusual object in that close country. We soon after emerged from the wood, and found that we were on a kind of table-land, and approaching a deep ravine coming from our right, and terminating on a very fine looking open country below, watered by a winding river. We descended by a bold feature to the bottom of the ravine, and found there a foaming little river hurrying downwards over rocks. After fording this stream, we ascended a very steep but grassy mountain-side, and on reaching a brow of high land, what a noble prospect appeared! a river winding amongst meadows, that were fully a mile broad, and green as an emerald. Above them rose swelling hills of fantastic shapes, but all smooth and thickly covered with rich verdure. Behind these were higher hills, all having grass on their sides and trees on their summits, and extending east and west, throughout the landscape, as far as I could see. I hastened to ascertain the course of the river, by riding about two miles along an entirely open grassy ridge, and then found again the Glenelg, flowing eastward, towards an apparently much lower country. All our difficulties seemed thus already at an end, for we had here good firm ground clear of timber, on which we could gallop once more. The river was making for the most promising bay on the coast, (for I saw that it turned southward some miles below the hill on which I stood,) through a country far surpassing in beauty and richness any part hitherto discovered. I hastened back to my men in the mud, and arrived before sunset with the good news, having found most of the intervening country fit for travelling upon. Thus the muddy hill which had before
seemed insurmountable, led to the immediate discovery of the true course of the river, and prevented me from continuing my route into the great angle of its course over unfavourable ground, instead of thus reaching it so much sooner by a much less deviation from the course I wished to pursue. I now hoped to extricate the carts in the morning, and henceforward to accomplish journeys of considerable length.

**Aug. 8.** — It was in vain that I reconnoitered the environs of the hill of mud for some portion of surface harder than the rest; and we could only extricate ourselves by floundering through it. Patches of clay occurred, but they led only to places, where the surface under the pressure of the cattle was immediately converted into white and liquid mud. It was necessary to take the loads from the carts, and carry them by hand half a mile; and then to remove the empty vehicles by the same means. After all this had been accomplished, the boat-carriage, (a four-wheeled waggon,) still remained immovably fixed up to the axle-tree in mud, in a situation where the block and tackle used in hoisting out the boats could not be applied. Much time was lost in our attempts to draw it through, by joining all the chains we possessed, and applying the united strength of all the bullocks; but even this was at length accomplished after the sun had set; the wheels, four inches broad, actually cutting through to the full depth of the spokes. On the eastern side of the hill the ground descended into a ravine, where it was grassy and firm enough; and it was a great relief to us all to feel thus at liberty, even by sunset, to start next morning towards the beautiful country, which we now knew lay before us.
Chapter X.

Cross various rivulets — Enter the valley of Nangeela — Native female and child — Encamp on the Glenelg — Cross the Wannon — Rifle range — Mount Gambier first seen from it — Sterile moors crossed by the party — Natives numerous but not accessible — Again arrive on the Glenelg — Indifferent country on its banks — Breadth and velocity of the river — Encamp on a tributary — Difficult passage — The expedition brought to a stand in soft ground — Excursion beyond — Reach a fine point on the river — The carts extricated — The whole equipment reaches the river — The boats launched on the Glenelg — Mr. Stapylton left with a dépôt at Fort O'Hare — Character of the river — Ornithorynchus paradoxus — Black swans — Water brackish — Isle of Bags — Arrival at the sea coast — Discovery Bay — Mouth of the Glenelg — Waterholes dug in the beach — Remarkable hollow — Limestone cavern — One fish caught in the Glenelg — Stormy weather — Return to the dépôt — Difference in longitude.

Aug. 9. — ONCE more in a state of forward movement, we crossed green hills and running brooks, until, when we had travelled nearly six miles from Muddy Camp, and had crossed six fine streams or burns, we met with a more formidable impediment in the seventh. The sides of this ravine were so uncommonly steep, that our new difficulty was how to move the vehicles down to the bank of the stream. In one place, where a narrow point of ground projected across, a passage seemed just possible; and after we had made it better with spades, we attempted to take a light cart over. The acclivity was still, however, rather too much, and over went the cart, carrying the shaft bullock with it, and depositing all my instruments, &c. under it in the bed of the stream. With travellers on roads, this might have been thought a serious accident, but in our case, we were prepared for joltings, and nothing was in the least degree injured; neither was the animal hurt, and we ascertained by the experiment, dangerous though it was, that still more was necessary to be done for the passage of the heavy carts and boats, which were still some way behind; and I encamped on the bank beyond, that the men might set about this work. No time was lost in filling up the hollow with all the dead trees that lay about, and what others we could cut for the purpose; and thus, before sunset, the three carts and one waggon were got across. The rocks in the bed of this stream, consisted of grey gneiss, and on the hills beyond it, I found nodules of highly ferruginous sandstone.

Aug. 10. — By means of a block and tackle attached to a large tree, the remaining carts and the boat-carriage were safely lowered to the bed of the stream. To draw them up the opposite bank was practicable only by uniting the strength of several teams, yet this too was effected successfully, and the whole party were enabled to go forward in the morning. At a mile and a half from the camp, a scene was displayed to our view, which gladdened every heart. An open grassy country,
extending as far as we could see, — hills round and smooth as a carpet,— meadows broad, and either green as an emerald, or of a rich golden colour, from the abundance, as we soon afterwards found, of a little ranunculus-like flower. Down into that delightful vale, our vehicles trundled over a gentle slope, the earth being covered with a thick matted turf, apparently superior to anything of the kind, previously seen. That extensive valley was enlivened by a winding stream, the waters of which glittered through trees fringing each bank. As we went on our way rejoicing, I perceived at length two figures at a distance, who at first either did not see, or did not mind us. They proved to be a gin with a little boy, and as soon as the female saw us, she began to run. I presently overtook her, and with the few words I knew, prevailed on her to stop, until the two gins of our party could come up; for I had long been at a loss for the names of localities. This woman was not so much alarmed as might have been expected; and I was glad to find that she and the gins perfectly understood each other. The difference in the costume on the banks of the Wándo, immediately attracted the notice of the females from the Lachlan. The bag usually carried by gins, was neatly wove in basketwork, and composed of a wiry kind of rush. She of Wándo carried this bag fastened to her back, having under it two circular mats of the same material, and beneath all, a kangaroo cloak, so that her back at least was sufficiently clothed, although she wore no dress in front. The boy was supported between the mats and cloak; and his pleased and youthful face, he being a very fine specimen of the native race, presented a striking contrast to the miserable looks of his whining mother. In the large bag, she carried some pieces of firewood, and a few roots, apparently of Taö, which she had just been digging from the earth. Such was the only visible inhabitant of this splendid valley, resembling a nobleman’s park on a gigantic scale. She stated that the main river was called “Temíángandgeen,” a name unfortunately too long to be introduced into maps. We also obtained the gratifying intelligence, that the whole country to the eastward was similar to these delightful vales; and that, in the same direction, as Piper translated her statement, “there was no more sticking in mud.” A favourable change in the weather accompanied our fortunate transition, from the land of watery soil and dark woody ravines, to an open country. The day was beautiful; and the balmy air was sweetened with a perfume resembling hay, which arose from the thick and matted herbs and grass. Proceeding along the valley, the stream on our left vanished at an isolated, rocky hill; but, on closer examination, I found the apparent barrier cleft in two, and that the water passed through, roaring over rocks. This was rather a singular feature in an open valley, where the ground on each side of it, was almost as low as the rocky bed of the stream itself. The bill was composed of granular felspar, in a state of decomposition; the surrounding country consisting chiefly of very fine grained sandstone. It is not so easy to suppose that the river could ever have watered the valley in its present state, and forced its way since, through that isolated hill of hard rock; as to believe that the rock, now isolated, originally contained a chasm, and afforded once the lowest channel for the water, before the valley now so open, had been scooped out on each side, by gradual decomposition. Another rivulet approached this hill, flowing under its eastern side, and joining the
Wándo just below. According to my plan of following down the main river, it was necessary to cross both these tributaries. In the open part of the valley, the channels of these streams were deep, and the banks soft; but at the base of the hill of Kingányu (for such was its name), we found rock enough, and having effected a passage there of both streams that afternoon, we encamped, after travelling about three miles further, on the banks of the Glenelg once more. Our route lay straight across an open grassy valley, at the foot of swelling hills of the same description. Each of these valleys presented peculiar and very romantic features, but I could not decide which looked most beautiful. All contained excellent soil and grass, surpassing in quality any I had seen in the present colony of New South Wales. The chase of the emu and kangaroo, which were both numerous, afforded us excellent sport on these fine downs. When about to cross the Wando, I took my leave of the native woman before mentioned, that she might not have the trouble of fording the river, and I presented her with a tomahawk, of which our females explained to her the use — although she seemed still at a loss to conceive the meaning of a present.

The use of the little hatchet would be well enough known, however, to her tribe, so leaving her to return to it, and assuring her at the same time of our friendly disposition towards the natives, we proceeded.

The left bank of the principal stream was very bold, where we reached it on this occasion, but still open, and covered with rich turf. The right bank was woody, and this was generally its character at the other points where we had seen the Glenelg. It was flowing with considerable rapidity, amongst the same kind of bushes we had met with above, but they did not appear so likely here to obstruct the passage of boats.

On the plains, we found a singular acacia, the leaves being covered with a clammy exudation resembling honey-dew. It differed from A. graveolens in its much more rigid habit, shorter and broader leaves, and much shorter peduncles.*

Aug. 11. — Passing along the bank of the river, under the steep grassy hills, which consisted of very fine-grained, calcareous sandstone, we began, two miles on, to ascend these heights; as well to avoid a place where they closed precipitously on the Glenelg, as to gain a point, from which I hoped to command an extensive view of its further course, and so cut off some of the windings. From that point, or rather on riding through the woods to some distance beyond it, I perceived that the river was joined by another, coming from the south-east, through an open country of the finest character. Below their junction, the principal river disappeared on passing through a woody range, and turned towards the south-west. Nothing could be seen beyond that crest, which seemed a very predominant feature, bounding the fine valley of the Wannon on the south. By turning round the eastern brow of the high ground on which we then were, we gained a long ridge of smooth grassy land, leading, by an easy descent, from this height to the junction of the rivers. This high ground was thickly wooded with stringy-bark trees, of large dimensions, and a few other eucalypti, together with banksia and casuarina. The soil there was soft and sandy, and the substratum contained masses of iron-stone. The shrubs upon the whole reminded me of those in the wooded parts of the sand hills on the shores of
Port Jackson. Smoke arose from various parts of the distant country before us; and we perceived one native running at prodigious speed across the plain below. On reaching the banks of the Wannon, we found it a deep flowing stream, about half as large as the river itself. We succeeded in finding a ford, and crossed, after cutting away some bushes and levelling the banks. Beyond the Wannon, we travelled 2¼ miles over a portion of very fine country, and encamped in a little vale in the bosom of a woody range, the western side of which overhung the river at the distance of two miles.

Aug. 12. — A fine clear morning gave full effect to the beauty of the country which I now saw to the eastward, from a hill near our camp. The summit of the Victoria range crowned the distant landscape; and the whole of the intervening territory appeared to consist of green hills, partially wooded. We crossed a mountain-stream by filling up its bed with logs, and as we ascended the slopes beyond, we found the country grassy, until we reached the high and wooded crest. Lofty stringy-bark trees and other timber grew there on a white sandy soil; but we found among the bushes, abundance of the anthistiria or kangaroo grass.

After travelling some miles beyond this crest, we at length found the ground sloping to the southward; and some swampy hollows with reeds in them, obliged us to turn to the right, or south-west, as the water in these depressed parts falling eastward, or to the left, shewed that we were not so very near the river, on the right, which I was endeavouring to follow. We were delayed in several of these hollows by the sinking of the carts and boat-carriage. We next traversed an extensive moor or heath, on which the ground was firm, and a little way beyond it, some rising ground bounded our view. On ascending this highest feature, which I named the Rifle range, I found it commanded an extensive view over a low and woody country. One peaked hill alone appeared on the otherwise level horizon, and this bore 68° W. of S. I supposed this to be Mount Gambier, near Cape Northumberland, which, according to my survey, ought to have appeared in that direction at a distance of forty-five miles. I expected to find the river on reaching the lower country beyond this range; but, instead of the Glenelg and the rich country on its banks, we entered on extensive moors of the most sterile description. They were, however, firm enough for travelling upon, the surface being very level, and the soil a whitish sand. These open wastes were interrupted, in some parts, by clumps of stringy-bark forest, which entirely concealed from view the extent of this kind of country. Swamps full of water, and containing reeds of a dark yellow colour, at length became numerous; and, although I succeeded in pursuing a course clear of these obstacles, we were obliged to encamp at twilight, without having any immediate prospect of a better country before us. There was, however, abundance of grass in these wet swamps, and our carts passed over one, quite covered with water, without sinking. Our camp was marked out on a low hill of white sand, on which grew mahogany and stringy-bark trees of large dimensions. The range from which we had descended, now appeared continuous as far as we could see eastward. Much smoke arose from this lower country when we entered upon it, and after sunset, the incessant calls of a native were heard near our camp, as if he had lost
some comrade. I sent up a rocket, that he might be convinced, we had not arrived by stealth, as the tribes do, when they insidiously make war on each other, but he only reiterated his calls the more.

Aug. 13. — At day-break, the cries of the native were renewed. I then made Piper cooy to him, whereupon he became silent, and I heard him no more, the natives of that country being, as Piper expressed it, “still very wild.” This morning we were on the march as soon as the sun rose, all being very anxious to see the river again, and a better country. At two miles, we passed along a sandy ridge between two extensive swamps; but at a mile and a half farther, I found at length a small hollow and water running in it, a feature which convinced me at once, that the river could not be very distant. In the bank there was a thin stratum of shelly limestone, bearing a resemblance to some of the oolitic limestones of England; and in the bed were irregular concretions of iron-stone, containing grains of quartz, some of the concretions having externally a glazed appearance, arising from a thin coating of compact brown hematite. Casuarinae and banksia growing on grassy slopes, were the next marks of a different country from that of the swamps, and at less than a mile from this point, we came upon the river. Its banks had a different character from that which they presented above, but they were still fine. The river now flowed in a narrow valley, the bed being about 70 feet below the common level of the swampy flats. At sharp bends, the banks consisted of cliffs of a soft limestone, composed, in part, of comminuted fragments of corallines, the interstices being rarely filled up; the rock contained also a few specimens of Foraminifera, most probably of recent species. In the narrow valley all was flourishing and green, attesting the rich luxuriance of the alluvial soil. The mimosa trees predominated, but still the bushes of leptospermum darkened the stream, which was deep, rapid, and muddy, its breadth being about 40 yards, and the bed consisting of a friable or soft calcareous sandstone. In accompanying it in its course downward, we met with less difficulty than I had expected, but I perceived that the barren swampy land, or more frequently, the stringy-bark forests, approached the higher banks on both sides the river. The few ravines falling in our way, were only the drains from swamps close at hand, and they were easily crossed by the party, at the fall of the ground, where we found rocky strata. After tracing the river more than four miles, we encamped on an elevated point, overlooking a flat of good grass, so necessary for the cattle.

Aug. 14. — Some of the bullocks were missing, and we were compelled to wait an hour or two, while parties went in search of them; one party being guided by Piper, the other by the two Tommies. I availed myself of the leisure afforded by this delay, to measure the breadth, depth, and velocity of the river, which were respectively as follows:

Average breadth 35 yards.
Mean depth 17 feet.
Velocity of the current 1,863 yards per hour; the general course, as far as we had traced this portion being nearly S. E.

When most of the cattle had been brought in, we proceeded, and in endeavouring to keep along the highest ground between the swamps, I unavoidably left the river
at some distance on our right, a circumstance I considered of less consequence, as the ground appeared to be falling on my left towards some tributary; and at four miles, we came upon a small river flowing rapidly, in a valley nearly as deep and wide as the main stream. The country on its immediate bank looked better than that last found on the main stream. Limestone rock appeared in the bank opposite, and at the foot of some cliffs we found fossil oyster-shells. Mr. Stapylton traced this stream to its junction with the river, about two miles lower down.

Aug. 15. — Two bullocks were still missing, and I had recourse to compulsory measures with Piper and the man who lost them, in order to find them again: I declared that unless they were found, Piper should have no provisions for a week; and I condemned the man who lost them to be kept every second night on watch, during the remainder of the journey. The passage of the little river (which I named the Stokes, in memory of a brother officer, who fell at Bajadoz), was not to be easily accomplished, owing to the depth and softness of the alluvial soil, through which it flowed. One place passable on horseback was found after long search, by Mr. Stapylton and myself. Out of the bed of the stream at that part, we drew some dead trees, and after two hours of great exertion, the passage of the boat-carriage and carts was effected, the latter sinking deeper in the water than they ever had done in any river which we had previously forded. We found the country beyond very intricate, being so intersected with swamps, draining off in all directions, and so divided by stringy-bark forests, that it was next to impossible to avoid the soft swampy ground, or reach the river bank again. We headed one deep ravine falling towards it, and had indeed travelled in the desired direction, about four miles further on dry ground, but only by winding about as the swamps permitted, when, at length, the ground appeared to slope towards the river, being also covered with the fine grass and the kind of trees which usually grew near it. But this ground, notwithstanding its firm appearance, proved to be as soft as that of Mount Mud; and it spread at length around us on all sides, except that from which we had approached it by so circuitous a route. We had no alternative but to cross this bad ground, and after finding out, by careful examination, the narrowest part, we prepared to pass to the nearest firm ground beyond, an undertaking infinitely more difficult and laborious to us, than the passage of the broadest river. One of the carts was with much labour taken across, and being anxious to know the actual situation of the river, I rode southward into the wood, taking with me the chain or measuring men, and leaving the rest of the people at work in the mud. I found much of the ground equally soft as I proceeded, but all consisted of excellent open forest-land, covered with good grass. I found there a woolly Correa, profusely covered with pink, bell shaped blossoms, and small round rufous leaves;* and the beautiful Kennedya prostrata was climbing among the bushes, and rendering them brilliant with its rich crimson flowers. At length I approached a ravine on the left, which I at first took for that of the river; but I soon perceived through the trees on my right, a still greater opening, and there I at last found the valley of the Glenelg. In the ravine to the left ran another small stream, rather larger than that crossed yesterday. We reached the bank of this at 2½ miles from the place where we left the party, and at
about half a mile above its junction with the main stream. The high ground between
the two streams terminated in a round, grassy promontory, overlooking one of the
finest flats imaginable. I determined to endeavour once more, to explore the river’s
course with the boats; provided we should succeed in transporting them over the
mud to this spot; and I returned with this intention to the muddy scene, where I
had left the men. It was quite dark before I found it again, and then they had
succeeded in getting through only the three light carts. I did not despair of
accomplishing the passage, at least in the course of time; but I was indeed impatient
for daylight, that I might carefully examine with that view, all parts of the country
between our camp and the place where I intended to launch the boats into the
Glenelg again.

Aug. 16. — This morning it rained heavily, and there was a balmy and refreshing
mildness in the air, probably owing to the vicinity of the sea. It occurred to me, that
as the ground appeared to slope towards the south-east, we might reach some
hollow on that side leading to the little river, we discovered yesterday; and that such
a hollow would afford the best chance of escape from the soft flats, which now
impeded us, since the drainage they afforded to the immediate banks, was likely to
leave them at least firm enough to be travelled upon. On this principle alone, I
understood why the ground, on the banks of the stream seen yesterday, was so
firm; and I therefore hoped that the head of any ravine, found near our camp,
would lead by a dry though perhaps circuitous route, first to the tributary, and next,
by its bank, to the point already mentioned, where it joined the Glenelg. I
accordingly instructed Mr. Stapylton to examine the ground in the direction
proposed, while I superintended the exertions of the party to drag the boat-carriage
through the mud. We finally succeeded in this last effort, and just as I stood
watching with joy the ascent of the carriage to the firm ground beyond, Mr.
Stapylton came to me with the intelligence, that he had found the head of a ravine,
and firm ground on its bank, in the direction where he had been. One bad place
alone intervened between our present position and the firm ground at the head of
the ravine, but this, Mr. Stapylton said was very bad indeed. By 10 A.M. everything
was got across the first swamp, the loads of all the carts having been carried by the
men. To the new difficulty mentioned by Mr. Stapylton, I therefore led them next,
and we soon accomplished the passage of the light carts; after which I proceeded,
leaving to Mr. Stapylton the management of the rest, having first brought the boat-
carriage within reach of the firm ground opposite, by means of blocks and tackle
attached to trees, and drawn by five bullocks. On going forward with the carts, I
was guided altogether by the course of the ravine or gully, keeping along the fall of
the ground, and so avoiding the softer soil above. Thus we proceeded successfully,
for although another ravine came in our way, I managed to travel round its head,
near which I found a place where we crossed the small water-course it contained,
by filling up the chasm with logs. On passing this, we entered the stringy-bark
forest, which I had traversed on the day previous; and I at length recognized
through the trees, the hill from which I had seen the junction of the streams. A
tremendous hail-storm met us in the face, just as we descended to encamp in the
valley, near the bank of the river, but this troubled us but little, while we were up to the waist in the thickest crop of grass, growing on the richest black soil, I had ever seen. Mr. Stapylton and Burnett came up in the evening with the intelligence, that the whole party had effected a safe passage across the swampy ground; but that the wheels of the boat-carriage and some of the carts had sunk deep in the earth, where I had previously crossed on horseback followed by the light carts without leaving any impression, and that consequently they had made but little progress beyond the swamp.

_Aug. 17._ — I sent Burnett back with some spare bullocks to assist the people in bringing on the carts and the boat-carriage, a man having been despatched from them early to inform me, that the carriage had again stuck fast. Piper drew my attention to the sound of a distant waterfall, which, he said, he had heard all night, and wished now to go down the river to look at. I directed him to do so, and to examine the river also still further if he could, that he might bring back information as to how the boats might get down the stream. On his return in the afternoon, he stated, that the river was joined just below, by several large streams from the left, and by one still larger from the right, which falling on rocks, made the noise he had heard, during the night: also, that on climbing a high tree he had seen the river very large “like the Murray,” adding that it was excellent for boats. All this news only made me the more impatient to embark in them, while they were still afar on the muddy hills. The whole day passed without any tidings of their approach, and another night had closed over us, before I heard the distant calls of the bullock-drivers; but I had the satisfaction soon after of seeing the whole party and equipment again united on the banks of this promising stream. The barometer was rising, the spring was advancing, and the approaching warmth might be expected to harden the ground. The cattle would be refreshed by a week’s rest in the midst of the rich pasture around us, while our labours to all appearance were on the eve of being crowned by the discovery of some harbour, which might serve as a port to one of the finest regions upon earth. At all events, if we could not longer travel on land, we had at length arrived with two boats within reach of the sea, and this alone was a pleasing reflection after the delays we had lately experienced.

_Aug. 18._ — An uncommonly fine morning succeeded a clear frosty night. The boats were hoisted out to be launched once more on the bosom of the newly discovered Glenelg; and they were loaded with what the party going with them might require for ten days. I left with Mr. Stapylton instructions, that the men under his charge should move up to, and occupy the round point of the hill, a position which I named Fort O’Hare, in memory of a truly brave soldier, my commanding officer, who fell at Badajoz in leading the forlorn hope of the Light Division to the storm. At twelve o’clock, I embarked on the river with sixteen men, in two boats, leaving eight with Mr. Stapylton in the depot. We met with many dead trees for the first mile or two, but none of these either prevented or delayed our passage; and the river then widened into fine reaches wholly clear of timber, so that the passage further down was quite uninterrupted. The scenery on the banks was pleasing and various: at some points picturesque limestone cliffs overhung the river,
and cascades flowed out of caverns hung with stalactites: at others, the shores were festooned with green dripping shrubs and creepers, or terminated in a smooth grassy bank sloping to the water’s edge. But none of the banks consisted of water-worn earth; they were in general low and grassy, bounding the alluvial flats, that lay between the higher points of land. Within the first three or four miles from Fort O’Hare, two tributaries joined the main stream from the right or westward, and one from the left or eastward: one of the former ending in a noisy cascade at the junction. The river soon opened to a uniform width of sixty yards, its waters being everywhere smooth and unruffled, and the current scarcely perceptible. Ducks were always to be seen in the reaches before us, and very frequently the ornithorhynchus paradoxus, an animal which had not, I believe, been hitherto seen so near the sea. After rowing about sixteen miles we landed on the left bank, near a cascade falling from under a limestone cliff, and there we encamped for the night. The sun was setting in a cloudless sky, while I eagerly ascended the highest cliffs in hopes of obtaining a sight of the coast, but nothing was visible beyond a gently undulating woody country, some swamps alone appearing in it to the westward. The land about the cliffs of limestone, was tolerably good and grassy, but towards the end of this day’s pull, forests of the stringy-bark sort of eucalyptus, having in them trees of large dimensions, closed on the river. We endeavoured, but in vain, to catch fish, and whether the waters contained the cod-perch (Gristes Peelii) or not, remained a question. Our position and our prospects were now extremely interesting, and throughout the night, I was impatient for the light of the next day.

Aug. 19. — I arose at three in order to determine the latitude more exactly, by the altitude of various stars then approaching the meridian. These were Aries and Menkar; while the two feet of the Centaur, both fine circum-polar stars, were so steadily reflected in the placid stream, that I obtained by that means, the altitude of both below the pole. It was most essential to the accuracy of my survey of the river, that I should determine the latitude as frequently and exactly as possible. The sun afterwards rose in a cloudless sky, and I ascertained the breadth of the river, by means of a micrometer telescope, to be exactly 70 yards. We continued our interesting voyage, and found the river of very uniform width, and that its depth increased.

The current was slower but still perceptible, although we found the water had ebbed six inches during the night, an indication that it was already influenced by the tide, although it tasted perfectly fresh. At a place where I observed the sun’s meridian altitude, I found the breadth on measurement to be 71 yards, and the depth, on sounding, 4½, 3½, and 3 fathoms. The direction of the course had there, however, changed. To the camp of last night it had been remarkably straight towards south-south-east, although full of turnings, being what may be termed “straight serpentine,”* and I had accordingly expected to find the estuary at Portland Bay, in which case it was likely to be sheltered sufficiently by Cape Nelson to form a harbour. Now, however, the general course was nearly west, and it preserved the same general direction without much winding, during the progress we made throughout the day. I had therefore every reason to suppose, that it would
thus terminate in the wide bay between Cape Northumberland and Cape Bridgewater. The scenery on the long reaches was in many places very fine, from the picturesque character of the limestone-rock, and the tints and outline of the trees, shrubs, and creepers upon the banks. In some places stalactite-grottoes, covered with red and yellow creepers, overhung or enclosed cascades; at other points, _casuarina_ and _banksia_ were festooned with creeping vines, whose hues of warm green or brown were relieved by the grey cliffs of more remote reaches, as they successively opened before us. Black swans being numerous, we shot several; and found some eggs, which we thought a luxury, among the bulrushes at the water’s edge. But we had left, as it seemed, all the good grassy land behind us; for the stringy-bark and a species of _Xanthorrhœa_ (grass tree), grew to the water’s edge, both where the soil looked black and rich, and where it possessed that red colour which distinguishes the best soil in the vicinity of limestone rock. One or two small tributaries joined the river, the principal one coming from the left bank, at that point or angle, where the great change takes place in its course. When the sun was near setting, we put ashore on this bank, and from a tree on the highest part of the country behind it, we now once again saw Mount Gambier, bearing 57° W. of N. Here the water was slightly brackish but still very good for use; the saltiness being most perceptible when the water was used for tea. The river had increased considerably both in width and depth; for here the measured breadth was 101 yards, and the mean depth, five fathoms. (See section on general Map.) It was, upon the whole, considering the permanent fulness of its stream, the character of its banks, and uniformity of width and depth, the finest body of fresh water I had seen in Australia; and our hopes were that day sanguine, that we should find an outlet to the sea of proportionate magnitude.

_Aug. 20._ — This morning I found there was a rise of six inches in the river, evidently the effect of tide, as the water was brackish, although still fit for use. The reach on which we embarked afforded us a view for a mile further down the river; the vista being truly picturesque, and with the interest attached to the scene, it looked indeed quite enchanting. We pulled on through the silent waters, awakening the slumbering echoes with many a shot at the numerous swans or ducks. At length another change took place in the general course of the river, which from west turned to east-south-east. The height of the banks appeared to diminish rapidly, and a very numerous flock of the small sea-swallo or tern indicated our vicinity to the sea. The slow-flying pelican, also, with its huge bill, pursued, regardless of strangers, its straight-forward course over the waters. A small bushy island next came in sight, having on it some rocks resembling, what we should have thought a great treasure then, a pile of flour-bags, and we named it, accordingly, the Isle of Bags. Soon after passing the island, a few low, sandy-looking hills appeared before us; and we found ourselves between two basins, wherein the water was very shallow, although we had sounded just previously to entering one of them in four fathoms. The widest lay directly before us, but having no outlet, we steered into the other on the right, and on rounding a low rocky point, we saw the green rolling breakers of the sea through an opening, which proved to be the mouth of the river. It consisted of two low
rocky points, and as soon as we had pulled outside of them, we landed on the eastern one. In the two basins we had seen, there was scarcely sufficient water to float the boats, and thus our hopes of finding a port at the mouth of this fine river were at once at an end. The sea broke on a sandy beach outside, and on ascending one of the sand hills near it, I perceived Cape Northumberland; the rocks outside called “the Carpenters,” bearing 7° 20' S. of W. (variation 3° 30'), and being distant, as I judged, about fifteen miles. Mount Gambier bore 23° 40' N. of W. and a height which seemed near the extreme point of the coast to the eastward, and which I therefore took for Cape Bridgewater, bore 52° E. of S. These points seemed distant from each other about forty miles; the line of coast between forming one grand curve or bay, which received this river at the deepest part, and which I now named Discovery Bay. There was no reef of rocks upon the bar; a circumstance to be regretted in this case, for it was obvious that the entrance to this fine river and the two basins, was choked merely by the sand thrown up by the sea. The river was four fathoms deep, the water being nearly fresh enough for use, within sight of the shore. Unfortunately, perhaps, for navigation, there is but little tide on that coast; the greatest rise in the lower part of the river (judging by the floating weeds), did not exceed a foot. I was too intent on the completion of my survey, to indulge much in contemplating the welcome sight of old ocean; but when a plank was picked up by the men on that desolate shore, and we found the initials, I. W. B., and the year 1832, carved on wood which had probably grown in old England, the sea really seemed like home to us. Although it was low water, a boat might easily have been got out, and it is probable that in certain states of the tide and sand, small craft might get in; but I, nevertheless, consider the mouth of this river quite unavailable as a harbour. Near the beach were holes, dug apparently by the natives, in which we found the water perfectly sweet. The hills sheltering the most eastern of the two basins, were well wooded, as were also those behind. The line of sand-hills on the beach seemed to rise into forest hills, at about five miles further eastward, and all those in the west, to within a short distance of the coast, were equally woody. The day was squally, with rain; nevertheless, during an interval of sunshine, I obtained the sun’s meridian altitude, making the latitude 38° 2’ 58” S. I also completed, by two P. M., my survey of the mouth of the river and adjacent country; and we then again embarked to return a few miles up the river, and encamp where wood and water were at hand. On re-entering the river from the sea, I presented the men with a bottle of whiskey, with which it was formally named the Glenelg, after the present Secretary of State for the Colonies, according to my previous intention.

Aug. 21. — We had encamped in a rather remarkable hollow on the right bank, at the extreme western bend of the river. There was no modern indication, that water either lodged in or ran through that ravine, although the channel resembled in width the bed of some considerable tributary; the rock presenting a section of cliffs on each side, and the bottom being broad, but consisting of black earth only, in which grew trees of eucalyptus. I found, on following it some way up, that it led to a low tract of country, which I regretted much I could not then examine further. I
found shells embedded in limestone, varying considerably in its hardness, being
sometimes very friable, and the surface, in some places, presenting innumerable
fragments of corallines, with pectens, spatangi, echini, ostrea, and foraminifera. In
the opposite bank of the river, I found several thin strata of compact chert,
containing probably fragments of corallines, not only on the surface, but imbedded
in the limestone. In pulling up the river this morning, we observed a cavern or
opening in the side of the limestone rock, and having ascended to it by means of a
rope, we entered with lights. It proved to be only a large fissure, and after
penetrating about 150 yards under ground, we met with red earth, apparently fallen
from the surface. We found, at the mouth of the fissure, some fine specimens of
shells, coral, and other marine productions, embedded in several thin strata of a
coarser structure, under one of very compact limestone, upwards of 20 feet thick.*
While the people in the boat awaited us there, a fish was taken by Muirhead, who
had also caught the first fish in the river Darling. That of the Glenelg was a salt-
water fish, known at Sydney by the name of Snapper.*

The weather was more moderate to-day, although still showery; and the scenery,
as we proceeded upwards, was very picturesque, and full of variety. At sunset, we
encamped about a mile and a half short of our camp of the 18th, and just as the
trees were groaning under a heavy squall, which obliged us to land on the first spot
where sufficient room was left in the thick woods, for our tents. This spot
happened to be on a steep bit of bank; and, in the evening, I was called in haste to a
new danger. The wind had suddenly changed, and blew with great fury, filling my
tent with sparks from a large fire which burnt before it. I had placed in it, according
to usual custom, our stock of ammunition packed in a keg; and, notwithstanding
these precautions, its preservation now, between the two elements of fire and water,
was rather doubtful. We contrived, however, to avert the danger, and were no more
disturbed during the night, except by the storm.

Aug. 22. — The squally weather continued until noon, when sunbeams again
adorned the river-scenery. We met with no impediment in the current, until within
about six miles of the dépôt-camp, when dead trees in the channel began again to
appear; but we passed them all without hindrance, and reached Fort O’Hare at two
o’clock, where we found all well. Mr. Stapylton had set Vulcan to repair the broken
chains, &c. — a ford had been cleared across the stream, from the north-east,
which I named the Crawford; and the cattle being refreshed, we were once more in
trim to continue the land journey. The height of the water in the river had
undergone no change during our absence, and was probably about its usual level
there, although I observed abundant marks of flood in the branches of trees, where
dry floated matter remained at the height of fifteen feet above the water, as it stood
then. The rock about this position consisted of limestone, apparently similar to that
seen on its banks higher up (See Aug. 15). It possessed a stalactitic aspect, by the
infiltration of calcareous matter, and, in crevices below, I found a reddish stalagmite
containing grains of sand. Large petrified oyster shells, lay loosely about the bank
above these cliffs. No natives had approached the dépôt during our absence, and
we had indeed reason to believe, that the adjacent country contained but few
inhabitants. During the afternoon, I laid down my survey of the estuary of the Glenelg, and completed, by 10 P. M., not only my plan of it, but that of the river also. I found a considerable difference between the result of my survey and the Admiralty charts, not only in the longitude, but also in the relative position of the two capes with respect to Mount Gambier, a solitary hill easily recognised.*
Chapter XI.

Leave the Glenelg and travel eastward — Cross the Crawford — Boggy character of its sources — Recross the Rifle range — Heavy timber the chief impediment — Travelling also difficult from the softness of the ground — Excursion southward to Portland bay — Mount Eckersley — Cross the Fitzrov — Cross the Surry — Lady Julia Percy’s Isle — Beach of Portland bay — A vessel at anchor — House and farming establishment there — Whale-fishery — Excursion to Cape Nelson — Mount Kincaid — A whale chase — Sagacity of the natives on the coast — Mount Clay — Return to the camp — Still retarded by the soft soil — Leave one of the boats, and reduce the size of the boat-carriage — Excursion to Mount Napier — Cross some fine streams — Natives very timid — Crater of Mount Napier or Murròa — View from the summit — Return to the camp — Mr. Stapylton’s excursion to the north west — The Shaw — Conduct the carts along the highest ground — Again ascend Murròa and partially clear the summit — Mount Rouse — Australian Pyrenees — Swamps harder than the ground around them — Again reach the good country — Mounts Bainbrigge and Pierrepont — Mount Sturgeon — Ascend Mount Abrupt — View of the Grampians from the summit — Victoria range and the Serra — Mud again, and a broken axle — Mr. Stapylton examines the country before us — At length get through the soft region — Cattle quite exhausted — Determine to leave them in a depôt to refresh while I proceed forward — Specimens of natural history — Situation of depôt camp at Lake Repose.

Aug. 23. — HAVING at length disposed of the course of the Glenelg, my next object was to cross and examine the high ground which enclosed its basin on the east, supplying those tributaries which the river received from its left bank, and evidently extending from the Grampians to Cape Bridge-water. I had named this the Rifle range, in crossing that branch of it extending north-westward, when I ascertained its characteristics to be lofty woods and swamps; but its ramifications in other directions, and how it was connected backwards with the mountains, still remained to be discovered; and from what I did know of this range, I apprehended considerable difficulty in getting over it with our heavy carriages, at such a season. That we might, if possible, escape the bogs, I devoted the day to an extensive reconnaissance of the country before us; my guide in this case being the river Crawford, which, flowing in deep ravines, was likely to afford (so long as its general course continued to be nearly parallel to our route), one means at least of avoiding those soft swampy flats, which could not possibly impede us, so long as the side of such a ravine as that of the river was within reach. I had the good fortune to find that the range in general was firm under the hoof, and its direction precisely such as I wished. Extensive swamps occasionally appeared on my right; but I had on the left the deep ravines of the Crawford, and I travelled across the highest slopes of the ground. Having thus found good sound turf, for twelve miles in the direction in
which I wished to take the carriages, I returned on descending from a trap-range, where the rock consisted of granular felspar and hornblende with crystals of glassy felspar. On this hill the soil was exceedingly rich, and the grass green and luxuriant. I obtained thence a most useful bearing on Mount Gambier, and saw also some heights to the eastward, beyond the Rifle range. The timber grew to an enormous size on the ranges which I traversed this day; it consisted chiefly of that useful species of eucalyptus, known as “stringy-bark.” Some of the trees we measured were 13 feet and one as much as 14½ feet in circumference, and 80 feet was no uncommon height. The fallen timber was of such magnitude as to present a new impediment to our progress, for we had not previously met with such an obstruction on any journey.

Aug. 24. — The carriages were taken across the Crawford without much delay, considering its depth and the softness of the banks. The carts sank at least five feet in the water, yet nothing was damaged, for we had taken care to pack the flour and other perishable articles on the tops of the loads. We succeeded in crossing the rivulets at the heads of several ravines, by filling up their channels with logs; and thus, after crossing the last of these, and ascending the steep bank beyond it, we encamped, after a journey of seven miles. The weather had been stormy on both days, since I crossed the Crawford, a circumstance very much against our progress. Near this camp, we found a new Correa, resembling Correa virens, but having distinctly cordate toothed leaves, with less down on their under side, and a much shorter calyx.*

Aug. 25. — In our progress eastward, we were still governed by the line of the Crawford; and the tortuous direction of the ravines connected with it, required constant attention, while the very variable character of the swamps at the head of them, was still more perplexing. We succeeded in finding a passage between all, this day also, and on again crossing a small mountain torrent by filling up the chasm with dead timber, we encamped after another journey of seven miles. On our left to the northward, lay a deep valley, in which we found a broad sheet of water covered with ducks, the banks being soft and overgrown with reeds. A considerable stream flowed westward from this lake through a narrow part of the valley, so that I concluded we were still on the principal branch of the Crawford. Trees of large dimensions were abundant, and the fallen timber impeded our progress even more, than any unusual softness of the earth.

Aug. 26. — After proceeding several miles without let or hindrance, having successfully crossed some swampy rivulets, all flowing to the left amidst thick scrubs, we at length arrived at a water-course in which my horse went down, and which filled a very wide swampy bed, enclosed by a thick growth of young mimosa trees, through which it was necessary to cut a passage wide enough for the carts. The scrub having been thus cleared to the extent of about 100 yards with much labour, I found only then, unfortunately, that although the roots grew very closely, and that water flowed over the surface, the earth was withal so soft, that I could at every point, with ease push a stick five feet down, without reaching any firm bottom. The loose cattle were driven in, an experiment which until then we had
tried with success, in doubtful places — but they with difficulty got across this, for one of them sank and could not be extricated without considerable delay. While the men were busily employed there, I rode to the head of the swamp, which extended about a mile to the southward. On this swampy plain, I at length succeeded in finding, with Mr. Stapylton’s assistance, a line of route likely to bear the carts, and we passed safely in that direction, not one carriage having gone down. While on this swampy surface, we distinctly heard the breakers of the sea, apparently at no great distance to the south-west, and I was convinced that the head of this swamp was about the highest ground immediately adjacent to Discovery Bay. On travelling a mile and a half further, we reached a small rivulet, the first we had crossed flowing to the south. Beyond it the country appeared open and good, consisting of what is termed forest-land, with casuarinae and banksia growing upon it. We had at length reached the highest parts of the range, and were about to descend into the country beyond it. We continued to travel a considerable distance further than the rivulet flowing to the south. Crossing others running northward or to the left, and leaving also on the same side a swamp, we finally came to a higher range clothed with trees of gigantic size, attesting the strength and depth of the soil, and here enormous old trunks obstructed our passage, covering the surface so as to form an impediment almost as great to us as the swampy ground had been; but this large timber so near the coast, was an important feature in that country. Piper having climbed to the top of one of these trees, perceived some fine green hills to the south-east, saying they were very near us, and that the sea was visible beyond them. It was late in the afternoon, when I reluctantly changed my intended route, which had been until then eastward, to proceed in the direction recommended by Piper, or to the south-east, and so to follow down a valley, instead of my proposed route which had been along a favourable range. I had still less reason to be satisfied with the change when, after pushing my horse through thick scrubs and bogs until twilight, and looking in vain for a passage for the carts, I encountered at length bushes so thickly set, and bogs so soft, that any further progress in that direction was out of the question; and thus on the evening when I hoped to have entered a better sort of country, after so successful a passage of the range, we encamped where but little grass could be found for the cattle, our tents being not only under lofty trees, but amongst thick bushes and bogs during very rainy weather.

Aug. 27. — I was so anxious to get into open ground again, that as soon as daylight permitted, I carefully examined the environs of our camp, and I found that we occupied a broad flat, where the drainage from the hills met and spread among bushes; so that at one time, I almost despaired of extricating the party otherwise than by returning to the hill at which I had first altered my route. The track we made, had been, however, so much cut up by our wheels, that I preferred the chance of finding a passage northward, which, of course, was also less out of our way. We reached an extremity of the hill, (the nearest to us on that side,) with much less difficulty than I had reason to apprehend; and keeping along that feature, we soon regained a range, which led us east-north-east. By proceeding in this direction, however, we could not avoid the passage of a valley where the water was not
confined to any channel, but spread and lodged on a wide tract of very soft ground, also covered with mimosa bushes, and a thick growth of young saplings of eucalyptus. The light carts and the first heavy cart got over this soft ground or bog, but the others and the boat carriage, sank up to the axles, so that we were obliged to halt after having proceeded about five miles only. This was near a fine forest-hill, consisting of trap-rock in a state of decomposition, but apparently similar to that of the trap range I had ascended on the 23rd of August; and from a tree there, Burnett thought he saw the sea to the north-east, and even to the northward of a remarkable conical hill. The discovery of the sea in that direction, was so different from the situation of the shore as laid down on the maps, that I began to hope an inlet might exist there as yet undiscovered — the “Cadong,” perhaps, of the native woman, “where white men had never been.” I had now proceeded far enough to the eastward, to be able to examine the coast about Portland Bay, and extend my survey to the capes in its neighbourhood, the better to ascertain their longitude. I therefore determined to make an excursion in that direction, and thus afford time not only for the extrication of the heavy carts still remaining in the mud, but also for the repose of the cattle after their labours.

Aug. 28. — By the survey proposed, I hoped to extend my map of the country sufficiently in that direction to be at liberty, on my return to the party, to pursue a route directly homeward; not doubting that at a short distance to the northward of our camp, we should again enter the beautiful open country, which, when seen from the mouth of the Wannon, seemed to extend as far as could be seen to the eastward. In our ride to the south, we reached, at four miles from the boggy ground, a fine green hill consisting of trap-rock, and connected with a ridge of the same description, which extended about two miles further to the southward. There we found it to terminate abruptly in a lofty brow quite clear of timber, and commanding an extensive view to the east and south, over a much lower country. This hill had a very remarkable feature — a deep chasm, separating it from the ridge behind, the sides being so steep, as to present a section of the trap-rock, which consisted principally of compact felspar. The hill which I named Mount Eckersley, was covered, as well as the ridge to which it belonged, with a luxuriant crop of anthistirium, or kangaroo grass. Unfortunately the weather was squally, but by awaiting the intervals between clouds on the horizon, I obtained angles, at length, on nearly all the distant hills, the waters of Portland Bay just appearing in the south over an intervening woody ridge. From this hill I recognized a very conspicuous, flat-topped hill to the northward, which had been previously included in a series of angles observed on the 12th instant from the valley of the Wannon, and which I now named Mount Napier. Portland Bay was distant about fifteen miles, but the intervening country seemed so low, and swamps, entirely clear of timber, appeared in so many places, that I could scarcely hope to get through it: — knowing it to contain all the water from those boggy vallies where our progress had been already so much impeded. Smoke arose from various parts of the lower country — a proof that at least some dry land was there. We were provided with horses only, and, therefore, desperately determined to flounder through or even to
swim if necessary, we thrust them down the hill. On its side we met an emu which stood and stared, apparently fearless, as if the strange quadrupeds had withdrawn its keen eye from the more familiar enemies who bestrode them. In the lower country we saw also a kangaroo, an animal that seldom frequents marshy lands. I was agreeably surprised to find also, on descending, that the rich grass extended among the trees across the lower country; and I was still more pleased on coming to a fine running stream, at about three miles from the hill, and after crossing a tract of land of the richest description. Reeds grew thickly amongst the long grass, and the ground appeared to be of a different character from any that I had previously seen. This seemed to be just such land as would produce wheat during the driest seasons, and never become sour even in the wettest, such as this season undoubtedly was. The timber was thin and light, and with a fine deep stream flowing through it, the tract which at first sight from Mount Eckersley, I had considered so sterile and wet, proved to be one likely at no distant day, to smile under luxuriant crops of grain. We found the river (which I named the Fitzroy) fordable, although deep at the place where we first came upon it. Shady trees of the mimosa kind grew along the banks, and the earth was now good and firm on both sides. We heard the natives as we approached this stream, and cooyed to them; but our calls had only the effect, as appeared from the retiring sound of their voices, of making them run faster away. Continuing our ride southward, we entered at two miles beyond the Fitzroy, a forest of the stringy-bark eucalyptus; and, although the anthistirium still grew in hollows, I saw swampy open flats before us, which I endeavoured to avoid, sometimes by passing between them, and, finally by turning to a woody range on the left. I ascended this range as night came on, in hopes of finding grass for our horses; but there the mimosa and xanthorrhœa alone prevailed — the latter being a sure indication of sterility, and scanty vegetation. We found naked ground higher up, consisting of deep lagoons and swamps, amongst which I was satisfied with my success, in passing through in such a direction, as enabled me to regain, in a dark and stormy night, the shelter of the woods on the side of the range. But I sought in vain for the grass, so abundant elsewhere on this day’s ride, and we were at length under the necessity of halting for the night, where but little food could be found for our horses, and under lofty trees that creaked and groaned to the blast.

Aug. 29. — The groaning trees had afforded us shelter, without letting fall even a single branch upon our heads,* but the morning was squally and unfavourable for the objects of the excursion, and we had still to ride some way, before I could commence operations. Proceeding along the skirts of the woody ridge on the left in order to avoid swamps, we at length saw through the trees, the blue waters of the sea, and heard the roar of the waves. My intended way towards the deepest part of the bay and the hills beyond it, did not lead directly to the shore, and I continued to pursue a course through the woods, having the shore on our left. We thus met a deep and rapid little river, exactly resembling the Fitzroy, and coming also from the westward. Tracing this a short distance upwards, we came to a place set with a sort of trellise work of bushes by the natives, for the purpose, no doubt, of catching fish. Here we found the stream fordable, though deep; a brownish granular
limestone appearing in the bank. We crossed and then continuing through a thick wood, we came out at length on the shore of Portland Bay, at about four miles beyond the little river. Straight before us lay “Laurence’s Island,” or rather, islands, there being two small islets of rock in that situation; and, some way to the eastward, I perceived a much larger island, which I concluded was one of “Lady Julia Percy’s Isles.” At a quarter of a mile back from the beach, broad broom-topped *casuarinae* were the only trees we could see; these grew on long ridges, parallel to the beach, resembling those long breakers, which, aided by winds, had probably thrown such ridges up. They were abundantly covered with excellent grass; and, as it wanted about an hour of noon, I halted that the cattle might feed, while I took some angles, and endeavoured to obtain the sun’s altitude during the intervals between heavy squalls; some of which were accompanied by hail and thunder. On reaching the sea shore at this beach, I turned to observe the face of “Tommy Came-last,” one of my followers, who being a native from the interior, had never before seen the sea. I could not discover in the face of this young savage, even on his first view of the ocean, any expression of surprise; on the contrary, the placid and comprehensive gaze he cast over it, seemed fully to embrace the grand expanse then for the first time opened to him. I was much more astonished, when he soon after came to tell me of the fresh tracks of cattle, that he had found on the shore, and the shoe marks of a white man. He also brought me portions of tobacco-pipes, and a glass bottle without a neck. That whaling vessels occasionally touched there, I was aware, as was indeed obvious from the carcases and bones of whales on the beach; but how cattle could have been brought there, I did not understand. Proceeding round the bay with the intention of examining the head of an inlet and continuing along shore as far as Cape Bridgewater, I was struck with the resemblance to houses, that some supposed grey rocks under the grassy cliffs presented; and while I directed my glass towards them, my servant Brown said he saw a brig at anchor; a fact of which I was soon convinced, and also that the grey rocks were in reality wooden houses. The most northern part of the shore of this bay was comparatively low, but the western consisted of bold cliffs rising to the height of 180 feet.

We ascended these cliffs near the wooden houses, which proved to be some deserted sheds of the whalers. One shot was heard as we drew near them, and another on our ascending the rocks. I then became somewhat apprehensive that the parties might either be, or suppose us to be, bushrangers, and to prevent if possible some such awkward mistake, I ordered a man to fire a gun and the bugle to be sounded; but on reaching the higher ground, we discovered not only a beaten path, but the track of two carts, and while we were following the latter, a man came towards us from the face of the cliffs. He informed me in answer to my questions, that the vessel at anchor was the “Elizabeth of Launceston;” and that just round the point there was a considerable farming establishment, belonging to Messrs. Henty, who were then at the house. It then occurred to me, that I might there procure a small additional supply of provisions, especially of flour, as my men were on very reduced rations. I, therefore, approached the house, and was kindly received and entertained by the Messrs. Henty, who as I learnt had been established there during
upwards of two years. It was very obvious indeed from the magnitude and extent of
the buildings, and the substantial fencing erected, that both time and labour had
been expended in their construction. A good garden stocked with abundance of
vegetables, already smiled on Portland Bay; the soil was very rich on the
overhanging cliffs, and the potatoes and turnips produced there, surpassed in
magnitude and quality any I had ever seen elsewhere. I learnt that the bay was much
resorted to by vessels engaged in the whale fishery, and that upwards of 700 tons of
oil had been shipped that season. I was likewise informed that only a few days
before my arrival, five vessels lay at anchor together in that bay, and that a
communication was regularly kept up with Van Diemen’s Land by means of vessels
from Launceston. Messrs. Henty were importing sheep and cattle as fast as vessels
could be found to bring them over, and the numerous whalers touching at or
fishing on the coast, were found to be good customers for farm produce and
whatever else could be spared from the establishment.

Portland Bay is well sheltered from all winds except the east-south-east, and the
anchorage is so good that a vessel is said to have rode out a gale even from this
quarter. The part of the western shore where the land is highest, shelters a small
bay, which might be made a tolerable harbour by means of two piers or quays,
erected on reefs of a kind of rock apparently very favourable for the purpose,
namely amygdaloidal trap in rounded boulders. The present anchorage in four
fathoms is on the outside of these reefs, and the water in this little bay is in general
smooth enough for the landing of boats. A fine stream falls into the bay there, and
the situation seems altogether a most eligible one for the site of a town. The rock is
trap, consisting principally of felspar; and the soil is excellent, as was amply testified
by the luxuriant vegetation in Mr. Henty’s garden.

Aug. 30. — I proceeded with the theodolite to a height near Cape Nelson, and
from it I intersected that cape and also Cape Bridgewater, Cape Sir William Grant,
the islands to the eastward, &c. I here recognized also the high hill, which appeared
within these capes when first seen from the westward. It formed the most elevated
part of the Rifle range at its termination on the coast, and I was informed by Mr.
Henty, that there was a fine lake at its base. I named the hill Mount Kincaid, after
my old and esteemed friend of Peninsular recollections. Returning to the party at
Portland Bay, where I had left my sextant, I then obtained a good observation on
the sun’s meridian altitude. I was accommodated with a small supply of flour by
Messrs. Henty, who having been themselves on short allowance, were awaiting the
arrival of a vessel then due two weeks. They also supplied us with as many
vegetables, as the men could carry away on their horses. Just as I was about to leave
the place, “a whale” was announced, and instantly three boats well manned, were
seen cutting through the water, a harpooneer standing up at the stern of each with
oar in hand, and assisting the rowers by a forward movement at each stroke. It was
not the least interesting scene in these my Australian travels, thus to witness from a
verandah on a beautiful afternoon at Portland Bay, the humours of the whale
fishery, and all those wondrous perils of harpooneers and whale boats, of which I
had delighted to read as scenes of “the stormy north.” The object of the present
pursuit was “a hunchback,” and being likely to occupy the boats for some time, I proceeded homewards. I understood it frequently happened, that several parties of fishermen, left by different whaling vessels, would engage in the pursuit of the same whale, and that in the struggle for possession, the whale would occasionally escape from them all and run ashore, in which case it is of little value to whalers, as the removal, &c, would be too tedious, and they in such cases carry away part of the head matter only. The natives never approach these whalers, nor had they ever shewn themselves to the white people of Portland Bay; but as they have taken to eat the cast-away whales, it is their custom to send up a column of smoke when a whale appears in the bay, and the fishers understand the signal. This affords an instance of the sagacity of the natives, for they must have reflected, that by thus giving timely notice, a greater number will become competitors for the whale, and that consequently there will be a better chance of the whale running ashore, in which case a share must fall finally to them. The fishers whom I saw were fine able fellows; and with their large ships and courageous struggles with the whales, they must seem terrible men of the sea to the natives. The neat trim of their boats, set up on stanchions on the beach, looked well, with oars and in perfect readiness to dash at a moment’s notice, into the “angry surge.” Upon the whole, what with the perils they undergo, and their incessant labour in boiling the oil, these men do not earn too cheaply the profits derived from that kind of speculation. I saw on the shore the wreck of a fine boat, which had been cut in two by a single stroke of the tail of a whale. The men were about to cast their net into the sea to procure a supply of fish for us, when the whale suddenly engaged all hands.

We returned along the shore of the bay, intersecting at its estuary, the mouth of the little river last crossed, and which, at the request of Mr. Henty, I have named the Surry. This river enters Portland Bay in latitude 38° 15' 43" S.; longitude (by my survey) 141° 58' E. We encamped on the rich grassy land just beyond, and I occupied for the night, a snug old hut of the natives.

Aug. 31. — Early this morning Richardson caught a fine bream, and I had indeed been informed by Messrs. Henty that these streams abound with this fish. On ascending the highest point of the hill, immediately behind the estuary of the Surry, and which I named Mount Clay, I found it consisted of good forest-land, and that its ramifications extended over as much as three miles. Beyond it, we descended into the valley of the Fitzroy, and at noon I ascertained the latitude, where we had before forded it, to be 38° 8' 51" S. The river had risen in the interim a foot and a half, so that we were obliged to carry the flour across, on the heads of the men, wading up to the neck. When we reached the summit of Mount Eckersley, the horizon being clear, I completed my series of angles on points visible from that station, by observing the “Julian Island” and Mount Abrupt, two of great importance in my survey, which were hidden from our sight by the squally weather, when I was last on this hill. We reached the camp about sunset, and found all right there, the carts having been drawn out of the bogs; all the claw chains repaired by the blacksmith; our hatchets resteeled; and two new shafts made for the heavy carts. Piper had, during our absence, killed abundance of kangaroos, and I now rejoiced at
his success, on account of the aboriginal portion of our party, for whose stomachs,
being of savage capacity, quantity was a more important consideration than quality
in the article of food, and we were then living on a very reduced scale of rations.
On my return from such excursions, the widow and her child frequently gave
notice of our approach, long before we reached the camp: their quick ears seemed
sensible of the sound of horses’ feet at an astonishing distance, for in no other way,
could the men account for the notice which Turandurey and her child, seated at
their own fire, were always the first to give, of my return, sometimes long before
our appearance at the camp. Piper was usually the first to meet me, and assure me
of the safety of the party, as if he had taken care of it during my absence; and I
encouraged his sense of responsibility, by giving him credit for the security they had
enjoyed. A serene evening, lovely in itself, looked doubly beautiful then, as our
hopes of getting home were inseparable from fine weather, for on this chance our
final escape from the mud and bogs seemed very much to depend. The barometer,
however, indicated rather doubtfully.

Sept. 1. — Heavy rain and fog detained us in the same camp this morning, and I
availed myself of the day for the purpose of laying down my recent survey. The
results satisfied me, that the coast-line on the engraved map was very defective, and
indeed the indentations extended so much deeper into the land, that I still
entertained hopes of finding some important inlet to the eastward, analogous to
that remarkable break of the mountain-chain at Mount William.

Sept. 2. — We travelled as much in a north-east direction as the ground permitted,
but although I should most willingly have followed the connecting features
whatever their directions, I could not avoid the passage of various swamps or
boggy soft hollows, in which the carts, and more especially the boat-carriage,
notwithstanding the greatest exertions on the part of the men, again sank up to the
axles. I had proceeded with the light carts and one heavy cart nearly nine miles,
while the boat-carriage fell at least six miles behind me, the other heavy carts having
also been retarded, from the necessity for yoking additional teams to the cattle
drawing the boats. The weather was still unsettled, and the continued rains had at
length made the surface so soft, that even to ride over it was in many places
difficult. I had reached some fine forest land on the bank of a running stream,
where the features were bolder, and I hoped to arrive soon at the good country
near the head of the Wannon. I encamped without much hope that the remainder
of the party could join us that night, and they, in fact, did remain six miles behind. I
had never been more puzzled in my travels, than I was with respect to the nature of
the country before us then. Mount Napier bore 74° E. of N. distant about 16 miles.
The little rivulet was flowing northward, and yet we had not reached the interior
side of that elevated though swampy ground, dividing the fine vallies we had seen
further westward, from the country sloping towards the sea.

Sept. 3. — This morning we had steady rain, accompanied as usual by a north-
west wind; I remarked also that at any rise of the barometer after such rain, the
wind changed to the south-east in situations near the coast, or to the north-east
when we were more inland. I sent back the cattle, we had brought forward to this
camp, to assist those behind, and in the meanwhile, Mr. Stapylton took a ride along
the ridge on which we were encamped, in order to ascertain its direction. Towards
evening Burnett returned from the carts with the intelligence, that the boat-carriage
could not be got out of the swamps, and that after the men had succeeded in raising
it with levers, and had drawn it some way, it had again sunk, and thus delayed the
carts, but that the latter were at length coming on, two men having been left behind
with the boat-carriage. Mr. Stapylton returned in the afternoon, having ascertained
that a swamp of upwards of a mile in breadth, and extending north and south as far
as he could see, lay straight before us, and he had concluded, that the rivulet upon
which we were then encamped, turned into it. Under such circumstances, we could
not hope to be able to travel much further with the boats, nor even indeed with the
carts, unless we found ground with a firmer surface in the country before us. Ere
we could reach the nearest habitations of civilized men, we had yet to traverse 400
miles of a country intersected by the highest mountains, and watered by the largest
rivers, known in New Holland.

Sept. 4. — Although the boats and their carriage had been of late a great
hindrance to us, I was very unwilling to abandon such useful appendages to an
exploring party, having already drawn them over-land nearly 3000 miles. A
promising part of the coast might still be explored, large rivers were to be crossed,
and we had already found boats useful on such occasions. One, however, might
answer these temporary purposes, since, for the main object, the exploration of
inland seas, they could not possibly be wanted. We had two, and the outer one,
which was both larger and heavier than the inner, had been shaken so much when
suspected without the thwarts, that she was almost unserviceable in the water, and
very leaky, as we had lately found in exploring the Glenelg. She had, in fact, all
along served as a case for the inner boat, which could thus be kept distended by the
thwarts, and was consequently in excellent repair, and in every respect the best. I
determined therefore to abandon the outer boat, and shorten the carriage, so that
the fore and hind wheels would be brought two feet nearer each other. I expected
from this arrangement, that instead of boats retarding the party, this one might thus
be drawn in advance with the light carts. Having directed the alteration to be made
during my intended absence, I set out for Mount Napier, and soon found the broad
swamp before me. After riding up an arm of it to the left, for a mile and a half, I
found it passable, and having crossed, we proceeded towards the hill by a rather
circuitous route, but over a fine tract of country, although then very soft under our
horses’ feet. We next reached a deeper ravine, where the land on each side was
more open, and also firmer, while a small rivulet flowing through it amongst
bushes, was easily crossed, and we ascended some fine rising ground beyond it.
Rich flats then extended before us, and we arrived at an open grassy valley, where a
beautiful little stream, resembling a river in miniature, was flowing rapidly. Two
very substantial huts shewed that even the natives had been attracted by the beauty
of the spot, and as the day was showery, I wished to return, if possible, to pass the
night there, for I began to learn that such huts, with a good fire before them, made
very comfortable quarters in bad weather. We had heard voices in the woods
several times this day, but their inhabitants seemed as timid as kangaroos, and not more likely to come near us. The blue mass of Mount Napier was visible occasionally through the trees, but I found as we proceeded, that we were not so near it as I had supposed, for at three miles beyond the little stream, we came upon one of greater magnitude, a small river flowing southward, with open grassy banks in which two kinds of trap-rock appeared. The edge of a thin layer of the lowest, a nearly decomposed trap, projected over the stream; the other lay in rounded blocks, in the face of the hill above, and appeared to be decomposed amygdaloid, principally felspar. The river ran through a valley where the forest land was remarkably open, being sprinkled with only a few trees as in a park, and this stream appeared to fall into the head of the extensive swamp already mentioned. About a mile beyond the river, (which I named the Shaw), we came upon the extremities of Mount Napier, for at least so I considered some rough sharp-pointed fragments of rock laying about in heaps, which we found it very difficult and tedious to ride over: indeed so sharp-edged and large were these rocks on the slopes of the terraces they formed, that we were often obliged to dismount and lead our horses. In these fragments I recognized the cellular character of the rocks I had noticed in the bed of the Shaw. The rock here might have been taken for decomposed amygdaloid, but having found the vestiges of an old crater in the summit of the hill, I was induced to consider it an ancient lava. The reefs at Portland Bay consist of the same rock in rounded nodules, a more compact trap-rock consisting principally of felspar lying above them, as was observable in the section of the coast. In some of the fragments on Mount Napier, these cells or pores were several inches in diameter, and, unlike amygdaloidal rocks, all were quite empty. The surface consisted wholly of this stone, without any intermediate soil to soften its asperity under the feet of our horses, and yet it was covered with a wood of *eucalyptus* and *mimosa*, growing there as on the open forest land, between which and this stony region the chief difference consisted in the ruggedness of surface, this being broken as already stated, into irregular terraces, where loose stones lay in irregular heaps and hollows, most resembling old stone quarries. We travelled over three miles of this rough surface, before we reached the base of the cone. On the sides of it we found some soft red earth mixed with fragments of lava, and on reaching the summit, I found myself on the narrow edge of a circular crater, composed wholly of lava and scoriæ. Trees and bushes grew luxuriantly everywhere, except where the sharp rocks shot up almost perpendicularly. The igneous character of these was so obvious, that one of the men thrust his hand into a chasm to ascertain whether it was warm. The discovery of an extinct volcano gave additional interest to Mount Napier, but it was by no means a better station for the theodolite on that account; on the contrary, it was the worst possible, for as the trees grew on the edge of the crater, no one station could be found to afford a view of the horizon, until the whole circumference was cleared of the trees, and this was too great a work for us at that visit. Mount William and the Grampian range presented a noble outline to the northward. The sun had set, before I could recognize distant points in the highly interesting country, to be seen from this remarkable hill. The weather was also
unfavourable, and I descended to pass the night at its base, in hopes that the next morning might be clear.

On reaching the spot where I had left the horses, I found that our native friend, Tommy Came-last, could discover no water in any of the numerous hollows around the hill, and though the superabundance of this element had caused the chief impediment to our progress through the country at that time, we were obliged to pass a night most uncomfortably from the total want of it, at the base of Mount Napier. The spongy looking rocks were, however, dry enough to sleep upon, a quality of which the soil in general had been rather deficient, as most of us felt in our muscles. I perceived a remarkable uniformity in the size of the trees, very few of which were dead or fallen. From this circumstance, together with the deficiency of the soil and the sharp edge of the rock generally, some might conclude, that the volcano had been in activity at no very remote period.

**Sept. 5.** — A thick fog hung upon the mountain until half-past 10 A.M., and when I ascended an extremity, I could see nothing of the distance. I had however ascertained the nature of the country thus far, this having been the object of my visit, and as I had resolved from what I had seen, to pass to the northward at no great distance from this hill, I returned with less reluctance, in hopes that I might have it in my power yet to revisit it, during more favourable weather. The day was squally with several very heavy showers, the wind being from the south-west. We saw two natives at a fire, when we were returning, and our friend Tommy readily advanced towards them, but they immediately set up such loud and incessant cries, that I called to him to come away. After a ride of twenty-six miles across swamps and many muddy hollows, we reached soon after sunset, the camp which I had directed to be moved back, to near where the boats lay. I found that these had been drawn out of the swamp, and one only brought forward as I wished to this camp, and where I found all the carts once more ranged together. The alteration of the boat carriage required a little more time, and I accordingly determined to halt one day, that we might also have our horses shod, several shoes having come off on the rough rocks near Mount Napier.

**Sept. 6.** — This day I requested Mr. Stapylton to examine the country in a north-west direction. Some of the swamps crossed by me yesterday had appeared to fall westward, and I wished to ascertain the situation and character of the ground dividing them from those discharging their waters eastward or towards the sea, as it was only by keeping on that dividing ground, that I could hope to avoid them. Mr. Stapylton proceeded nine miles north-west, crossing many swampy flats, and at length a small rivulet, all falling west-ward. Beyond the rivulet, he got upon some good hills connected with higher land. Our best line of route homewards, was in a north-east direction, or at right angles to the route of Mr. Stapylton. The great swamp already mentioned, being the channel and recipient of the Shaw, was somewhat in my way, and my object now was, to trace out the dividing ground as we proceeded, so as to avoid the swamps on both sides. By sunset, the single boat was mounted in the shortened carriage, the whole being now so manageable and light, that the boat could be lifted out by hand, without block and tackle; and when
on the carriage, she could be drawn with ease wherever the light carts could pass. Thus we got rid of that heavy clog on our progress over soft ground, “the boats,” by reserving but one; and we left the larger, keel upwards, at the swamp which had occasioned so much delay.

_Sept. 7._ — Having chosen for a general line of route, the bearing most likely to avoid the swamps, according to the knowledge I had gained of the country, I proceeded as these and the soft ground permitted, and had the singular, and indeed, unexpected good fortune to come upon my horse’s track from Mount Napier, without having even seen the large swamp. The boat-carriage now travelled with the light carts, and we at length reached the first running stream at a short distance below where I had previously crossed it. The bottom was boggy, and the water flowed in two channels, the ground between them being very soft. The whole party crossed it, with the exception of two carts, which did not arrive, and we encamped on the bank beyond, after a journey of about eight miles. Near this stream, we found a pretty new species of Dillwynia, with plain yellow flowers, clustered on a long stalk at the end of the branches, and with curiously hairy heath-like leaves. It resembles _D. peduncularis_, but proved, on examination, to be distinct.* At this spot, we found a very small bower of twigs, only large enough to contain a child: the floor was hollowed out, and filled with dry leaves and feathers; and the ground around had been cut smooth, several boughs having been also bent over it, so as to be fixed in the ground at both ends. The whole seemed connected with some mystic ceremony of the aborigines, but which the male natives, who were with us, could not explain. The gins, however, on being questioned, said it was usual to prepare such a bower for the reception of a new-born child. Kangaroos were more numerous in this part of the country, than in any other that we had traversed. I counted twenty-three in one flock, which passed before me, as I stood silently by a tree. Two of the men counted fifty-seven in another flock, and it was not unusual for them to approach our camp, as if from curiosity, on which occasions two or three were occasionally caught by our dogs.

_Sept. 8._ — The remainder of the heavy carts not having come up, I left the two with us, to await their arrival, that the men might assist the drivers with their teams, in crossing this stream. On proceeding then with the light carts only, I crossed several soft bad places, and one or two fine little rivulets, encamping at last where we again fell in with my horse’s track, on an open space, about eight miles from Mount Napier. During the day’s journey, we traversed some fine, open, forest hills near the banks of rivulets. We generally found the south-eastern slope of such heights very indistinct, and the ground soft, boggy, and covered with banksias. The rock in such places consisted of the same cellular trap, so common on this side of the Grampians. Our camp lay between two swamps, for no better ground appeared on any side. I hoped, however, to obtain a more general knowledge of the surrounding country from Mount Napier, during clear weather, and thus to discover some way by which we might make our escape to the northward. The carts did not overtake us this day, and I determined, when they should arrive, to overhaul them, and throw away every article of weight, not absolutely required for the rest of
the journey.

Sept. 9. — Once more I set out for Mount Napier, followed by a party of men with axes to clear its summit, at least sufficiently for the purpose of taking angles with the theodolite. The night had been clear, and the morning was fine, but as soon as I had ascended the hill, rain-clouds gathered in the south-west, and obscured the horizon on all sides; I could only see some points at intervals, but I took as many as I could, after the men had cleared a station for the theodolite. I perceived two very extensive lakes in the low country between Mount Napier and the south-eastern portion of the Grampian range, which terminated in the hill, that I had previously named Mount Abrupt. Between the largest of these waters (called by me Lake Linlithgow), and the mountains, there appeared an extensive tract of open grassy land. To the eastward, at the distance of twelve miles, I perceived a solitary hill, somewhat resembling Mount Napier, and named it Mount Rouse; but a haze still concealed the more distant country. On reaching the camp, where we arrived in the dark, I found that the carts had not, even then, returned; but as the barometer promised better weather, I did not much regret their non-arrival, as the delay would afford me another chance of having a clear day on Mount Napier.

Sept. 10. — I again proceeded to the hill, and obtained at length a clear and extensive view from it in all directions. In the north, the Grampian range, on all sides grand, presented a new and striking outline on this. Far in the west, I could recognise in slight breaks, on a low horizon, some features of the valley of Nangeela (Glenelg). Eastward, the summits of a range, I thought of naming the Australian Pyrenees, were just visible over a woody horizon; and to the south-east were several detached hills, and some elevated ridges of forest-land, apparently near the coast. One isolated hill, resembling a haystack, was very remarkable on the seashore. This I named Mount Hotspur, being the only elevation near Lady Julia Percy’s Isle, (not Isles, as laid down on the charts, for there is but one, now called by whalers the Julian Island.) To the southward, I could just distinguish the Laurence Islands, but a haze upon the coast prevented me from seeing that of Lady Julia Percy. Smoke arose from many parts of the lower country, and shewed that the inhabitants were very generally scattered over its surface. We could now look on such fires with indifference, so harmless were these natives, compared with those on the Darling, and the smoke now ascended in equal abundance from the furthest verge of the horizon. It was impossible to discover the sources of streams, or the direction of any ranges visible in the surrounding country; but upon the whole, I concluded that the only practicable route for us homewards, at that time, would be through the forests, and by passing as near as possible to the base of Mount Abrupt, the south-eastern extremity of the Grampians. Several forest-hills stood above the extensive level country, extending from our camp to Mount Abrupt; but I could trace no connection between these hills, and was rather apprehensive that a soft and swampy country intervened. I had this day leisure to examine the crater on this hill more particularly, and found its breadth to be 446 feet; its average depth 80 feet. The cellular rocks and lava stood nearly perpendicular around one portion of it; but there was a gap towards the west-north-west, on which side the crater was
open almost to its greatest depth. (See frontispiece, vol. 2.) Several deep tongues of
land descended from it to the west and north-west, forming the base of the hill, and
had somewhat of the regularity of water-worn features. No marks of
decomposition appeared in the fragments projecting from the highest points,
however much exposed. On the contrary, all the stringy twisted marks of fusion
were as sharp and fresh, as if the lava had but recently cooled. One species of moss
very much resembled the Orchilla, and I thought it not improbable that this valuable
weed might be found here, as it occurs on similar rocks at Teneriffe. Just as I
reached the highest summit this morning, a bronze-wing pigeon arose from it; a
circumstance rather remarkable, considering that this was the only bird of that
species seen on this side the mountains, besides the one we saw on Pigeon Ponds,
on the 3rd of August. On returning to the camp, I found that the carts had arrived
soon after my departure in the morning; but the men had the misfortune to lose
two bullocks in crossing the swampy stream where we had been previously
encamped. One was suffocated in the mud, and the other having lain down in it,
could not be made to rise. By observing the stars $\alpha$ and $\beta$ Centauri, I ascertained the
magnetic variation to be $3^\circ 2' 45''$ E. and by the sun’s altitude, observed this day at
Mount Napier, I found the latitude of that hill to be $37^\circ 52' 29''$ S.

Sept. 11. — In order to lighten the carts as much as possible, I caused the pack-
saddles to be placed on the spare bullocks, and various articles carried upon them;
thus lightening, to less than eight hundred weight each, the loads of two of the
heavy carts, which had narrow wheels and sunk most in the ground. The old cover
of the boat carriage was also laid aside, and in its place, some tarpaulins which had
previously added to the loads, were laid across our remaining boat. A heavy jack
used to raise cart wheels, was also left at this camp, and some iron bars, that had
been taken from the boat carriage when it was shortened. Thus lightened, we
proceeded once more into the fields of mud, taking a northerly direction. For
several miles, we encountered worse ground than we had ever crossed before, yet
the carts came over it; but broad swamps still lay before us. Despairing at length of
being able to avoid them, I impatiently galloped my horse into one, and the carts
followed, thanks to my impatience for once, for I do not think that I should
otherwise have discovered that a swamp so uninviting could possibly have borne
my horse, and still less the carts. After this I ventured to pursue a less circuitous
route. About that time a yellow flower in the grass caught my eye, and remembering
that we had seen none of these golden flowers since we left the beautiful valley of
the Wannon; I ventured to hope, that we were at length approaching the good
country at the head of that stream. Such was my anxious wish, when I perceived
through the trees a glimpse of an open grassy country, and immediately entered a
fine clear valley with a lively little stream flowing westward through it, and which I
named the Grange. This was indeed one of the heads of the Wannon, and we had
at length reached the good country. The contrast between it and that from which
we had emerged, was obvious to all; even to the natives, who for the first time,
painted themselves in the evening, and danced a spirited corrobory on the occasion.
This day, Piper had seen two of the native inhabitants, and had endeavoured to
persuade them to come to me, but all to no purpose, until at length, enraged at the unreasonable timidity of one of them, he threw his tomahawk at him, and nearly hit him as he edged off; an act of which, as I told him, in the strongest terms, I very much disapproved.

*Sept. 12.* — The course of the little stream being to the northward, I proceeded along its right bank this morning, until it turned to the north-west; but we soon after came to another to which the former seemed to be but a tributary. Its course was almost due west, and the valley in which it flowed, was deep and boldly escarped. The stream thundered along with considerable rapidity over a rocky bottom, consisting of the same sort of trap or ancient lava. I had little doubt, that this was the principal head of the Wannon, a river crossed by us on the 11th of August. Meeting next, an important branch falling into it from the south-east, and being obliged to cross this, we effected the passage, even with the carts, although the horses were nearly swimming. We proceeded next along a continuous ridge of fine firm ground covered with excellent grass, and soon after, we saw before us a smaller stream flowing through a broad grassy vale, and having crossed it also, without difficulty, we encamped in one of the valleys beyond, where this tributary appeared to originate. A finer country could scarcely be imagined: enormous trees of the mimosa or wattle, of which the bark is so valuable, grew almost every where; and several new varieties of Caladenia were found to-day. The blue, yellow, pink, and brown coloured were all observed on these flowery plains. The sublime peaks of the Grampians began to appear above the trees to the northward, and two lower hills of trap-rock arose, one to the south-west, the other north-west of our camp. That to the northward, I named Mount Bainbrigge, the other on the south, Mount Pierrepoint.

*Sept. 13.* — We broke up our camp early this morning, and on reaching the highest ground we discovered a large lake on our left: it was nearly circular, about half a mile in circumference, and surrounded by high firm banks, from which there was no visible outlet; I named it Lake Nivelle. At a few miles beyond this lake, the cheering sight of an open country extending to the horizon, first appeared through the trees; and we soon entered on these fine downs where the gently undulating surface was firm under our horses’ feet, and thickly clothed with excellent grass. The cart-wheels trundled merrily along, so that twelve miles were accomplished soon after mid-day, and we encamped near the extreme southern point of the Grampians, [which I named Mount Sturgeon. The weather was very wet, but this troubled us the less, as we had not known a day without rain for several months.

*Sept. 14.* — I was most anxious to ascend Mount Abrupt, the first peak to the northward of Mount Sturgeon, that I might close my survey of these mountains, and also reconnoitre the country before us. This morning, clouds hung upon the mountains, however, and I could scarcely indulge a hope that the weather would be favourable for the purposed survey; nevertheless I bent my steps towards the mountain, having first set the carpenter to work to make an additional width of felloe to the narrow wheels of one of the carts, that it might pass with less difficulty over soft ground. We soon came to a deep stream flowing not from, but apparently,
towards the mountains; its general course being westward. It was so deep that our horses could scarcely ford it without swimming. Reeds grew about, and the bottom was soft, although two kinds of rock appeared in its banks. On the right was trap, on the left the ferruginous sandstone of which all these mountains consist. We soon entered on the barren and sandy but firm ground at their base, which, with its peculiar trees and shrubs, appeared so different from the grassy plains. The banksia, the casuarina, and the hardy xanthorrhæa, reminded us of former toils on the opposite side of these ranges. The weather turned out better than I had expected, and from the summit of Mount Abrupt I beheld a truly sublime scene; the whole of the mountains, quite clear of clouds, the grand outline of the more distant masses blended with the sky, and forming a blue and purple background for the numerous peaks of the range on which I stood, which consisted of sharp cones and perpendicular cliffs foreshortened, so as to form one grand feature only of the extensive landscape, though composing a crescent nearly 30 miles in extent: this range being but a branch from the still more lofty masses of Mount William, which crowned the whole. Towards the coast, there was less haze than usual, for I could distinguish Lady Julia Percy's Isle, which I had looked for in vain from Mount Napier, a point twenty-four miles nearer to it. Here I could also trace the course of the stream we had crossed that morning, from its sources under the eastern base of the mountains to a group of lower hills twenty-seven miles distant to the westward; which hills, named by me Dundas group, formed a most useful point in my trigonometrical survey. Several extensive lakes appeared in the lowest parts adjacent; but what interested me most, after I had intersected the various summits, was the appearance of the country to the eastward, through which we were to find our way home. There I saw a vast extent of open downs, and could trace their undulations to where they joined a range of mountains, which, judging by their outlines, appeared to be of easy access. Our straightest way homewards passed just under a bluff head about fifty miles distant, and so far I could easily perceive a most favourable line of route, by avoiding several large reedy lakes. Between that open country and these lakes on one side, and the coast on the other, a low woody ridge extended eastward; and, by first gaining that, I hoped we should reach the open ground, in a direction which should enable us to leave all the lakes on our left.

The largest pieces of water, I could see, were Lake Linlithgow and its companion in the open grassy plains between the range and Mount Napier, as previously discovered from that hill. Several small and very picturesque lakes, then as smooth as mirrors, adorned the valley immediately to the westward of the hill, I was upon. They were fringed with luxuriant shrubs, so that it was really painful to me to hurry, as I was then compelled to do, past spots like these, involving in their unexplored recesses so much of novelty amidst the most romantic scenery. The rock consisted of a finely grained sandstone as in other parts of that mass. The Grampians of the south consist of three ranges, covering a surface which extends latitudinally 54 miles, and longitudinally 20 miles. The extreme eastern and highest summit is Mount William, in height 4,500 feet above the sea. The northern point is Mount Zero, in latitude 36° 52′ 35″ S., and the southern is Mount Sturgeon, in latitude 37°
38' 00". I here again recognised the outline of the most northern and elevated range extending from Mount William to Mount Zero, but it was not so steep on the southern as on the northern side. From this hill two other ranges branch off to the south; the western being marked Victoria range on the map, the eastern, the Serra, from its serrated appearance; the broken outlines they present being highly ornamental to the fine country around. On the northern slopes of the range, are some forests of fine timber, but, in general, the higher summits are bare and rocky. The chief source of the Glenelg, is between the Victoria range and the most northern, whence it soon sinks into a deep glen or ravine, receiving numberless tributaries from other dells, intersecting the adjacent country. A considerable branch of the Glenelg, named by the natives the “Wannon,” has its sources in the eastern and southern rivulets from these mountains. The waters falling northward, enter the “Wimmera,” a different river, whose estuary has not yet been explored. Returning towards the camp, on approaching the stream, we met with one of the most strikingly beautiful species of the common genus Pultenæa; its narrow heath-like leaves were so closely covered with soft silky hairs as to have quite a silvery appearance, and the branches were loaded with the heads of yellow and brown flowers now fully open. It formed a new species of the “Proliferous” section, allied to *Pultenæa stipularis*.

***Sept. 15.*** — Pursuing an easterly course in order to avoid the Wannon, we again found the ground so soft and boggy that it was impossible to proceed; and after advancing with incredible labour (under which one of the poor bullocks fell to rise no more), barely four miles, I ordered the tents to be again set up, but almost in despair, for having performed during the previous days several good journeys with perfect freedom from this species of impediment, and having seen no indication of any change in the surface, I had assured the men on descending from the mountains, that the country before us was favourable. We were nevertheless compelled to halt again at this part by the breaking of the iron axle of one of the carts, for it was necessary to endeavour to repair it, before we could proceed. The highest part of the woody ridge, between us and the plains, bore according to my map due east, being distant 14 miles.

I gave that bearing to Mr. Stapylton, who rode forward with Burnett to ascertain how far we were from firmer ground, while I continued in my tent occupied with the map of the mountains. It was dark before Mr. Stapylton returned and brought the pleasing tidings, that the soft ground extended only to three or four miles from the camp, and that from beyond that distance to the forest hills, he had found the ground tolerably firm.

*Mount Abrupt from the south.*

***Sept. 16.*** — The country which proved so soft was nevertheless stony, and traprock projected from every higher portion; yet such rocky eminences being unconnected, each was surrounded by softer ground. I was resolved to make the very most of them: but an iron axle having been broken in our struggles with the mud, the smith required more time to repair it, and I therefore determined to proceed with but half the equipment drawn by *all* the bullocks, leaving Burnett and
the remaining portion of the party and equipment to come on next day by the same means, as soon as the cattle could be sent back. Having previously examined the ground, and carefully traced out the hardest parts, connecting these rocky features, I led the way with the carts, and got through the first part of the journey much better than any of us had expected. After passing over four miles of soft boggy ground, we came to a small running stream, the surface beyond it rising to a somewhat steep ascent. On reaching that side, I found myself on a good, firm ridge, along which I continued for some time until we reached a swampy lagoon, the banks of which were very firm and good. Leaving this on our right, we at length saw the darkly wooded hills of the ridge before mentioned; and having travelled eleven miles, we encamped near a small lagoon, on a spot, where there was excellent grass; but it was still necessary to send back the poor cattle with their drivers that evening, to where the other party still remained encamped.

Sept. 17. — This day the rest of the party came up, but the cattle seemed quite exhausted. They had at length become so weak, from the continued heavy dragging through mud, that it was obvious they could not proceed much further until after they had enjoyed at least some weeks of repose. But our provisions did not admit of this delay, as the time had arrived, when I ought to have been at Sydney, although still so far from it. After mature deliberation, we hit upon a plan, which might, as I thought, enable us to escape. The arrangement proposed was, that I should go forward with some of the freshest of the cattle drawing the light carts and boat, with a month’s provisions, and taking with me as many men as would enable me to leave with those who should remain, provisions for two months. That the cattle should rest at the present camp two weeks and then proceed, while I, by travelling so far before them with so light a party, could send back a supply of provisions, and also the boat, to meet this second party following in my track, on the banks of the Murray. Thus I could reach Sydney some weeks sooner, and also carry on my survey much more conveniently; the cattle, which had been sinking almost daily, would be thus refreshed sufficiently to be able to travel, and the chance of the whole party suffering from famine would be much diminished. Such was the outline of the plan, which our position and necessities suggested.

Sept. 18. — This day was passed, in making preparations for setting out to-morrow with the light party, as proposed. The catalogue of the objects of natural history, collected during the journey, included several birds and animals not hitherto mentioned in this Journal. Amongst the most remarkable of these was the pig-footed animal, found on June 16. It measured about ten inches in length, had no tail, and the fore feet resembled those of a pig. There was also the rat, which climbs trees like the opossum; the flat-tailed rat from the scrubs of the Darling, where it builds an enormous nest of branches and boughs, so interlaced as to be proof against any attacks of the native dog. The unique specimen from the reedy country on the Murray of a very singular animal much resembling the jerboa or desert rat of Persia; also a rat-eared bat from the Lachlan. We had several new birds, but the most admired of our ornithological discoveries, was a white-winged superb warbler, from the junction of the Darling and the Murray, all the plumage not white, being
of a bright blue colour; but of this we had obtained only one specimen. I had not many
opportunities of figuring the birds from life, so very desirable in ornithological subjects.
The eye of the eagle and the rich crest of the cockatoo of the desert, could not be
preserved in dead specimens, and were too fine to be omitted among the sketches, I
endeavoured to snatch from nature. Our herbarium had suffered from the continued wet
weather, especially in fording deep rivers; and this was the more to be regretted, as it
contained many remarkable specimens. The seeds and bulbous roots, comprising
varieties of Calostemma, Caladenia, and Anguillaria, besides a number of large
liliaceous bulbs, were however preserved in a very good state.

The camp in which Mr. Stapylton’s party was to remain two weeks, was in as
favourable a place for refreshing the cattle as could be found. The ground undulated,
and was thickly clothed with fresh verdure; a grassy swamp also, such as cattle
delight in, extended northward into a lake of fresh water, which I named Lake Repose.
The peaks of the Serra Range, and especially Mount Abrupt, were landmarks which
secured the men from even the possibility of losing their way in looking after the cattle.

Of the natives in our party, it was arranged amongst themselves that Tommy Came-first,
and the widow, who most required a rest, having sore feet, should remain with Mr.
Stapylton, and that Piper and Tommy Came-last should accompany me.
Chapter XII.

Parting of the widow and her child — We at length emerge on much firmer ground — River Hopkins — Mount Nicholson — Cockajemmy salt lake — Natives ill disposed — Singular weapon — Treacherous concealment of a native — Contents of a native’s “basket and store” — A tribe comes forward — Fine country for colonization — Hollows in the downs — Snakes numerous — Native females — Cattle tracks — Ascend Mount Cole — Enter on a granite country — Many rivulets — Mammeloid Hills — Lava, the surface rock — Snakes eaten by the natives — Ascend Mount Byng — Rich grass — Expedition Pass — Excursion towards Port Phillip — Discover and cross the river Barnard — Emus numerous and tame — The river Campaspe — Effects of a storm in the woods — Ascend Mount Macedon — Port Phillip dimly seen from it — Return to the camp — Continue our homeward journey — Waterfall of Cobaw — Singular country on the Barnard — Cross the Campaspe — An English razor found — Ascend Mount Campbell — Native beverage — Valley of the Deegay — Natives exchange baskets for axes — They linger about our camp — Effects of fireworks, &c. — Arrival at, and passage of, the Goulburn — Fish caught.

Sept. 19. — WHEN about to set out I observed that the widow “Turandurèy,” who was to remain with Mr. Stapylton’s party and the carts, was marked with white round the eyes (the natives’ fashion of mourning), and that the face of her child Ballandella was whitened also. This poor woman, who had cheerfully carried the child on her back, when we offered to carry both on the carts, and who was as careful and affectionate as any mother could be, had at length determined to entrust to me the care of this infant. I was gratified with such a proof of the mother’s confidence in us, but I should have been less willing to take charge of her child, had I not been aware of the wretched state of slavery to which the native females are doomed. I felt additional interest in this poor child, from the circumstance of her having suffered so much by the accident, that befel her while with our party, and which had not prevented her from now preferring our mode of living so much, that I believe the mother at length despaired of being ever able to initiate her thoroughly in the mysteries of killing and eating snakes, lizards, rats, and similar food. The widow had been long enough with us to be sensible, how much more her sex was respected by civilized men than savages, and, as I conceived, it was with such sentiments that she committed her child to my charge, under the immediate care, however, of Piper’s gin.

For several miles, we met with soft ground at the low connecting parts of hills, but we at length gained the woody ridge, so likely, as I had hoped, to favour our progress. Its turnings were intricate, but by one or two rivulets falling to my left, and then by others falling to the right, I learnt how to keep on the intermediate ground, until, at length, after a journey of nine miles, we emerged from the woods on a firm open surface, and an extensive prospect was seen before us. Leaving the
party to encamp, I rode to a round forest-hill some miles to the eastward, and obtained a comprehensive view of the Grampians, and also of the country to the northward, which now appeared to be chiefly open; and I had little doubt that we should find it more favourable for travelling upon. Eastward of the forest-hill, the ground sank into a deep valley which turned round to the south-east, after receiving the drainage from some hollows in the open country north of it. This ravine received also the waters from the woody ridge now south of us, where the numerous deep vallies were irrigated by streams arising in swamps; the whole probably forming the head of some more important stream flowing to the coast, and which I here named the river Hopkins. This eminence, which I distinguished as Mount Stavely, consisted, apparently of decomposed clay-stone or felspar, having a tendency to divide naturally into regular prisms. A very beautiful and singular looking shrub appeared on the hills we crossed this day, and also on the open ground, where indeed it was most abundant. It was a species of acacia, the leaves adhering edgeways to thorny branches; many of these shrubs were in blossom, the flowers being yellow, and as large and round as marbles, and those growing very thickly, they gave to the branches, the appearance of garlands or festoons, the effect altogether being extremely graceful and singular. We found also a beautiful new species of acacia, looking like a broad-leaved variety of *A. armata*. The branches were singularly protected by short spiny forks, which proved to be the hardened permanent stipules. With this occurred another species with hard stiff scymetar-shaped leaves and a profusion of balls of browner yellow flowers, which had been previously observed (on June 22) in a more vigorous condition. By observations from this hill I made the height of Mount William about 4,500 feet above the sea.

*Mount William from Mount Stavely.*

*Sept. 20.* — Our wheels now rolled lightly over fine grassy downs, and our faces were turned towards distant home. Before us arose a low, thinly-wooded hill, which at first bounded our view towards the north, and afterwards proved to be the feature, connecting the low woody ridge near our last camp with the hills still further to the northward. On reaching the summit, I perceived, that a considerable extent of open country intervened, being watered in the lower parts by several lakes. Descending northward along an offset of the same hills which had led us in that direction, and which I now named Mount Nicholson, I observed that the lakes occurred at intervals in a valley apparently falling from the westward in which no stream appeared, although it was shut in by well escarped rocky banks. We encamped, after a journey of ten miles, at a point where another valley from the north joined the above, and I was somewhat surprised to find after encamping, that the water in the adjacent lakes was extremely salt. No connection existed by means of any channel between them, although they formed together a chain of lagoons in the bed of a deep and well defined valley. On the contrary, the soil was particularly solid and firm between them, and the margin of the most eastern of these lakes, was separated by a high bank from the bed of another valley, where a running stream of pure water flowed over a broad and swampy bed fifteen feet higher than the adjacent valley containing the stagnant salt lakes. The rock enclosing these
singular valleys was basalt, and from these peculiarities, considered with reference to
the ancient volcano and the dip of the mountain strata to the north-west, it was
evident that some upheaving or subsidence had materially altered the levels of the
original surface.

I could find no brine-springs in or about these lakes, and as it was evident, that a
stream had once washed the bed of the ravine now occupied by them, I may leave
the solution of the problem to geologists. As we proceeded over the open ground,
before we reached the spot where we finally encamped; several natives appeared at
a great distance in a valley eastward of Mount Nicholson, and Piper went towards
them supported by Brown, whom I sent after him on horse-back. They proved to
be three or four gins only, but Piper continued to pursue them to the top of a hill,
when a number of men armed with spears suddenly started from behind trees, and
were running furiously towards Piper, when Brown rode up. On presenting his
pistol they came to a full stop, thereby shewing that they had some idea of fire-
arms, although they refused to answer Piper’s questions or to remain longer. In the
evening, four of them approaching our camp, Piper went forward with Burnett to
meet them. They advanced to the tents apparently without fear, and I obtained
from them the names of various localities. On being questioned respecting Cadong,
they told us, that all these waters ran into it, and pointed to the south-east, saying
that I should by-and-bye see it. When I found we could obtain no more
information, I presented the most intelligent of them with a tomahawk, on which
they went slowly away, repeatedly turning round towards us and saying something,
which, according to Piper, had reference to their tribe coming again and dancing a
corrobori, a proposal these savage tribes often make, and which the traveller who
knows them well, will think it better to discourage. These men carried a singular
kind of malga, of a construction different from any Piper had ever seen. The malga
is a weapon usually made in the form of fig. 2, but that with which these natives
were provided somewhat resembled a pick-axe with one half broken off, and was of
the form of fig. 1, being made so as to be thickest at the angle. The blow of such a
formidable weapon could not be easily parried, from the uncertainty whether it
would be aimed with the thick heavy corner or the sharp point. All the weapons of
this singular race are peculiar, and this one was not the least remarkable. At dusk,
while Woods was looking after the cattle near the camp, he surprised a native
concealed behind a small bush, who did not make his escape until Woods was
within two yards of him. How many more had been about we could not ascertain,
but next morning we found near the spot, one of the bags usually carried by gins,
and containing the following samples of their daily food: — three snakes; three rats;
about 2 lbs. of small fish, like white bait; cray fish; and a quantity of the small root
of the eichoraceous plant *ťaǹ, usually found growing on the plains with a bright
yellow flower. There were also in the bag, various bodkins and colouring stones,
and two mogos or stone hatchets, (fig. 5.) It seemed that our civility had as usual
inspired these savages with a desire to beat our brains out while asleep, and we were
thankful that in effecting their cowardly designs, they had been once more
unsuccessful.
Sept. 21. — Early in the morning, a tribe of about forty were seen advancing toward our camp, preceded by the four men who had been previously there. Having determined, that they should not approach us again, I made Piper advance to them, and inquire what they wanted last night behind the bush, pointing at the same time to the spot. They returned no answer to this question, but continued to come forward, until I ordered a burning bush to be waved at them, and when they came to a stand without answering Piper’s question, I ordered a party of our men to charge them, where-upon they all scampered off. We saw them upon our encamping ground after we had proceeded about two miles, but they did not attempt to follow us. Whether they would find a letter which I had buried there for Mr. Stapynton or not, we could only hope to discover after that gentleman’s return to the colony. It was understood between us, that where a cross was cut in the turf where my tent had stood, he would find a note under the centre of the cross. This I buried, by merely pushing a stick into the earth, and dropping into the hole thus made, the note twisted up like a cigar. The letter was written chiefly to caution him about these natives. Basalt appeared in the sides of the ravine, which contained the salt-lakes, and, in equal abundance, and of the same quality, in that which enclosed the living stream, where it lay in blocks forming small cliffs. Finding, at length, a favourable place for crossing this stream, we traversed the ravine, and resumed our direct course towards the southern extremity of a distant range, named Māmmala by the natives; the bluff head previously seen from Mount Abrupt (p. 259). We now travelled over a country quite open, slightly undulating, and well covered with grass. To the westward the noble outline of the Grampians terminated a view extending over vast plains, fringed with forests and embellished with lakes. To the northward appeared other more accessible looking hills, some being slightly wooded, some green and quite clear to their summits, long grassy vales and ridges intervening: while to the eastward, the open plain extended as far as the eye could reach. Our way lay between distant ranges, which, in that direction, mingled with the clouds. Thus I had both the low country, which was without timber, and the well wooded hills, within reach, and might choose either for our route, according to the state of the ground, weather, &c. Certainly a land more favourable for colonization could not be found. Flocks might be turned out upon its hills, or the plough at once set to work in the plains. No primeval forests required to be first rooted out, although there was enough of wood for all purposes of utility, and as much also for embellishment as even a painter could wish. One feature peculiar to that country appeared on these open downs: it consisted of hollows, which being usually surrounded by a line of “yarra” gum trees, or white bark eucalyptus, seemed at a distance to contain lakes, but instead of water, I found only blocks of vesicular trap, consisting apparently of granular felspar, and hornblende rock also appeared in the banks enclosing them. Some of these hollows were of a winding character, as if they were the remains of ancient water-courses; but if ever currents flowed there, the surface must have undergone considerable alteration since, for the downs where these hollows appeared, were elevated at least 900 feet above the sea, and surrounded on all sides by lower ground. There was an appearance of moisture
among the rocks, in some of these depressions; and whether, by digging a few feet, permanent wells might be made, may be a question worth attention when colonization extends to that country. We found on other parts of this open ground, large blocks composed of irregular concretions of ironstone, covered with a thin coating of compact brown haematite. The purple-ringed *Anguillaria dioica*, first seen on Pyramid Hill, again appeared here; and in many places the ground was quite yellow with the flowers of the cichoraceous plant *Táo*, whose root, small as it is, constitutes the food of the native women and children. The cattle are very fond of the leaves of this plant, and seemed to thrive upon it. We also found a new bulbine with a delicate yellow flower, being perfectly distinct from both the species described by Brown.* The genial warmth of spring had begun to shew its influence on these plants, and also brought the snakes from their holes, for on this day in particular, it was ascertained that twenty-two had been killed by the party. These were all of that species, not venomous I believe, which the natives eat. We encamped near a small clump of trees, for the sake of fire-wood.

**Sept. 22.** — This day’s journey lay chiefly across open downs, with wooded hills occasionally to the left. On the southward, ward, these downs extended to the horizon: and several isolated hills at great distances, apparently of trap, presented an outline like the volcanic Mount Napier. All the various small rivulets we traversed in our line of route, seemed to flow in that direction. Having crossed three of these, we encamped on the right bank of the fourth. The hills on our left were of granite, and as different as possible in appearance from the mountains to the westward, which were all of red sandstone. In the afternoon there was a thunder storm, but the sky became again perfectly serene in the evening.

**Sept. 23.** — This morning a thick fog hung over us; but having well reconnoitred the country beyond, I knew that I might travel in a straight line, over open ground, for several miles. When the fog arose, some finely wooded hills appeared on our right; but after advancing seven miles on good firm earth, we again came upon very soft ground, which obliged us to turn, and wind, and pick our way, wherever the surface seemed most likely to bear us. The fog was succeeded by a fine warm day, and as we proceeded, we saw two gins and their children, at work separately, on a swampy meadow; and, quick as the sight of these natives is, we had travelled long within view, before they observed us. They were spread over the field much in the manner in which emus and kangaroos feed on plains, and we observed them digging in the ground for roots. All carried bags, and when Piper went towards them, they ran with great speed across the vast open plains to the southward. This day we perceived the fresh track of several bullocks, a very extraordinary circumstance in that situation. The beautiful yellow-wreathed *acacia* was not to be seen after we quitted the open country. The ground was becoming almost hopelessly soft, when we reached a small run of water from the hills, and by keeping along its bank, we had the good fortune to reach an extremity of the range, where the solid granite was as welcome to our feet, as a dry beach is to shipwrecked seamen. We had at length arrived under Mámmala, the bluff hill which had been my land-mark, from the time I left Mr. Stapylton. I found this was the southern
extremity of a lofty range, which I lost no time in ascending, after I had fixed on a spot for the camp. It consisted of huge blocks of granite,* and was crowned with such lofty timber, that I could only catch occasional peeps of the surrounding country; nevertheless, I obtained, by moving about among the trees with my pocket sextant, almost all the angles I wanted; and I thus connected the survey of the region I was leaving, with that I was about to enter. My first view over this eastern country was extensive, and when I at length descended to a projecting rock, I found the prospect extremely promising, the land being variegated with open plains and strips of forest, and studded with smooth green hills, of the most beautiful forms. In the extreme distance, a range, much resembling that on which I stood, declined at its southern extremity, in the same manner as this did, and thus left me a passage precisely in the most direct line of route homewards. The carts had still, however, to cross the range at which we had arrived, and which, as I perceived here, not only extended southward, but also broke into bold ravines on the eastern side, being connected with some noble hills, or rather mountains, all grassy to their summits, thinly wooded, and consisting wholly of granite. They resembled very much some hills of the lower Pyrenees, in Spain, only that they were more grassy and less acclivitous, and I named this hill Mount Cole. To the southward, the sea-haze dimmed the horizon: but I perceived the eastern margin of a large piece of water bearing south-south-east, and which I supposed might be Cadong. It was sheltered on the south-east by elevated ground apparently very distant, but no high range appeared between us and that inlet of the sea. On the contrary, the heights extending southward from this summit being connected with the highest and most southern hills visible from it, seemed to be the only high land or separation of the waters falling north and south. With such a country before us, I bade adieu to swamps, and returned well pleased to the camp, being guided to it only by the gushing torrent, for I had remained on the hill as long as daylight lasted.

Sept. 24. — The morning was rainy, and our way having to be traced up the ravines and round the hills, was very tortuous for the first three miles. We then reached the dividing part of the range, and descended immediately after into valleys of a less intricate character. Having passed over the swampy bed of a rivulet flowing southward, and having also crossed several fine bold ridges with good streams between them, we at length encamped near a round hill, which being clear on the summit, was therefore a favourable station for the theodolite. This hill also consisted of granite, and commanded an open and extensive view over the country to the eastward.

Sept. 25. — One bold range of forest land appeared before us, and after crossing it, we passed over several rivulets falling northward, then over a ridge of trapean conglomerate with embedded quartz pebbles, and descended into a valley of the finest description. Grassly hills clear of timber appeared beyond a stream also flowing northward. These hills consisted of old vesicular lava. We next entered a forest of very large trees of iron-bark eucalyptus, and we finally encamped in a grassy valley in the midst of this forest.

Sept. 26. — We first crossed more hills of the trapean conglomerate, on which
grew iron-bark eucalypti, and box. The rock consisted of a base of compact felspar, with embedded grains of quartz, giving to some parts the character of conglomerate, and there were also embedded crystals of common felspar. By diverging a little to the right, we entered upon an open tract of the most favourable aspect, stretching away to the south-west among similar hills, until they were lost in the extreme distance. The whole surface was green as an emerald, and on our right for some miles ran a fine rivulet between steep grassy banks, and over a bed of trap-rock. At length, this stream was joined by two others coming through similar grassy vallies from the south; and, when we approached two lofty, smooth, round hills, green to their summits, the united streams flowed in an open dell, which our carts rolled through without meeting any impediment. I ascended the most western of these hills, as it was a point which I had observed from various distant stations, and I enjoyed such a charming view eastward from the summit, as can but seldom fall to the lot of the explorers of new countries. The surface presented the forms of pristine beauty, clothed in the hues of spring; and the shining verdure of these smooth and symmetrical hills, was relieved by the darker hues of the wood with which they were interlaced; which exhibited every variety of tint, from a dark brown in the fore-ground, to a light blue in extreme distance. The hills consisted entirely of lava, and I named them from their peculiar shape, the Mammeloid hills, and the station on which I stood, Mount Greenock. In travelling through this Eden, no road was necessary, nor any ingenuity in conducting wheel-carriages, wherever we chose. The beautiful little terrestrial orchidaceous plants *Caladenia dilatata* and *Diuris aurea*, were already in full bloom; and we also found on the plains this day, a most curious little bush resembling a heath in foliage, but with solitary polyptalous flowers resembling those of *Sollya*.* When we had completed fourteen miles, we encamped on the edge of an open plain and near a small rivulet, the opposite bank consisting of grassy forest land.

*Sept. 27.* — I was surprised to hear the voice of a Scotch-woman in the camp, this morning. The peculiar accent and rapid utterance could not be mistaken, as I thought, and I called to inquire who the stranger was, when I ascertained that it was only Tommy Came-last, who was imitating a Scotch female, who, as I then learnt, was at Portland Bay, and had been very kind to Tommy. The imitation was ridiculously true, through all the modulations of that peculiar accent, although, strange to say, without the pronunciation of a single intelligible word. The talent of the aborigines for imitation seems a peculiar trait in their character. I was informed that the widow could also amuse the men occasionally — by enacting their leader, taking angles, drawing from nature, &c.

While the party went forward over the open plains with Mr. Stapylton, I ascended a smooth round hill, distant about a mile to the southward of our camp, from which I could with ease continue my survey, by means of hills on all sides, the highest of them being to the southward. I could trace the rivulets flowing northward, into one or two principal channels, near several masses of mountain: these channels and ranges being probably connected with those crossed by us on our route from the Murray. In these bare hills, and on the open grassy plains, old
vesicular lava abounded; small loose elongated fragments lay on the round hills, having a red scorified appearance, and being also so cellular, as to be nearly as light as pumice. We this day crossed several fine running streams, and forests of box and blue-gum growing on ridges of trapean conglomerate. At length, we entered on a very level and extensive flat, exceedingly green, and resembling an English park. It was bounded on the east by a small river flowing to the north-west, (probably the Loddon), and abrupt but grassy slopes arose beyond its right bank. After crossing this stream, we encamped, having travelled nearly fifteen miles in one straight line, bearing 60½° east of north. This tract was rather of a different character from that of the fine country of which we had previously seen so much, and we saw for the first time, the *Discaria Australis*, a remarkable green leafless spiny bush, and resembling in a most striking manner the Colletias of Chili. Sheltered on every side by woods or higher ground, the spring seemed more advanced there than elsewhere, and our hard wrought cattle well deserved to be the first to browse on that verdant plain. The stream, in its course downwards, vanished amongst grassy hills to water a country apparently of the most interesting and valuable character.

Sept. 28. — The steep banks beyond the river consisted of clay-slate, having under it a conglomerate, containing fragments of quartz cemented by compact hematite. The day was hot, and we killed several large snakes of the species eaten by the natives. I observed that our guides looked at the colour of the belly, when in any doubt about the sort they preferred; these were white bailed; whereas the belly of a very fierce one with a large head, of which Piper and the others seemed much afraid, was yellow. On cutting this snake open, two young quails were found within: one of them not being quite dead. The country we crossed during the early part of the day, was at least as fine as that we had left. We passed alternately through strips of forest and over open flats well watered — the streams flowing southward; and at nine miles we crossed a large stream also flowing in that direction: all these being evidently tributaries to that on which we had been encamped. Beyond the greater stream, where we last crossed it, the country presented more of the mountain character, but good strong grass grew among the trees, which consisted of box and lofty blue-gum. After making out upwards of eleven miles, we encamped in a valley where water lodged in holes, and where we found also abundance of grass. We were fast approaching those summits which had guided me in my route from Mount Cole, then more than fifty miles behind us. Like that mountain these heights also belonged to a lofty range, and, like it, were beside a very low part of it, through which I hoped to effect a passage. Leaving the party to encamp, I proceeded forward in search of the hill I had so long seen before me, and I found that the hills immediately beyond our camp were part of the dividing range, and broken into deep ravines on the eastern side. Pursuing the connection between them and the still higher summits on the north-east, I came at length upon an open valley enclosed by hills very lightly wooded. This change was evidently owing to a difference in the rock, which was a fine grained granite, whereas the hills we had recently crossed, belonged chiefly to the volcanic class of rocks, with the exception of the range I had traversed that evening in my way from the camp, which
consisted of ferruginous sandstone. With the change of rock, a difference was also obvious in the shape of the hills, the quantity and quality of the water, and the character of the trees. The hills presented a bold sweeping outline, and were no longer broken by sharp-edged strata, but crowned with large round masses of rock. Running water was gushing from every hollow in much greater abundance than elsewhere; and, lastly, the timber, which on the other ranges, consisted chiefly of iron-bark and stringy-bark, now presented the shining bark of the blue-gum or yarra, and the grey hue of the box. The *anthistiria australis*, a grass which seems to delight in a granitic soil, also appeared in great abundance, and we also found the aromatic tea, *Tasmania aromatica*, which represents in New Holland, the Winter’s bark of the southern extremity of South America. The leaves and bark of this tree have a hot biting cinnamon-like taste, on which account it is vulgarly called the pepper-tree. I could ride with ease to the summit of the friendly hill, that I had seen from afar, and found it but thinly wooded, so that I could take my angles around the horizon without difficulty. Again reminded by the similar aspect this region presented, of the lower Pyrenees and the pass of Orbaicetta, I named the summit Mount Byng. A country fully as promising as the fine region we had left, was embraced in my view from that point. I perceived long patches of open plain, interspersed with forest hills and low woody ranges, among which I could trace out a good line of route for another fifty miles homewards. The highest of the mountains lay to the south, and evidently belonged to the coast range, if it might be so called; and on that side, a lofty mass arose above the rest, and promised a view towards the sea; that height being distant from the hill on which I stood, about thirty miles. A broad chain of woody hills connected the coast range with Mount Byng, and I could trace the general course of several important streams through the country to the east of it. Northward, I saw a little of the interior plains, and the points where the various ranges terminated upon them. The sun was setting, when I left Mount Byng, but I depended on one of our natives, Tommy Came-last, who was then with me, for finding our way to the camp; and who, on such occasions, could trace my steps backwards, with wonderful facility by day or night.

*Sept. 29.* — The range before us was certainly rather formidable for the passage of carts, but home lay beyond it, while delay and famine were synonymous terms with us at that time. By following up the valley in which we had encamped, I found, early on this morning, an easy way through which the carts might gain the lowest part of the range. Having conducted them to this point without any other inconvenience besides the overturning of one cart (from bad driving), we descended along the hollow of a ravine, after making it passable by throwing some rocks into the narrow part near its head. The ravine at length opened, as I had expected, into a grassy valley, with a fine rivulet flowing through it, and from this valley we debouched into the still more open granitic country at the foot of Mount Byng. The pass, thus auspiciously discovered and opened, over a neck apparently the very lowest of the whole range, I named Expedition-pass, confident that such a line of communication between the southern coast and Sydney, must, in the course of time, become a very considerable thoroughfare. The change of soil, however,
introduced us to the old difficulty from which we had been happily relieved for some time, for we came once more upon rotten and boggy ground. We met with this unexpected impediment in an open-looking flat, near a rivulet I was about to cross, when I found the surface so extremely soft and yielding, that from the extreme resistance, a bolt of the boat-carriage gave way, a circumstance which obliged us immediately to encamp, although we had travelled only four miles.

Sept. 30. — Compelled thus to await the repair of the boat-carriage, I determined to make an excursion to the lofty mountain mass, which appeared about thirty miles to the southward, in order that I might connect my survey with Port Phillip, which I hoped to see thence. The horses were not found as soon as they were required, but when we at last got upon their backs, we were therefore less disposed to spare them. We crossed some soft hollows during the first few miles, and then arrived on the banks of a small and deep river with reeds on its borders, and containing many broad and deep reaches. It was full, and flowed, but not rapidly, towards the north-east, and it was not until we had continued along the left bank of this stream for a considerable way upwards, that we found a rapid, where we could cross without swimming. The left bank was of bold acclivity, but grassy and clear of timber, being very level on the summit; and I found it consisted of trap-rock of the same vesicular character, which I had observed in so many other parts of this southern region. Beyond the river (which I then named the Barnard,) we first encountered a hilly country from which we emerged rather unexpectedly; for, after crossing a small rivulet flowing in a deep and grassy dell, where trap-rock again appeared, and ascending the opposite slope, we found that the summit consisted of an open level country of the finest description. It was covered with the best kind of grass, and the immediate object of our ride, the mountain, was now visible beyond these rich plains. Some fine forest-hills arose in various directions to the right and left, and indeed I never saw a more pleasing or promising portion of territory. The rich open ground, across which we rode, was not without slight undulations; and when we had traversed about four miles of it, we came quite unawares to a full and flowing stream, nearly on a level with its grassy banks; the bottom being so sound, that we forded it without the least difficulty. Emus were very numerous on the downs, and their curiosity brought them to stare at our horses, apparently unconscious of the presence of the biped on their backs, whom both birds and beasts seem instinctively to avoid. In one flock, I counted twenty-nine emus, and so near did they come to us, that having no rifle with me, I was tempted to discharge even my pistol at one, although without effect. Kangaroos were equally numerous. Having proceeded three miles beyond the stream, we came to another, flowing to the westward between some very deep ponds, and it was probably a tributary to the first. At twenty-two miles from the camp, on descending from some finely undulating open ground, we arrived at a stream flowing westward, which I judged to be also a branch of that we had first crossed. Its bed consisted of granitic rocks, and on the left bank I found trap. We had this stream afterwards in sight on our left until, at two miles further, we again crossed it and entered a wood of eucalyptus, being then only five miles distant from the mountain, and we subsequently found,
that this wood extended to its base. The effects of some violent hurricane from the north were visible under every tree, the earth being covered with broken branches, some of which were more than a foot in diameter: the withering leaves remained upon them, and I remarked that no whole trees had been blown down, although almost all had lost their principal limbs, and not a few had been reduced to bare poles. The havoc which the storm had made, gave an unusual aspect to the whole of the forest land, so universally was it covered with withering branches. Whether this region is subject to frequent visitations of a like nature, I could not of course then ascertain; but I perceived that many of the trees had lost some of their top limbs at a much earlier period, in a similar manner. Neither had this been but a partial tempest, for to the very base of the mountain the same effects were visible. The trees on its side were of a much grander character than those in the forest, and consisted principally of black-butt and blue-gum eucalypti, measuring from six to eight feet in diameter. The rock was syenite, so weathered as to resemble sandstone. I ascended without having been obliged to alight from my horse, and I found that the summit was very spacious, being covered towards the south with tree-ferns, and the musk-plant grew in great luxuriance. I saw also many other plants found at the Illawarra, on the eastern coast of the colony of New South Wales. The summit was full of wombat holes, and, unlike that side by which I had ascended, it was covered with the dead trunks of enormous trees in all stages of decay. I had two important objects in view in ascending this hill; one being to determine its position trigonometrically, as a point likely to be seen from the country to which I was going, where it might be useful to me in fixing other points; the other being to obtain a view of Port Phillip, and thus to connect my survey with that harbour. But the tree-fern, musk-plant, brush, and lofty timber, together shut us up for a long time from any prospect of the low country to the southward, and it was not until I had nearly exhausted a fine sunny afternoon in wandering round the broad summit, that I could distinguish and recognize some of the hills to the westward; and when I at length obtained a glimpse of the country towards the coast, the features of the earth could scarcely be distinguished from the sky or sea, although one dark point looked more like a cape than a cloud, and seemed to remain steady. With my glass, I perceived that water lay inside of that cape, and that low plains extended northward from the water. I next discovered a hilly point outside of the cape or towards the sea; and on descending the hill to where the trees grew less thickly, I obtained an uninterrupted view of the whole piece of water. As the sun went down, the distant horizon became clearer towards the coast, and I intersected at length the two capes; also one at the head of the bay, and several detached hills. I perceived distinctly the course of the Exe and Arundell rivers, and a line of mangrove trees along the low shore. In short, I at length recognized Port Phillip and the intervening country around it, at a distance afterwards ascertained to be upwards of fifty miles from Indented Head, which proved to be the first cape I had seen; that outside (at A) being Point Nepean, on the east side of the entrance to this bay. At that vast distance, I could trace no signs of life about this harbour. No stockyards, cattle, nor even smoke, although at the highest northern point of the bay, I saw a
mass of white objects which might have been either tents or vessels. I perceived a white speck, which I took for breakers or white sand, on the projecting point of the north-eastern shore. (B.) On that day nine years exactly, I first beheld the heads of Port Jackson, a rather singular coincidence. Thus the mountain on which I stood, became an important point in my survey, and I gave it the name of Mount Macedon, with reference to that of Port Phillip. It had been long dark before I reached the base of the mountain, and picked out a dry bit of turf, on which to lie down for the night.

Oct. 1. — The morning was cloudy with drizzling rain, a circumstance which prevented me from re-ascending a naked rock on the north-eastern summit, to extend my observations over the country we were about to traverse. I found decomposed gneiss at the base of this hill. While returning to the camp, we saw great numbers of kangaroos, but could not add to our stock of provisions, having neither dogs nor a rifle with us. I found on my arrival at the camp, that the boat-carriage having been made once more serviceable, the party was quite ready to move forward in the morning.

Oct. 2. — The day being Sunday, and the weather unfavourable, as it rained heavily, the barometer having also fallen more than half an inch; I made it a day of rest for the benefit of our jaded horses, notwithstanding our own short rations. I was also very desirous to complete some work on the map.

Oct. 3. — A clear morning: I buried another letter for Mr. Stapylton, informing him how he might best avoid the mud; and then we proceeded along the highest points of the ground, thus keeping clear of that which was boggy, and we found the surface to improve much in this respect, as we receded from the base of the higher range. We crossed some fine valleys, each watered by a running stream; and all the hills consisted of granite. The various rivulets we crossed, fell southwards, into one we had seen in a valley on our right, which continued from the base of the mountain, and this rivulet at length entered a still deeper valley in which there was very little wood, the hills on the opposite side being uncommonly level at the top. In this valley, a fine stream ran northward, being undoubtedly the Barnard, or first river crossed by us on our way to Mount Macedon. We succeeded in finding a ford, but although it was deep, a greater difficulty to be overcome was the descent of our carts to it, so abrupt and steep-sided was the ravine in which the Barnard flowed. When we had effected, at length, a descent and a passage across, having also established our camp beyond this stream, I rode up the bank towards a noise of falling water, and thus came to a very fine cascade of upwards of sixty feet. The river indeed fell more than double that height, but in the lower part, the water escaped unseen, flowing amongst large blocks of granite. I had visited several waterfalls in Scotland, but this was certainly the most picturesque I had witnessed; although the effect was not so much in the body of water falling, or the loud noise, as in the bold character of the rocks over and amongst which it fell. Their colour and shape were harmonized into a more complete scene than nature usually presents, resembling the “finished subject” of an artist, foreground and all. The prevailing hues were light red and purple-grey, the rocks being finely interlaced with
a small-leaved creeper of the brightest green. A dark coloured moss, which presents
a warm green in the sun, covered the lower masses, and relieved and supported the
brighter hues, while a brilliant iris shone steadily in the spray, and blended into
perfect harmony the lighter hues of the higher rocks, and the whiteness of the
torrent rushing over them. The banks of this stream were of so bold a character,
that in all probability other picturesque scenery, perhaps finer than this, may yet be
found upon it. The geological character of the adjacent country was sufficiently
striking, — the left bank consisted of undulating hills and bold rocks of granite; the
right of trap-rock in the higher part, and presented a remarkable contrast to the
other, from the perfectly level character of the summits of adjacent hills, as if the
whole had been once in a fluid state. Some of these table hills were separated by dry
grassy vales, of excellent soil. Further back, the rugged crests of a wooded range, of
a different formation, rendered the level character of this ancient lava or vesicular
trap, more obvious. The hills behind consisted, in the higher parts, of a felspathic
conglomerate and clay slate, dipping to the eastward.

The country looked fine to the south, and also northward, or down the stream.
By keeping along a winding valley, we ascended without inconvenience, between
these curiously scarped trap hills.

Oct. 5. — We found the trees on the low range much broken like those near
Mount Macedon, and the ground strewn here also with withering boughs, the
result apparently of the same storm, the destructive effects of which we had noticed
on the trees there. Beyond the clay-stone range, we entered on another open and
grassy tract, where trap-rock again appeared; and at four miles and a half, we
descended into a grassy ravine, in which we found another river flowing northward;
this being apparently the second river, crossed in my ride to Mount Macedon, and
which I now named the Campaspe. It was difficult to find in this stream any
fordable place where the banks could be approached by the carts, one side or the
other always proving too steep; but at length we succeeded. Strata of clay-slate
inclined almost perpendicularly to the horizon, projected at parts of the left bank,
and over this clay-slate I found trap-rock. Beyond the Campaspe we crossed plains
and much open land. At length, on descending a little from a sort of table, the trap
was no longer to be seen, and we entered a wood where sandstone seemed to
predominate, the strata dipping to the south-west. Fine grassy slopes extended
through this forest, which was also so open, that we could see each way for several
miles. A rich variety of yellow flowers adorned the verdure, among which the
Caladenia and *Diuris aurea*, and also a large white Anguillaria, guillaria, were very
abundant. Piper found, at an old native encampment, a razor, and I had the
satisfaction of reading on the blade, the words “Old English,” in this wild region,
still so remote, from civilized man’s dominion! In the afternoon, a remarkable
change took place in the weather, for we had rain with an easterly wind, the
thermometer being at 68°. We encamped on a chain of deep ponds, falling to the
northward; reeds grew in them, and we endeavoured to catch codperch, but
without success, probably because the natives of the country were too expert
fishers to leave any in such holes.
Oct. 6. — At two miles on, we reached the summit of the range near Mount Campbell, which had partly bounded my view eastward from Mount Byng. A slight scrub grew on this range, but not so thickly as to be impervious to carts; and after crossing it, as well as a succession of lower ridges, a good valley at length appeared on the left, while another, which was very wide and green, lay before us. At the further side of this, and under another range, ran a deep mountain stream, which was joined, a little lower down, by one from the valley on the left: thus, by following this stream, I might have turned the range, but it was not too steep to be crossed, and I required some angles with the surrounding hills, and the country before us. We ascended it, therefore, and comparatively with ease; and from amongst the trees, on a hill, I saw and intersected more points than I expected to see; even Mount Macedon was visible, and, to the eastward, summits, which I was almost certain lay beyond the river Goulburn. The descent from this ridge to the eastward, was rather steep; but we immediately after, entered an open forest, in a valley which led very nearly in the direction of my intended route. The adjacent forest consisted of large trees of iron-bark, the first of that species of eucalyptus, that we had seen for a considerable time. This tree was then in flower, and we found, in a large canoe, at an old native encampment, a considerable quantity of the blossoms, which had not been long cut. Piper explained the purpose for which these flowers had been gathered, by informing me, that by steeping them a night in water, the natives make a sweet beverage named “bool.”

Oct. 7. — The whole of this day’s journey (fourteen miles) was along the same valley, that we had entered yesterday. The deep bed of a stream, then containing a chain of ponds only, pursued a meandering course through it. We saw in this valley, a pair of cockatoos with the scarlet and yellow top-knot. (Pl. 23. page 47.) We had not been long encamped, when intelligence was brought me by Piper, that a party of natives were following our track, and soon after, Burnett and he having gone out to encourage them to come up, seven, including an old man and two boys, approached, and I hastened out to meet them, that they might not “sit down” too close to our camp. They told us, the creek watering this long valley, was named Déegay. Three of them carried very neatly wrought baskets, and I gave two tomahawks in exchange for two of the baskets, and then making signs that it was time to sleep, I returned to my tent, hoping that they would go to their tribe. On looking out, however, some time after, I found that two had walked boldly up to our fires, while the others continued to cower over a few embers at the spot where I left them; the evening being very cold and stormy. Piper, who at first seemed much disposed to make friends of these people, had found that his endeavours to conciliate strange natives were, as usual, in vain, and was now going about, sword in hand, while three of the strangers seemed desirous to assuage his anger, by telling him a “long yarn.” The other, who was the old man, was casting a covetous eye on all things around the camp. When I went out, they retired to the group, but long after it had become quite dark, there they still sate, having scarcely any fire, and evidently bent on mischief. I really was not sorry then to find that they still continued, for I had made arrangements for having a little amusement in that case,
although their object in lingering there, was nothing less than to kill us when asleep. Accordingly, at a given signal, Burnett suddenly sallied forth, wearing a gilt mask, and holding in his hand a blue light with which he fired a rocket. Two men concealed behind the boat-carriage, bellowed hideously through speaking trumpets, while all the others shouted and discharged their carabines in the air. Burnett marched solemnly towards the astonished natives, who were seen through the gloom but for an instant, as they made their escape and disappeared for ever; leaving behind them, however, rough-shaped heavy clubs, which they had made in the dark with the new tomahawks we had given them, and which clubs were doubtless made for the sole purpose of beating out our brains, as soon as we fell asleep. Thus their savage thirst for our blood, only afforded us some hearty laughing. Such an instance of ingratitude was to me, however, a subject of painful reflection. The clubs made in the dark, during a very cold night, with the tomahawks I had given them, enabled me to understand better, what the intentions of the natives had been in other similar cases; and I was at length convinced, that no kindness had the slightest effect in altering the disposition and savage desire of these wild men to kill white strangers, on their first coming among them. That Australia can never be explored with safety, except by very powerful parties, will probably be proved by the treacherous murder of many brave white men.

Oct. 8. — The windings of the creek were this day more in our way, as we proceeded along the valley, and when in doubt whether it would be best for our purpose to cross this channel, or one joining it there from the south, I perceived a small hill at no great distance beyond, upon which I halted the party and ascended; when I saw that several ranges, previously observed, were at no great distance before us. In these ranges, a gap to the south-east seemed to be the bed of the river, which I knew we were approaching, and which I therefore concluded, we should find in the low intervening country. Westward of the gap or ravine, stood a large mass, which I thought might be the Mount Disappointment of Mr. Hume. On returning to the party, we crossed the channel of the Deegay; but at less than a mile further, we were obliged to pass again to the right bank, at a point where its course tended northward. Soon after recrossing it, we met with a broad, dry channel or lagoon, with lofty gum trees of the “yarra” species on its borders, a proof that the river was at hand; and on advancing three-quarters of a mile further, we made the bank of the Goulburn or Hovell, a fine river somewhat larger than the Murrumbidgee. Its banks and bed were firm; the breadth 60 yards; the mean depth, as ascertained by soundings, being somewhat more there than two fathoms. The velocity was at the rate of 100 yards in three minutes, or one mile and 240 yards per hour; the temperature of the water 54° of Farenheit. After having ascertained, that this river was nowhere fordable at that time, I sought an eligible place for swimming the cattle and horses across, and immediately launched the boat. All the animals reached the opposite bank in safety; and, by the evening, every part of our equipment, except the boat-carriage, was also across. In this river, we caught one or two very fine cod-perch, our old friends Gristes Peelii.
Chapter XIII.

Continue through a level forest country — Ascend a height near the camp and obtain a sight of snowy summits to the eastward — Reach a swampy river — A man drowned — Pass through Futter’s range — Impeded by a swamp among reeds — Junction of the rivers Ovens and King — Ascend granitic ranges — Mount Aberdeen — Reach the Murray — The river very difficult of access — A carriage track discovered — Passage of the river — Cattle — Horses — Party returning to meet Mr. Stapylton — A creek terminating in a swamp — Mount Trafalgar — Rugged country still before us — Provisions nearly exhausted — Cattle tracks found — At length reach a valley leading in the desired direction — Cattle seen — Obliged to kill one of our working bullocks — By following the valley downwards, arrive on the Murrumbidgee — Write my despatch — Piper meets his friends — Native names of rivers.

Oct. 9. — HAVING buried on the left bank another letter of instructions for Mr. Stapylton, according to certain marks, as previously arranged with him, we mounted our boat on the carriage (which had been brought across early in the morning), and continued our journey. I expected to find a ford in this river; but, considering the swollen state in which it then was, I instructed Mr. Stapylton to remain encamped on the left bank, until the boat should return from the Murray, as beyond that river we were not likely to have further occasion for it. Our way on leaving the Bayùnga was rather intricate, being amongst lagoons left by high floods of the river. Some of them were fine sheets of water, apparently much frequented by ducks and other aquatic birds. At exactly 2½ miles from the river, we reached the outer bank or berg, and resumed at length the straight course homewards, for I there found a level forest country open before me, through which we travelled about eight miles in a south-east direction. We then encamped near some water-holes, which I found on our right, in the surface of a clay soil, and close to a plain extending southward. The wood throughout the forest, consisted of the box or “goborri”, species of eucalyptus, and we crossed, soon after first entering it, a small plain. At 3½ miles from the last camp on this line, the low alluvial bed of the river with a deep lagoon in it, as broad as the river itself, appeared close to us on the left; and as I had seen some indications of the Bayùnga on the other side also, or to our right, it was obvious that we had just met with this river at one of its most western bends, an object I had in view in following down the Deegay from the westward. The forest country traversed by the party this day was in general grassy and good; and as it was open enough to afford a prospect of about a mile around us, we travelled on in a straight line with unwonted ease and facility.

Oct. 10. — We continued our journey homeward through a country of the same character, as that seen yesterday, at least for the first five miles, when we came at length to a chain of deep ponds, the second we had encountered that morning. In the bank of this, I found a stratum of alluvium; but beyond it the soil was granitic,
and *banksia* was seen there for the first time after crossing the river. At 7¼ miles, we met with another chain of large ponds, and at 9 miles a running stream flowing to the north-west. After passing over various other chains of ponds, we encamped at the end of 14½ miles, near the bank of a running-stream in which were also some deep pools, and which, from some flowers growing there, were named by the men Violet Ponds.

Oct. 11. — Having turned my course a little more towards the east, in order to keep the hills in view, chiefly for the more convenient continuance of the survey, we passed through a country abundantly watered at that time, the party having crossed eight running streams besides chains of ponds, in travelling only 14 miles. Towards the end of the day’s journey, we found ourselves once more on undulating ground, and I at length perceived on my right, that particular height which, at a distance of 80 miles back, I had selected as a guiding point in the direction which then appeared the most open part of the horizon, this being also in the best line for reaching the Murrumbidgee below Yass. It was the elevated northern extremity of a range connected with others still more lofty, which arose to the south-east. We crossed some undulating ground near its base, on which grew trees of stringy-bark, a species of eucalyptus which had not been previously seen in the forests traversed by us in our way from the river. We next entered a valley of a finer description of land than that of the level forest; and we encamped on the bank of a stream, which formed deep reedy ponds, having travelled 14 miles.

As soon as I had marked out the ground for the party, I proceeded towards a hill which bore east-south-east from our camp, and was distant from it about 5½ miles. On our way, an emu ran boldly up, apparently desirous of becoming acquainted with our horses; when close to us it stood still and began quietly to feed like a domestic fowl, so that I was at first unwilling to take a shot at the social and friendly bird. The state of our flour, however, and the recollection of our one remaining sheep already doomed to die, at length overcame my scruples, and I fired my carabine, but missed. The bird ran only to a little distance however, and soon returned at a rapid rate again to feed beside us, when, fortunately perhaps for the emu, I had no more time to spare for such sport, and we proceeded. The top of the hill was covered thickly with wood, but I saw for the first time for some years, snowy pics far in the south-east, beyond intermediate mountains, also of considerable elevation. There was one low group of heights to the northward, but these were apparently the last, for the dead level of the interior was visible beyond them to the north-west. Further eastward a bold range extended too far towards the north to be turned conveniently by us in our proposed route; but under its high southern extremity, (a very remarkable point), its connection with the mountains on the south appeared very low, and thither I determined to proceed. One isolated hill far in the north-western interior had already proved a useful point, and was still visible here. I also saw the distant ranges to the eastward, beyond the proposed pass just mentioned, and some of these, I had no doubt, lay beyond the Murray. The hill and range I had ascended, consisted of granite, and the country between it and our camp, of grassy open forest land.
Oct. 12. — We passed over a country of similar description and well watered, throughout the greater portion of this day’s journey. In some parts, the surface consisted of stiff clay, retaining the surface water in holes, and at ten miles, we crossed an undulating ridge of quartz rock; two miles beyond which we encamped, near a stream running northward.

Oct. 13. — At 3¼ miles, we came to a river of very irregular width, and which, as I found on further examination, spread into broad lagoons and swamps bordered with reeds. Where we first approached it, the bank was high and firm, the water forming a broad reach evidently very deep. But both above and below that point, the stream actually flowing, seemed fordable, and we tried it in various places, but the bottom was everywhere soft and swampy. The man whom I usually employed on these occasions, was James Taylor, who had charge of the horses, and who, on this unfortunate morning, was fated to lose his life in that swampy river. Taylor, or Tally-ho, as the other men called him, had been brought up in a hunting stable in England, and was always desirous of going further than I was willing to allow him, relying too much, as it now appeared, on his skill in swimming his horse, which I had often before prevented him from doing. I had on this occasion recalled him from different parts of the river, and determined to use the boat and swim the cattle and horses to the other side, when “Tally-ho” proposed to swim over on a horse, in order to ascertain where the opposite bank was most favourable for the cattle to get out. I agreed to his crossing thus wherever he thought he could; and he rode towards a place which I conceived was by no means the best, and accordingly said so to him. I did not hear his reply, for he was just then riding into the water, and I could no longer see him, from where I stood on the edge of a swampy hole. But scarcely a minute had elapsed, when Burnett going on foot to the spot, called out for all the men who could dive, at the same time exclaiming “the man’s gone!” The horse came out with the bridle on his neck, just as I reached the water’s edge, but of poor Tally-ho I saw only the cap floating on the river. Four persons were immediately in the water — Piper, his gin, and two whites — and at six or eight minutes at most, Piper brought the body up from the bottom. It was quite warm, and immediately, almost all the means recommended in such cases, were applied by our medical attendant (Drysdale), who, having come from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, had seen many cases of that description. For three hours, the animal heat was preserved by chafing the body, and during the whole of that time, the lungs were alternately inflated and compressed, but all without success. With a sincerity of grief, which must always pervade the breasts of men, losing one of their number under such circumstances, we consigned the body of poor Taylor to a deep grave, the Doctor having previously laid it out between two large sheets of bark. I was myself confounded with the most heartfelt sorrow, when I turned from the grave of poor Tally-ho, never to hear his bugle blast again. It was late before we commenced the passage of this fatal river, which although apparently narrow, we could only cross in the same manner in which we had passed the largest, namely, by swimming the cattle and horses, and carrying every article of equipment across in the boat. We effected, even thus, however, the passage of the whole party before
sunset; and then encamped on the opposite bank.

Oct. 14. — As we proceeded, the broad swampy bed of this river or morass appeared on our right for a mile, the country being still covered by an open forest of box, having also grass enough upon it. At eight miles we approached some low hills of clay-slate, and I ascended one to the southward of our route, from which I recognized a sufficient number of previously observed points, to enable me to determine its relative position and theirs. On this hill, I found the beautiful Brownonia, which we had seen before only on Macquarie range, beside the Lachlan. We here also met with the rare Spadostylis Cunninghamii, whose heart-shaped glaucous leaves so much reminded us of the European Euphorbias, that it would have been mistaken for one of them, if it had not been for its shrubby habit and bright yellow pea flowers. The country crossed beyond this hill was first undulating then hilly, and at length became so much so, that it was necessary to pick a way for the carts with much caution. Nevertheless we at length succeeded in crossing this range also, at its lowest part, where the hill, to the northward of it, already mentioned as the end of a range, bore nearly north. On reaching the head of this pass, the prospect before us, after winding through such a labyrinth of hills, was agreeable enough. One fertile hollow led to an open level country, which appeared to be bounded at a great distance by mountains; and I concluded that I should find in this extensive valley the rivers King and Ovens. Keeping along the verdant flat (which was watered by a good chain of ponds), we encamped about a mile and a half beyond the pass, and I then named that feature above it, Futter’s range, after a successful and public-spirited colonist of New South Wales.

Oct. 15. — We had not proceeded more than half a mile in the general direction I proposed for our route, when a reedy swamp compelled me to turn northward; and after travelling in that direction about a mile and a half, we found the swamp on our right had produced a small stream running nearly on a level with the plain. Its banks were soft and boggy, and beyond it, we saw through the trees extensive tracts, covered with reeds. I was soon compelled by the rivulet to deviate from my intended route even to the westward of north, until, at 10½ miles, on meeting with a chain of ponds falling to the eastward, I turned north-east, which bearing, at less than a mile forward, again brought us upon the stream running from the swamp, but which was here flowing between firm banks, and forming ponds of some magnitude. We forded it with difficulty, by crossing at two points, that we might not break too much the soft earth over which it flowed, by the passage of all in one place. At two miles further on, we met with another stream of less magnitude, flowing also to the north-west, and at about a mile beyond it, we reached the bank of the Ovens, fortunately just below the junction of a rather smaller stream, which I took to be King’s river.

The two united formed a noble stream, finely breaking up the dead levels of the surrounding plains, which, indeed, where we approached it, formed its highest bank, and were there twenty-three feet above the water.

No time was lost in launching our boat, and we effected a passage, and encamped on the opposite bank, before sunset, having driven all the cattle and horses safely
across also, although with considerable difficulty, from the steepness of the banks and softness of the soil at the water’s edge, on the side where they got to land.

Oct. 16. — This morning the river had fallen three inches; its temperature was 59° (of Fahr.); the current flowing at the rate of 1¼ mile per hour; the mean depth, two fathoms; and the width, where measured, 47 yards; the breadth of the river King, at the junction, being nearly as much. The right bank, to the distance of a mile and a half from the river, was low and alluvial, and intersected by narrow water-courses and lagoons. On the alluvial flat, where we crossed it, stood a small isolated hill, between which and the higher ground still farther back, water was running, apparently from a swamp, but as soon as we crossed this, we reached firm ground, and travelled on an open forest plain for nearly eight miles. We then came upon a hill of granite, and from its summit, I perceived, that we were already on the northern extremities of the high ranges, we had seen from the westward. After travelling some miles along the summits of ridges, in order to reach their connection with another range, more to the northward, I ascertained, on crossing the highest part of a second ridge, that its northern slopes were very steep and rocky. A hill of considerable height lay before us, and therefore, as soon as I had selected a spot for our camp, in a little intervening valley, I hastened to it, certainly in doubt how we should extricate the carts from the rocky fastnesses before us. That summit afforded a commanding view of the country beyond the granitic range, and I perceived, that it was low to a considerable distance northward, while the ranges, beyond that extensive basin, seemed of no great elevation to the westward or north-west, and all terminated on the level interior country, where the horizon was broken by only one remarkable hill, which, as I afterwards learnt, was named “Dingée.” In that direction, I saw also open plains, along which I thought I could trace the line of the Ovens. In the lower country before me, I hoped to find the Murray, according to the map of Messrs. Hovell and Hume, which in the two rivers we had recently passed, seemed wonderfully correct. I again recognised in the south and south-east, some of the snowy peaks formerly noticed, and I named the most lofty mass, Mount Aberdeen. Beyond what I considered to be the course or bed of the Murray, there appeared some steep ranges, to avoid which, I chose a course more to the northward than I should otherwise have pursued, in my way towards Yass. Before I returned to the camp, I sought and succeeded in finding and marking out, a line of route by which the carts could be conducted across these rocky ranges, and down to the lower country beyond them. On that range we found a handsome blue flower, which I had previously seen growing abundantly on Bowrell range, near Mittagong, within the present colony. We found in these vallies abundance of good grass.

Oct. 17. — We descended from the higher range without difficulty, and then crossed several low ridges of quartz and clay-slate, extending westward; some flats of good land lay between these ridges; and, at about 6 miles, we met with a creek or chain of ponds. At 13½ miles, we entered a rich plain terminating northward at a low but remarkable hill which I had observed from the mountains. The grass grew luxuriantly on this plain, and after crossing and passing through the forest beyond
it, I recognized, with satisfaction, the lofty “yarra” trees and the low verdant alluvial flats of the Murray. No one could have mistaken this grand feature; for the vast extent of verdant margin, with lofty trees and still lakes, could belong to no other Australian river, we knew of. On descending the berg or outer bank, which was sloping and grassy, I found the still lagoons so numerous, that I could not, without very great difficulty, and after a ride of nearly an hour, obtain a sight of the flowing river. I found it, at length, running bank high, and still of greater width than any other known Australian river. The water was then just beginning to pour over its borders into the alluvial margins by which I had approached it; and on the opposite side, the border consisted of a reedy swamp, evidently impassable and unfit for a landing place. In no direction could I find access for our carts to the running stream. Deep and long winding reaches of still water shut me out, either from the high berg or bank, at one part, or from the flowing stream at another. Returning from the river, in a different direction, I found, in a situation where I had nearly gained, as I imagined, the high bank, after riding a mile, that a deep reach still separated me from that high bank, which I then saw was beyond it, so that in order to return to the carts, I was obliged to retrace my steps for several miles. Having got round at length, I ascended the hill before mentioned for the purpose of taking some angles, and I found that it consisted of granite, the component parts being white quartz and felspar, and black mica. I named this remarkable feature, probably the lowest hill of granite on the Murray, Mount Ochtertyre. I had sufficient daylight left to conduct the party over part of this hill, to a portion of the river bank, accessible then to carts by fording only one lagoon. The velocity of the Murray at the spot where we could thus approach its border, exceeded that of any other river we had previously crossed, being at the rate of 2½ miles per hour.

Oct. 18. — At daylight this morning, the boat was sent across with Burnett and Piper, who landed to examine the ground within the reeds on that bank; and they ascertained it was so intersected by various deep lagoons, that we could no longer hope to pass that way. I next went down the river in the boat, and found at about a mile and a half below our camp, a place where I thought we might effect a passage. This point was under a steep bank of red earth, on the opposite shore, where the river seemed to be encroaching. We landed and endeavoured to ascertain, by looking for cattle marks, whether any stations were near; and having heard that the flocks of the settlers, already extended to the Murray, we proceeded northward, eager to discover the tracks of civilized men. The wheels of a gig drawn by one horse, and accompanied by others, were traced by Piper, but the impressions were several months old. We walked as far as a spacious plain at some distance from the river, without seeing any more recent tracks; and we were at length convinced, that no station existed then in the immediate neighbourhood. The left bank between the spot where our camp then was, and the crossing place which I had selected, was low, though apparently firm; but on landing and returning along it, I met with several narrow channels, into which water was then flowing from the river, and which afterwards cost us considerable trouble to cross with our carts.

That part of the bank which I had selected for driving the cattle into the river,
that they might swim over, was soft and boggy, but in the opposite shore, where they were to go out, we cut in the firm clay at the base of the red cliff before mentioned, a landing place and path with picks and spades, so that the cattle, on reaching that side, could pass along the foot of the cliff, to a lower part of the bank adjacent. After all other obstacles had been surmounted, and the best portion of the day had been spent in conducting the party to within a short distance of this place, my horse unexpectedly sunk in what had appeared to be firm ground. This impediment the party, however, overcame, by cutting down some brush and small trees, and opening a lane, through which we at length contrived to bring the cattle forward to the bank. It was near sunset before they could be driven into the water; yet we finally succeeded in forcing the whole to swim to the other side that evening, with the exception of one bullock, which, having got bogged, was smothered in the mud, on the first rush of the others into the water. The landing of some of these animals on the opposite bank was attended with difficulty, for they did not all make for the proper place; some turning towards the bank they had left, and endeavouring to re-ascent it much lower down, where the banks were either too soft or inaccessible: others, swimming straight down the stream, turned to parts of the opposite bank, which they could not climb. With these last, I was prepared to contend, having taken my station in the boat to watch such contingencies; and by dragging the foremost of those who had swum back, across the river by the horns, and those which had arrived at the wrong place, out with ropes; we succeeded at length in forcing all that had floated too far down, to land on the right bank. But the greater number had got out higher up the river, upon some fallen portions of the red cliff; instead of taking the path we had cut under it; and the footing there was so slight, that, as they crowded on each other, groups fell, from time to time, back into the river. The last part of the operation was therefore to row towards these, when Woods, who was in the boat, soon induced one of the bullocks well known to him, to take the path, upon which all the rest followed, until they reached the grassy flat where others more fortunate than themselves, were already feeding.

At the close of this laborious day, I encamped on the right bank, leaving still on the other side, however, a small party in charge of the horses and carts. The day was extremely hot, and the full and flowing river gave an unusual appearance of life and motion to the desert, whose wearisome stillness was so unvarying elsewhere. Serpents were numerous, and some were seen of a species apparently peculiar to this river. Here they invariably took to it, and one beautiful reptile in particular, being of a golden colour with red streaks, sprang from under my horse’s feet, and rode upon the strong current of the boiling stream, keeping abreast of us, and holding his head erect, as if in defiance, and without once attempting to make off, until he died in his glory, by a shot from Roach.

Oct. 19. — The first half of this day was required for the passage of the horses, one by one; and for taking the carts across. We left the boat-carriage on the left bank, and sunk the boat in a deep lagoon on the right bank, to remain there until the party should return to the spot with a stock of provisions for Mr. Stapylton. Here, the last mountain barometer, which had been carried in excellent order
throughout the journey, lost mercury so copiously, that I could not hope to use it any more; time being then too valuable to admit of delay; and thus my list of observations terminated on the Murray. I supposed that the intense heat of the sun, to which the instrument had been exposed, when tied to a tree for some hours after the tents had been struck, had contracted the leathern bag, so much as to loosen it from the edges of the cylinder, and thus formed openings, through which the mercury had escaped. The breadth of the Murray was 80 yards, at the place where we crossed it, and the mean depth was 3½ fathoms. At length, I saw with great satisfaction, my party on the right bank of this great river; having now no other stream to cross until we reached the Murrumbidgee, where we might consider ourselves at home. Just at this time, Archibald McKane, a carpenter, came forward, and proposed to return with any two of the men and the native, Tommy, to meet the party, coming after us, upon the Goulburn; and to construct there such rafts of casks and other gear, as might enable Mr. Stapylton to cross that river and the Ovens, and so come forward to the Murray; an arrangement which would render it unnecessary for me to send back any cattle, or the boat, as intended. I was much pleased with the proposal of McKane, and Tommy Came-last being also willing to return, I appointed John Douglas, a sailor and most handy man, and Charles King, a man who feared nothing, to accompany McKane. Full rations were issued to the four, and having given them a letter for Mr. Stapylton, the little party returned towards the houseless wilds, when we left the Murray to continue our journey homewards. Although we did not set off before one o’clock, we this day travelled fourteen miles, but did not encamp till long after sunset. The scarcity of water compelled us to travel thus far — for none had been seen except one small muddy pool, until I reached the valley where we encamped, and even there we found little more than enough for ourselves and cattle.

Oct. 20. — After travelling five miles over tolerable land, we crossed a range of very fine grained granite, consisting of felspar, quartz, and small particles of mica, and having a very crystalline aspect. This range was a branch from a higher mass on our right. At seven miles, we crossed the shoulder of a hill, whence I intersected others to the right. This also consisted of fine grained granite, similar to that of the other hill, but it was not so red, and had fewer spangles of mica. At eight miles, we came to a chain of deep ponds, which seemed a tributary to some greater water, as indicated by the yarra trees and flats before us, apparently covered with verdure. On advancing into these flats, however, we found them soft and swampy, being so very wet, and so covered with dead trees, that we were obliged to retrace our steps, and turn eastward, thus crossing to a higher bank, altogether east of the chain of ponds; and along this we proceeded, without seeing any further continuance of the deep serpentine channel, full of water, which appeared to terminate there. That woody swamp seemed very extensive, and was the only instance met with in the course of our travels, of the termination of a stream in a swamp, although I understood subsequently, that this was the fate of various minor brooks descending towards that part of the interior plains. We found there a curious black-headed grass, which proved to be of the carex genus. At 11½ miles we arrived at a running stream, its
course being northward; and, at 15½ miles, we reached a very fine little rivulet, flowing between grassy banks twenty-five feet high, the soil consisting of a red earth, similar to that on the interior plains and the banks of the Murray.

Oct. 21. — At five miles, we were abreast of a pointed hill, which I ascended, and named Mount Trafalgar, in honour of that memorable day. From it I obtained a view of the country before us, and I perceived, in the direction of our intended route, some high cone-shaped hills. A ridge extended from them to the westward, but its height seemed gradually to diminish in that direction, although it presented two very abrupt and remarkable hills, whose steepest side being towards the north, overlooked, as I supposed, the spacious basin of the Murrumbidgee. One solitary mount appeared much farther to the westward, and was also steep-sided towards the north. On descending, I shaped my course towards the hollow, where the ridge could be most easily crossed. At 8¾ miles, we met with some good ponds of water, and beyond them, the winding channel of a smaller water-course, falling southward, from the range already mentioned. After crossing and recrossing this channel and its various branches, we at length gained the crest of the range, and I directed the party to halt, while I hastened to a conical summit on the left, apparently the highest and most pointed, of those previously observed. It consisted of syenite, and from it, I obtained a very extensive view to the northward, but yet could not see any favourable opening in the direction in which I wished to reach the Murrumbidgee: on the contrary, as we reduced our distance from home, the obstacles to our reaching it, seemed to increase. Our provisions had been counted out to a day, and any delay beyond the time required to cross that country, at our usual rate of travelling, might have been attended with great inconvenience. Mr. Stapylton’s party, then so far behind, were depending upon us for supplies; while a labyrinth of mountains, entirely without roads or inhabitants, was to be crossed in a limited time with carts, before any such supplies could be obtained and sent back. Some high and distant mountains appeared to the eastward, and in the west, I intersected the hills I had previously seen, which were now much nearer to us. On returning from the hill to the party, we descended from the range into some flats of good open land, where a solitary kangaroo became an object of intense interest, now that our provisions were exhausted. The week was out, for which the last of our stock had been issued, in very small rations; and although most of the men had endeavoured to make this very reduced week’s allowance, to last them nine days, no mutton remained, nor could it well have been preserved, during such hot weather. This kangaroo would have been, therefore, a most welcome addition to our store; but we had no dogs, and I was so anxious, as to venture a shot at too great a distance, and, to our great disappointment, it escaped. We finally encamped in a valley, which fell to the right, or eastward, near some good ponds, and after performing a journey of upwards of 15 miles. I found near the hill, I first ascended in the morning, a new kind of grass with large seeds.*

Oct. 22. — Soon after we set out this morning, we approached a range of barren hills, of clay slate, on which grew the grass tree (xanthorrhæa), and stunted eucalypti. On ascending this range, I perceived before me a deep ravine, and beyond it, hills
less promising than even these, which were sufficiently repulsive to travellers with wheel carriages. Turning, therefore, from that hopeless prospect, towards the eastward, we crossed the head of a valley falling to the right, and after a somewhat tortuous course, we gained the highest part of a range beyond it, from which a grassy vale descended on the opposite side, towards the north-east. This vale turned to the left, after we had followed it 2¼ miles, and we next crossed a ridge of quartz rock. Beyond the ridge the natives found some old cattle tracks, and this intelligence very much pleased and encouraged the men. At two miles farther on, we came upon a little rivulet flowing to the westward through a good grassy valley, and it was joined, about the place where we came upon it, by one coming from the south. The stream washed the base of a lofty mountain, which I ascended while the people were passing our carts, cattle, and equipment, across the rivulet, which I named after my trusty follower Burnett. The mountain consisted of granite, and was so smooth that I could ride to its summit. The weather was boisterous, and the country which that height presented to my view seemed quite inaccessible, at least in the direction of the colony, where

“Hills upon hills and alps on alps arose.”

The only valley of any extent which could be seen, was that watered by the rivulet below, and this extended, as I have stated, to the westward, a direction in which we could not follow it, with any prospect of either getting nearer home, or reaching a cattle station. Our provisions were exhausted, while the rocky fastnesses of a mountain region, still threatened to shut us out from the Murrumbidgee, a river on whose banks we hoped to meet with civilized people once more, and which, according to the map, was almost within our reach. Again and again I examined the mountains with my glass, and only discovered that they were numerous and all ranging towards the north-west, a direction right across our way to the Murrumbidgee. I could indeed trace among the hills in the north, the grand valley through which the river flowed, but the intervening ranges seemed to deny any access to it, from this side. I was determined, however, to find some valley likely to lead us into that of the Murrumbidgee, and although it could only be looked for beyond that mountain range, our route had been so good and so direct thus far, from the very shores of the southern ocean, that I could not despair of crossing the comparatively small space occupied by these mountains; and I descended the hill firmly resolved to continue our course, in the same direction, as we best could. I found on reaching the foot, that, to the delight of the men, more cattle marks had been discovered in the valley, and in one place, Piper pointed out a spot, where a bullock had been eaten by the natives. Following the little stream upwards, I at length, placed our camp in a grassy valley near its head, and then, on riding forward, I found that no obstruction existed to our progress with the carts on the following day, for at least several miles.

Oct. 23. — The hills we ascended offered much less impediment than I had reason to apprehend, when I surveyed them at a distance, but they became at length so steep-sided and sharp-pointed, that to proceed further, even by keeping the
crests of a range, seemed a very doubtful undertaking: to cross such ranges was still more difficult, while the principal chain, which led to the south-east, appeared equally impracticable, even had its direction been more favourable. Drizzling rain came on, and prevented me from seeing far beyond the point we had reached, when I at length halted the party, and taking Piper with me, descended into a valley before us, in order to ascertain its general direction, and whether the carts might not pass along it. We found in this valley the tracks, not of cattle only, but of well shod horses: we also discovered that it opened into extensive green flats, and its direction being northerly, I hastened back and conducted the party into it, by the best line of descent I could find, although it was certainly very steep. Having got safe down with our carts, we found excellent pasturage: the cattle marks being very numerous, and at length quite fresh, even the print of young calves’ feet appeared, and all the traces of a numerous herd. In short, cattle tracks resembling roads, ran along the banks of the chain of ponds which watered this valley; and, at length, the welcome sight of the cattle themselves, delighted our longing eyes, not to mention our stomachs, which were then in the best possible state to assist our perceptions of the beauty of a foreground of fat cattle. We were soon surrounded by a staring herd, consisting of, at least, 800 head, and I took a shot at one; but my ball only made him jump, upon which the whole body, apparently very wild, made off to the mountains. Symptoms of famine now began to shew themselves in the sullenness of some of the men, and I most reluctantly allowed them to kill one of our poor working animals, which was accordingly shot, as soon as we encamped, and divided amongst the party. The valley preserved a course somewhat to the westward of north, and I now felt confident that by following it downwards, we should reach the Murrumbidgee without meeting further impediment. This unexpected relief from the hopeless prospects of the drizzling morning, was infinitely more refreshing to me, than any kind of food could possibly have been, even under such circumstances.

Oct. 24. — As we continued our journey downwards, the water holes in the chain of ponds became small and scarce, while we found the cattle-tracks more and more numerous. No change took place in the character of the valley for nine miles; but I recognised then, at no great distance, the hills which, on the 22nd, I had supposed to lie beyond the Murrumbidgee. On riding to a small eminence on the right, I perceived the dark umbrageous trees, overshadowing that noble river, and close before me, the rich open flats with tame cattle browsing upon them, or reclining in luxuriant ease, very unlike the wild herd. The river was flowing westward over a gravelly bottom, its scenery being highly embellished by the lofty casuarina, whose sombre masses of darkest green, cover the water so gracefully, and afford both coolness and shade. Now, we could trace the marks of horsemen on the plain; and, as we travelled up the river, horses and cattle appeared on both banks. At length we discovered a small house or station, and a stock-yard. On riding up to it, an old man came to the door, beating the ashes from a loaf, nearly two feet in diameter. His name was “Billy Buckley,” and the poor fellow received us all with the most cordial welcome, supplying us at once with two days’ provisions, until we could send across
the river for a supply. Just then, several drays appeared on the opposite side, coming along the road from Sydney, and these drays contained a supply, from which Mr. Thompson the owner, accommodated me with enough to send back to meet Mr. Stapylton, on the banks of the Murray. Having pitched my tent close by the house of my new friend Billy, I wrote a brief account of our proceedings to the government, while my horses were permitted to rest two days, preparatory to my long ride to Sydney.

Piper’s joy on emerging from the land of “Myalls” (or savages), was at least as great as ours, especially when he met here with natives of his acquaintance — “civil black-fellows,” as he styled them, bel (not) “Myalls.” He was at least “a Triton among the minnows,” and it was pleasant to see how much he enjoyed his lionship among his brethren. Little Ballandella had been taken great care of by Mrs. Piper, and was now feasted with milk, and seemed quite happy.

I learnt from the natives we found here, their names for the greater rivers we had passed, and of some of the isolated hills. Everywhere the Murray was known as the “Millewà”; but I was not so sure about “Bayúnga,” a name which I had understood to apply to the Goulburn, Hovell, or Ovens.

When Billy Buckley, who was only a stock-keeper at that station, saw my party arrive, and was at length aware who we were; he came to me, when enjoying a quiet walk on the river bank, at some distance from his house, carrying in his hand a jug of rich milk, and a piece of bread, which I afterwards learnt, with dismay, had been baked in butter. I felt bound in civility to partake of both, but the consequence was, an illness, which very much interfered with my enjoyment of that luxuriant repose, I had anticipated in my tent, under the shade of the casuarinae, on the brink of the living stream.

Oct. 27. — BRIGHTLY shone the sun, the sky was dressed in blue and gold, and “the fields were full of star-like flowers, and overgrown with joy,”* on the first day of my ride homeward along the green banks of the Murrumbidgee, having crossed the river in a small canoe that morning. Seven months had elapsed, since I had seen either a road or a bridge, although during that time, I had travelled over two thousand four hundred miles. Right glad was I, like Gilpin’s horse, “at length to miss the lumber of the wheels,” — the boats, carts, specimens, and, last but not least, Kater’s compasses. No care had I now, whether my single step was east or north-east, nor about the length of my day’s journey — nor the hills or dales crossed, as to their true situation, names, or number — or where I should encamp. To be free from such cares, seemed heaven itself, and I rode on without the slightest thought about where I should pass the night, quite sure that some friendly hut or house would receive me, and afford snugger shelter and better fare, than I had seen for many a day.

We had arrived on the Murrumbidgee, seventy-five miles below the point where
that river quitted the settled districts, and ceased to form a county boundary. I
found the upper portion of this fine stream fully occupied as cattle-stations, which
indeed extended also, as I was informed, much lower down the river; and such was
the thoroughfare in that direction, that I found a tolerable cart road from one
station to another. I passed the night at the house of a stockman, in charge of the
cattle of Mr. James Macarthur, and I was very comfortably lodged.

Oct. 28. — With the Murrumbidgee still occasionally in view, we pursued the road
which led towards Sydney. Each meadow was already covered with the lowing
herds for which it seemed to have been prepared; and the traces of man's industry
were now obvious in fences, and in a substantial wooden house and smoking
chimney, usually built in the most inviting part of each cattle run. All the animals
looked fat, and sufficiently proved the value of the pasturage along this river. Steep
and rugged ridges, occasionally approached its banks; and, in following the beaten
track, I, this day, crossed acclivities much more difficult for the passage of wheel
carriages, than any we had traversed throughout those uncultivated wastes, where
even the pastoral age had not commenced.

The scenery, at various points of the river seen this day, was very beautiful; — its
chief features consisting of noble sheets of water — umbrageous woods — flowery
meadows, enlivened by those objects so essential to the harmony of landscape,
cattle of every hue.

The gigantic and luxuriant growth of the yarra eucalyptus, every where produced
fine effects; and one tree, in particular, pleased me so much that I was tempted to
draw it, although the shades of evening would scarcely permit; but while thus
engaged, I sent my servant forward to look for some hut or station, that I might
remain the longer to complete my drawing. I arrived long after dark, at a cattle-
station occupied by a superintendent of Mr. Henry O'Brian, near Jugion Creek, on
the right bank of the Murrumbidgee, and there passed the night. Two considerable
rivers join this creek, from the mountainous but fine country to the southward —
one being named the Coodradigbee, the other the Doomot. The higher country
there is granitic, although, on both rivers, limestone also abounds, in which the
corals seem to belong to Mr. Murchinson's silurian system. *Favosites, stromatopora
concentrica, heliopora pyriformis*, and stems of *crinoidea* are found loosely about the
surface. There is also a large rock of haematite under Mount Jellula.

Oct. 29. — The road led us this day over some hilly country of a rather poor
description, but the beautiful flower, *Brunonia*, grew so abundantly, that the surface
exhibited the unusual, and delicate tint, of ultramarine blue. I was tempted once
more to forsake the road in order to ascend a range, which it crossed, in hopes of
being able to see, from some lofty summit thereof, points of the country I had left,
and thus to connect them, by means of my pocket sextant, with any visible points I
might recognise, of my former trigonometrical survey. It was not, however, in my
power to do this satisfactorily, not having been able to distinguish any of the latter.

Towards evening I drew near Yass Plains, and was not a little struck with their
insignificance, as compared with those of the south. A township had been marked
out here, and the comfortable establishments of various wealthy colonists evinced,
by their preference of these plains, that they considered them the best part of a very extensive district. Mr. Cornelius O'Brien had invited me to his house, and afterwards furnished me with a supply of provisions for my party; but I carried my own despatches, and a much shorter route led to the left, by which I could divide the way better, in continuing my ride to the “Gap,” a small inn, where I arrived at a very late hour, the road having been soft, uneven, and wholly through a dreary wood.

The noise and bustle of the house was quite refreshing to one who had dwelt so long in deserts, although it seemed to promise little accommodation, for there had been races in the neighbourhood, and horses lay about the yard. Nevertheless, the waiter and his wife cleared for my accommodation, a room which had been full of noisy people, and my horses were soon lodged snugly in the stable. There, indeed, I perceived more room than the house afforded, for while the guests were regaling within, their horses were allowed to lay about to starve outside — as if so many gypsies had been about the place; no uncommon circumstance in Australia.

Oct. 30. — In the course of my ride this morning, I recognised the poor scrubby land about the southern boundary of the county of Argyle, which I had surveyed in 1828. The wood on it, is rather open, consisting of a stunted species of eucalyptus, the grass apparently a hard species of Poa, affording but little nourishment. Sandstone and quartz are the predominant rocks, although some of the most remarkable hills consist of trap.

Passing at length through a gap in a low ridge of granular quartz, we entered upon Bredalbane plains, consisting of three open flats of grassy land circumscribed by hills of little apparent height, and extending about twelve miles in the direction of this road, their average width being about two miles. Deringullen ponds arise in the most southern plain, and are among the most eastern heads of the Lachlan. The plains are situated on the high dividing ground or watershed, between the streams falling eastward and westward, and had probably once been lagoons of the same character as those, which still distinguish other portions of this dividing ground. The most remarkable of these is Lake George, about fourteen miles further to the south, and which, in 1828, was a sheet of water seventeen miles in length, and seven in breadth. There is no outlet for the waters of this lake, although it receives no less than four mountain streams from the hills north of it, viz. Turallo creek, whose highest source is fourteen miles from the lake: But-maro creek, which arises in a mountain sixteen miles from it: Taylor’s creek, from the range on the east, six miles distant: and Kenny’s creek, from hills five miles distant. The southern shore of this lake presents one continuous low ridge, separating its waters from the head of the Yass river, which would otherwise receive them. The water was slightly brackish in 1828, but quite fit for use, and the lake was then surrounded by dead trees of the eucalyptus measuring about two feet in diameter, which also extended into it, until wholly covered by the water. In that wide expanse, we could find no fish, and an old native female said, she remembered when the whole was a forest, a statement supported _pro tanto_ by the dead trees in its bed, as well as by the whole of the basin being in Oct. 1836, a grassy meadow, not unlike the plains of Bredalbane.
It would be well worth the attention of a man of leisure, to ascertain the lowest part in the country around Lake George, at which its waters, on reaching their maximum height, would overflow from its basin.

Several lagoons, apparently the remains of more extensive waters, occur between Lake George and Bredalbane plains, in the line of watershed, as already observed. These are named Tárrago, Mutmutbilly, and Wallagoróng, the latter being apparently a residuum of the lake, which probably once covered the three plains of Bredalbane.

The quality of the soil, now found in the patches of grassy land on the margins of these lakes and lagoons, depends on the nature of the high ground nearest to them. The hills to the eastward of Lake George, are chiefly granitic. Ondyong point, on its northern shore, consists of sandstone resembling that of the coal-measures; and the rock forming the range above the western shores, is of the same quality. The hills at the source of Kenny’s creek, consist of trap, of which rock there is also a remarkable hill on the southern side of Bredalbane plains; and these plains are bounded on the north by a ridge of syenite, which here forms the actual division between the sources of the rivers Lachlan and Wollondilly.

The water in the smaller lagoons, westward of Lake George, is perfectly sweet, and the pasturage on the plains adjacent, being, in general, very good, the land is occupied by several extensive grazing establishments.

On entering the valley of the river Wollondilly, which waters Goulburn plains, I was surprised to see its waters extremely low, and not even flowing. The poor appearance of the woods also struck me, judging by comparison with the land in the south; and although the scantiness of grass, also observable, might be attributed to the great number of sheep and cattle fed there, I was not the less sensible of the more parched aspect of the country generally.

Goulburn plains consist of open downs, affording excellent pasturage for sheep, and extending twenty miles southward from the township, their breadth being about ten.

I reached, at twilight, the house of a worthy friend, Captain Rossi, who received me with great kindness and hospitality. The substantial improvements which he had effected on his farm, since my last visit to that part of the colony, evinced his skill and industry as a colonist; while an extensive garden, and many tasteful arrangements for domestic comfort, marked the residence of a gentleman. Under that hospitable roof, I exchanged the narrative of my wanderings, for the accumulated news of seven months, which, with my friend’s good cheer, rendered his invitation to rest my horses for one day, quite irresistible.

Oct. 31. — A walk in the garden; a visit to the shearing shed; the news of colonial affairs in general; fat pullets cooked à la gastronome, and some good wine; had each in its turn rare charms for me.

I had arrived in a country which I had myself surveyed; and the roads and towns in progress were the first fruits of these labours. I had marked out, in 1830, the road now before me, which I then considered the most important in New South Wales, as leading to the more temperate south, and I had now completed it as a line
of communication between Sydney and the southern coasts. This important public work, on which I had bestowed the greatest pains, by surveying the whole country between the Wollondilly and Shoalhaven rivers, had been nevertheless retarded nearly two years, on the representations of some of the settlers, so that the part most essential to be opened, continued still in a half-finished state.*

The Shoalhaven river flows in a ravine about 1500 feet below the common level of the country, between it and the Wollondilly. Precipices, consisting at one part of granite, and at another, of limestone, give a peculiar grandeur to the scenery of the Shoalhaven river. The limestone is of a dark grey colour, and contains very imperfect fragments of shells. We find among the features on these lofty river banks, many remarkable hollows, not unaptly termed “hoppers” by the country people, from the water sinking into them, as grain subsides in the hopper of a mill. As each of these hollows terminates in a crevice leading to a cavern in the limestone below, I descended into one in 1828, and penetrated without difficulty, to a considerable depth, over slimy rocks, but was forced to return, because our candles were nearly exhausted. A current of air met us as we descended, and it might have come from some crevice probably near the bed of the river. That water sometimes flowed into these caverns was evident, from pieces of decayed trees, which had been carried downwards by it, to a considerable depth. I looked in vain there for fossil bones, but I found projecting from the side of the cavern, at the lowest part I reached, a very perfect specimen of coral of the genus *favosites.*

The country to the eastward of the Shoalhaven river, that is to say, between it and the sea coast, is very wild and mountainous. The higher part, including “Currocbilly” and “the Pigeon house” (summits), consists of sandstone passing from a fine to a coarse grain, occasionally containing pebbles of quartz, and, in some of the varieties, numerous specks of decomposed felspar. The lower parts of the same country, according to the rocks seen in Yalwal creek, consist of granite, basalt, and compact felspar. Nearer the coast, a friable whitish sandstone affords but a poor soil, except where the partial occurrence of decomposed laminated felspar, and gneiss, produced one somewhat better. This country comprises the county of St. Vincent, bounded on one side by the Shoalhaven river, and on the other, by the sea coast. The southern portion of that county affords the greatest quantity of soil available either for cultivation or pasture; although around Bateman Bay, which is its limit on the south, much good land cannot be expected, as Snapper Island, at the entrance, consists of grey compact quartz only, with white veins of crystalline quartz.

The country, on the upper part of the Shoalhaven river, comprises much good land. The river flows there nearly on a level with the surface, and resembles an English stream. The temperature, at the elevation of about 2,000 feet above the sea, is so low even in summer, that potatoes and goose-berries, for both of which the climate of Sydney is too hot, grow luxuriantly. A rich field for geological research will probably be found in that neighbourhood. In a hasty ride which I took as far as Carwàry, in 1832, I was conducted by my friend, Mr. Ryrie, to a remarkable cavern under white marble — where I found trap; a vein of ironstone, of a fused
appearance; a quartzose ferruginous conglomerate; a calcareous tuff containing fragments of these rocks; and specular iron ore in abundance, near the same spot.

But still further southward, and on the range separating the country at the head of the Shoalhaven river, from the ravines on the coast, I was shewn an “antre vast,” which, for aught I know, may involve in its recesses, more of the wild and wonderful, than any of the “deserts idle” which I have since explored. A part of the surface of that elevated country had subsided, carrying trees along with it, to the depth of about 400 yards, and left a yawning opening about 300 yards wide, resembling a gigantic quarry, at the bottom of which the sunken trees continued to grow. In the eastern side of the bottom of this subsidence, a large opening extended under the rock, and seemed to lead to a subterranean cavity of great dimensions.

Nov. 1. — Taking leave of my kind host at an early hour, I continued my ride, passing through the new township, in which, although but few years had elapsed since I had sketched its streets on paper, a number of houses had already been built. The Mulwary Ponds scarcely afford sufficient water for the supply of a large population there; but at the junction of this channel with the Wollondilly, there is a deep reach, not likely to be ever exhausted.

The road marked out between this township and Sydney, led over a country shut up, as already stated, between the Wollondilly and the Shoalhaven rivers. These streams are distant from each other, at the narrowest part of the intervening surface, about ten miles; and as each is bordered by deep ravines, the middle portion of the country between them is naturally the most level, and this happens to be precisely in the direction most desirable, for a general line of communication between Sydney and the most valuable parts of the colony to the southward. At a few miles from Goulburn, the road passes by the foot of Towrang, a hill, whose summit I had formerly cleared of timber, leaving only one tree. I thus obtained an uninterrupted view of the distant horizon, and found the hill very useful afterwards, in extending our survey from Jellore into the higher country around Lake George. This hill consists chiefly of quartz rock. At its base, the new line leaves the original cart track, which here crossed the Wollondilly twice. I now found an intermediate road in use, between the old track and my half formed road, which was still inaccessible, at this point, for want of a small bridge over Towrang Creek.

The Wollondilly pursues its course to the left, passing under the southern extremity of Cockbundoon range, which extends about thirty miles in a straight line from north to south, and consists of sandstone, dipping westward. Near the Wollondilly, and a few miles from Towrang, a quarry of crystalline variegated marble, has been recently wrought to a considerable extent, and chimney-pieces, tables, &c. now ornament most good houses at Sydney. This rock occurs in blocks over greenstone, and has hitherto been found only in that spot.

The channel of the Wollondilly continues open and accessible for a few miles lower down than this, but after it is joined by the Uringalla, near Arthursleigh, it sinks immediately into a deep ravine, and is no longer accessible as above; the country to the westward of it being exceedingly wild and broken. The scene it presented, when I stood on the pic of Jellore in 1828, and commenced a general
survey of this colony, was of the most discouraging description.* A flat horizon to a
surface cracked and hollowed out into the wildest ravines, deep and inaccessible;
their sides, consisting of perpendicular rocky cliffs, afforded but little reason to
suppose, that it could be surveyed and divided, as proposed, into counties,
hundreds, and parishes; and still less was it likely ever to be inhabited, even if such a
work could be accomplished. Nevertheless, it was necessary, in the performance of
my duties, that these rivers should be traced, and where the surveyor pronounced
them inaccessible to the chain, I clambered over rocks and measured from cliff to
cliff with the pocket sextant. Thus had I wandered on foot by the murmuring
Wollondilly, sometimes passing the night in its deep dark bed with no other
companions than a robber and a savage. I could now look back with some
satisfaction on these labours in that barren field. I had encompassed those wild
recesses; the desired division of the rocky wastes they enclosed had really been
made; and if no other practical benefit was derived, we had at least been enabled to
open ways across them to better regions beyond.

In the numerous ravines surrounding Jellore, the little river Nattai has its sources,
and this wild region is the haunt and secure retreat of the Nattai tribe, whose chief,
Moyengully, was one of my earliest aboriginal friends. (See Pl. 39.)

Marulan, the highest summit eastward of Jellore, consists of ferruginous
sandstone, but in the country to the northward, we find syenite and trap-rock. Of
the latter, Nattary, a small hill north-east from Towrang, and distant about four
miles from it, is, perhaps, the most remarkable. The elevation of the country there
is considerable, (being about one thousand five hundred feet above the sea, on the
level part), and, except near the Shoalhaven and Wollondilly rivers, not much
broken into ravines. It contains not only fine pasture land, but also much good
wheat land, especially towards the side of the Shoalhaven river.

At fourteen miles from Goulburn, I came upon that part of my new line of great
road, where the works had not been impeded by those for whose benefit the road
was intended;* and here I found that the irongangs had done some good service. I
had now the satisfaction of travelling along a road, every turn of which I had
studied previous to marking it out, after a most careful survey of the whole country.
On Crawford’s creek, I found that a bridge, with stone buttresses, had been nearly
completed. I had endeavoured to introduce permanent bridges of stone-work into
this colony, instead of those of wood, which were very liable to be burnt, and
frequently required repair. We had among the prisoners some tolerable stone-
cutters and setters, but until I had the good fortune to find among the emigrants, a
person practically acquainted with the construction of arches, their labours had
never been productive of much benefit to the public. The governor had readily
complied with my recommendation to appoint Mr. Lennox superintendent of such
works; and, on entering the township of Berrima this evening, I had the
satisfaction, at length, of crossing, at least, one bridge worthy of a British colony.

This town is situated on the little river Wingecarrabee, and was planned by me
some years before, when marking out the general line of road. The eligibility of the
situation consists chiefly in the abundance and purity of the water, and of materials
for building, with the vicinity of a small agricultural population. I found here, on my return now, Mr. Lambie of the road branch of my department, under whose immediate superintendance, the bridge had been erected. The walls of a gaol and court-house were also rising, and a site was ready for the church.

Nov. 2. — A remarkable range, consisting chiefly of trap rock, traverses the whole country between the Wollondilly and the sea, in a south-east direction, extending from Bullio to Kiama. The highest part is known as the Mittagong range, and in laying down the new line of road, it was an object of importance to avoid this range. Bowrell, the highest part, consists of quartz or very hard sandstone. On leaving Berrima, the road traverses several low ridges of trap rock, and then turns to the south-east in order to avoid the ravines of the Nattai; for we again find here, that ferruginous sandstone, which desolates so large a portion of New South Wales, and, to all appearance, New Holland; presenting in the interior, desert plains of red sand, and, on the eastern side of the dividing range, a world of stone quarries and sterility. It is only where trap, or granite, or limestone occur, that the soil is worth possessing, and, to this extent, every settler is under the necessity of becoming a geologist; he must also be a geographer, that he may find water and not lose himself in the bush; and it must, indeed, be admitted that the intelligence of the native youth, in all such matters, is little inferior to that of the aborigines.

The barren sandstone country is separated from the sea-shore by a lofty range of trap rock, connected with that of Mittagong, and we accordingly find an earthly paradise between that range and the sea-shore. The Illawarra is a region, in which the rich soil is buried under matted creepers, tree-ferns, and the luxuriant shade of a tropical vegetation, nourished both by streams from the lofty range, and the moist breezes of the sea. There, a promising and extensive field for man’s industry, lies still uncultivated, but when the roads, now partially in progress, shall have connected it with the rest of the colony, it must become one of the most certain sources of agricultural produce, in New South Wales. The sandstone on the interior side, extends to the summit of the trap range, and its numerous ravines occasion the difficulties, which have hitherto excluded wheel-carriages, from access to the Illawarra. To cross a country so excavated, is impossible except in certain directions, but the best lines these fastnesses admit of, have been ascertained, and marked out in connection with that for the great southern road, which ought to leave the present line at Lupton’s Inn. I consider this the most important public work, still necessary to complete the system of great roads, planned by me in New South Wales; but I have not had means at my disposal hitherto, for carrying into effect, this portion of the general plan.

From Lupton’s Inn, Sydney bore north-east, yet I was obliged to turn with the present road towards the north-west, and to travel eleven miles, over unfavourable ground, in a direction to the westward of north.

Having been engaged this day in examining the bridges, and the work done along the whole line, Mr. Lambie accompanying me; I did not reach the house of my friend Macalister, at Clifton, until it was rather late, but at any hour I could be sure of a hearty welcome.
Nov. 3. — The Razor-back range is a very remarkable feature in this part of the country. It is isolated, extending about eight miles in a general direction between west-north-west and east-south-east, being very level on some parts of the summit, and so very narrow in others, while the sides are also so steep, that the name it has obtained, is descriptive enough. Around this trap range, lies the fertile district of the Cow-pastures, watered by the Nepean river. On proceeding along the road towards Campbell-town, we cross this river by a ford, which has been paved with a causeway, and we thus enter the county of Cumberland. Here, traprock still predominates, and the soil is good and appears well cultivated, but there is a saltiness in the surface water, which renders it, at some seasons, unfit for use. The line of great road, as planned by me, would pass by this township (now containing 400 inhabitants), and the town might then probably increase, by extending towards George’s river, a stream which would afford a permanent supply of good water. Passing through Liverpool, which has a population of 600 inhabitants, and is situated on the left bank of George’s river; I arrived, at three miles beyond that town, at Lansdowne bridge, where the largest arch, hitherto erected in Australia, had been recently built by Mr. Lennox. The necessity for a permanent bridge over Prospect Creek, arose from the failure of several wooden structures, to the great inconvenience of the public; this being really a creek, rising and falling with the tide. The obstacle, and the steepness of the left bank, which was considerable, have been triumphantly surmounted, by a noble arch of 110 feet span, which carries the road at a very slight inclination, to the level of the opposite bank. The bridge is wholly the work of men in irons, who must have been fed, and must consequently have cost the public just as much, if they had done nothing all the while; and it may be held up, as a fair specimen of the great advantage of convict labour, in such a country, when applied to public works. The creek is navigable to this point, and stone being abundant and of good quality on the opposite side of George’s river; one gang was advantageously employed in the quarry there, while another was building the bridge. Mr. Lennox ably seconded my views, in carrying these arrangements into effect. He contrived the cranes, superintended the stone cutting, and even taught the workmen; planned and erected the centres for the arches, and finally completed the structure itself, which had been opened to the public on the 26th of January.

Before venturing on so large a work, I had employed Mr. Lennox on a smaller bridge, in the new pass, in the ascent to the Blue Mountains, and the manner in which he completed that work, was such as to justify the confidence with which I suggested to the government, this larger undertaking.

At length I arrived at Sydney, and had the happiness, on terminating this long journey, to find that all the members of my family were well, although they had been much alarmed by reports of my death, and the destruction of my party, by the savage natives of the interior.

Released from the necessity for recording each day’s proceedings, I may now add a few general remarks on the character of the country, traversed in these various expeditions.
It has been observed, that the soil in New South Wales is good, only where trap, limestone, or granite rocks occur. Sandstone, however, predominates so much, as to cover about six-sevenths of the whole surface, comprised within the boundaries of nineteen counties. Wherever this is the surface rock, little besides barren sand is found in the place of soil. Deciduous vegetation scarcely exists there, no vegetable soil is formed, for the trees and shrubs being very inflammable, conflagrations take place so frequently and extensively, in the woods during summer, as to leave very little vegetable matter to return to earth. On the highest mountains, and in places the most remote and desolate, I have always found on every dead trunk on the ground, and living tree of any magnitude also, the marks of fire; and thus it appeared that these annual conflagrations extend to every place. In the regions of sandstone, the territory is, in short, good for nothing, and is besides, very generally inaccessible, thus presenting a formidable obstruction to any communication between isolated spots of a better description.

Land near Sydney has always been preferred to that which is remote, though the quality may have been equal; yet throughout the wide extent of twenty-three millions of acres, only about 4,400,000 have been found, worth 5s. per acre, and the owners of this appropriated land within the limits, have been obliged to send their cattle beyond them, for the sake of pasturage. From the labour necessary to form lines of communication across such a country, New South Wales still affords an excellent field for the employment of convicts; and although some of the present colonists may be against the continuance of transportation, it must be admitted, that the increase and extension of population, and the future prosperity of the country, depends much on the completion of such public works. The dominion of man cannot indeed be extended well over nature there, without much labour of this description. The prisoners should be worked in gangs, and guarded and coerced according to some well organized system. It can require no argument to shew, how much more pernicious to the general interests of mankind, the amalgamation of criminals with the people of a young colony must be, than with the dense population of old countries, where a better organized police, and laws suited to the community, are in full and efficient operation, both for the prevention and detection of crime; but the employment of convicts on public works, is not inseparable from the question of allowing such people to become colonists; and whoever desires to see the noble harbour of Sydney made the centre of a flourishing country, extending from the tropic to the shores of the Southern Ocean, rather than one only of several small settlements along the coast, will not object to relieve the mother country by employing her convicts, even at a greater expense than they cost the colonists at present. Thus the evil would in time cure itself, by preparing the country for such accessions of honest people from home, as would reduce the tainted portion of its inhabitants to a mere caput mortuum.

With a well arranged system of roads radiating from such a harbour, even the sandstone wastes, extensive though they be, might be overstept, and the good parts being connected by roads, the produce of the tropical and temperate regions might then be brought to one common market.
Where there is so much unproductive surface, the unavoidable dispersion of population renders good lines of communication more essentially necessary, and these must consist of roads, for there are neither navigable rivers, nor, in general, the means of forming canals. This colony might thus extend northward to the tropic of Capricorn, westward to the 145th degree of east longitude; the southern portion having for boundaries the Darling, the Murray, and the sea coast. Throughout the extensive territory thus bounded, one-third, probably, consists of desert interior plains; one-fourth, of land available for pasturage or cultivation; and the remainder, of rocky mountain, or impassable or unproductive country. Perhaps the greater portion of really good land, within the whole extent, will be found to the southward of the Murray, for there the country consists chiefly of trap, granite, or limestone. The amount of surface comprised in European kingdoms, affords no criterion of what may be necessary, for the growth of a new people in Australia. Extreme differences of soil, climate, and seasons, may indeed be usefully reconciled, and rendered available to one community there; but this must depend on ingenious adaptations, aided by all the facilities man’s art can supply, in the free occupation of a very extensive region. Agricultural resources must ever be scanty and uncertain, in a country where there is so little moisture to nourish vegetation.

We have seen, from the state of the Darling, where I last saw it, that all the surface water flowing from the vast territory west of the dividing range, and extending north and south between the Murray and the tropic, is insufficient to support the current of one small river. The country southward of the Murray is not so deficient in this respect, for there the mountains are higher, the rocks more varied, and the soil, consequently, better; while the vast extent of open, grassy downs, seems just what was most necessary, for the prosperity of the present colonists, and the encouragement of a greater emigration from Europe.

Every variety of feature may be seen in these southern parts, from the lofty alpine region on the east, to the low grassy plains, in which it terminates on the west. The Murray, perhaps the largest river in all Australia, arises amongst those mountains, and receives in its course, various other rivers of considerable magnitude. These flow over extensive plains, in directions nearly parallel to the main stream, and thus irrigate and fertilize a large extent of rich country. Falling from mountains of great height, the current of these rivers is perpetual, whereas in other parts of Australia, the rivers are too often dried up, and seldom, indeed, deserve any other name than chains of ponds.

Hills, of moderate elevation, occupy the central country, between the Murray and the sea, being thinly or partially wooded, and covered with the richest pasturage. The lower country, both on the northern and southern skirts of these hills, is chiefly open; slightly undulating towards the coast on the south, and is, in general, well watered.

The grassy plains which extend northward from these thinly wooded hills, to the banks of the Murray, are chequered by the channels of many streams falling from them, and by the more permanent and extensive waters of deep lagoons. These are numerous on the face of the plains near the river, as if intended by a bounteous
Providence, to correct the deficiencies of too dry a climate. An industrious and increasing people, may always secure an abundant supply, by adopting artificial means to preserve it, and in acting thus, they would only extend the natural plan, according to their wants. The fine climate is worthy of a little extra toil, especially in those parts at a distance from the surplus waters of the large rivers, and in places, considered favourable in other respects, either for the rearing of cattle, or for cultivation.

In the western portion, small rivers radiate from the Grampians, an elevated and isolated mass, presenting no impediment, to a free communication, through the fine country, around its base. Hence that enormous labour necessary to obtain access to some parts, and for crossing continuous ranges, to reach others, by passes like those so essential to the prosperity of the present colony, might be, in a great degree, dispensed with, in that southern region.

Towards the sea-coast on the south, and adjacent to the open downs, between the Grampians and Port Phillip, there is a low tract consisting of very rich black soil, apparently the best imaginable, for the cultivation of grain, in such a climate.

On parts of the low ridges of hills, near Cape Nelson and Portland Bay, are forests of very large trees of stringy-bark, iron-bark, and other useful species of eucalyptus, much of which are probably destined yet to float, in vessels on the adjacent sea.

The character of the country behind Cape Northumberland, affords fair promise of a harbour, in the shore to the westward. Such a port would probably possess advantages over any other on the southern coast; for a railroad thence, along the skirts of the level interior country, would require but little artificial levelling, and might extend to the tropical regions, or even beyond them, thus affording the means of expeditious communication between all the fine districts on the interior side of the coast ranges, and a sea-port, to the westward of Bass’s Straits.

The Murray, fed by the lofty mountains on the east, carries to the sea a body of fresh water, sufficient to irrigate the whole country, which is, in general, so level, even to a great distance from its banks, that the abundant waters of the river, might probably be turned into canals, for the purpose, either of supplying deficiencies of natural irrigation at particular places, or of affording the means of transport, across the wide plains.

The high mountains in the east, have not yet been explored, but their very aspect is refreshing, in a country, where the summer heat is often very oppressive. The land is, in short, open and available in its present state, for all the purposes of civilized man. We traversed it in two directions with heavy carts, meeting no other obstruction than the softness of the rich soil; and, in returning, over flowery plains and green hills, fanned by the breezes of early spring, I named this region Australia Felix, the better to distinguish it from the parched deserts of the interior country, where we had wandered so unprofitably, and so long.

This territory, still for the most part in a state of nature, presents a fair blank sheet, for any geographical arrangement, whether of county divisions — lines of communication — or sites of towns, &c. &c. The growth of a colony there, might
be trained according to one general system, with a view to various combinations of soil and climate, and not left to chance, as in old countries — or, which would perhaps be worse, to the partial or narrow views of the first settlers. The plan of a whole state might be arranged there, like that of an edifice, before the foundation is laid, and a solid one seems necessary, where a large superstructure is likely to be built. The accompanying sketch of the limits, which I would propose for the colony of New South Wales, is intended to shew also, how the deficiencies of such a region might be compensated, and the advantages combined, for the convenience and accommodation of a civilized and industrious people. The rich pasture land beyond the mountains, is already connected by roads with the harbour of Sydney, and the system, though not complete, has been at least sufficiently carried into effect, to justify the preference of that town and port, as a capital and common centre, not only for the roads, but for steam navigation around the coasts, extending in each direction about 900 miles. The coast country affords the best prospects for the agriculturist, but the arable spots therein, being of difficult access by land, his success would depend much on immediate means of communication with Sydney by water, and on the facility his position would thus afford, of shipping his produce to neighbouring colonies.*

It would be establishing a lasting monument of the beneficial influence of British power and colonization, thus to engraft a new and flourishing state, on a region now so desolate and unproductive; but this seems only possible under very extensive arrangements, and by such means as England alone can supply:

“Here the great mistress of the seas is known,
   By empires founded, — not by states o’erthrown.”

_Sydney Gazette, Jan. 1, 1831._

Mr. Stapylton met no difficulty, in following my track through Australia Felix, with heavy wheel-carriages and worn-out cattle, as appears by his own account of his progress in the following report, which he forwarded to me, on his arrival at the Murrumbidgee.

“Camp near Guy’s Station, Murrumbidgee, November 11.

“Sir, — I have the honour to inform you, that in compliance with your directions of the 18th of September last, I quitted the depot near Lake Repose on the 3rd of October, and that I arrived at this station to-day. Our journey towards the located country, has been most prosperous. On the 17th of October I reached the Goulburn; the numerous streams which intercepted our progress thither, having been overcome with rapidity and excellent management on the part of the bullock-drivers. On the 23rd of the same month, the three men whom you sent back to me from the Murray, arrived at our encampment on the left bank of the Goulburn, and on the 25th, the passage was effected across it, without an accident of any kind whatsoever. On the 30th, we encamped on the right bank of the Swampy river, having been again successful in the transit of stores and cattle, and on the 2nd of November, the party was established on the right bank of the King. Here we unfortunately lost one bullock, a weak and lame animal. On the 4th of November, I
made the Murray, and on the 5th, the provision party not being arrived, I directed that the boat, which we found in the contiguous backwater, should be got afloat, and on the evening of that day, we took up our position, on the right bank of the river; the cattle, horses, and equipment having been passed across in safety, and in a manner highly creditable to all the men employed. The boat-carriage, (which, as well as the boat, appeared to have remained untouched by the natives), was brought off on the following morning, which being Sunday, I halted. On the 7th, I resumed our journey, and arrived as above-mentioned, — the cattle and horses having been got safely over the Murrumbidgee the same afternoon. I duly received your several communications, numbers one, two, three and four; your letter by McKane, and that by Burnett. Turandurey has grown enormously fat, which should speak well of the care we had taken of her, and, to the best of my belief, no improprieties with her as a female have ever taken place. She was married last night to King Joey, and she proceeds with him to her friends. Having a superfluity of government blankets, I have taken the liberty of giving her one now and one formerly at the last depot.

“I have to acknowledge the receipt of the letter containing your instructions of the 26th ult., which was delivered to me by Overseer Burnett on the 5th of this month, who arrived at the moment the first boat-load from the camp, reached the opposite bank of the Murray. By means of casks, we floated the drays over the three rivers, and, after two experiments with a raft, both partial failures, and while a third raft was in progress of a more solid and better construction, we discovered that a canoe of very large dimensions, and paddled by the native boy, “Tommy,” would prove the most expeditious as well as a safe mode of shipment for the boxes of value, equipment, &c. I therefore caused a canoe to be used for this purpose, and it answered admirably. I have to mention the loss of three of the cattle. One by death at the depot in consequence of previous overexertion, and two by accidents of a most provoking and unlucky nature, but which could not have been foreseen or prevented.

“I have the honour to be, &c.”

This was one of the best proofs, how valuable the services of the aborigines, who accompanied the party, were to us on some occasions. They could strip from a tree, in a very short time, a sheet of bark, large enough to form a canoe; and they could propel the light bark thus made, through the water, with astonishing ease and swiftness. By this means alone, most of our effects were transported across broad rivers — without an accident, even to any of my papers or dried plants. I was now anxious to convince them how much I appreciated that assistance, but felt in some degree at a loss, especially in the case of the widow. It was, therefore, not the least satisfactory part of the intelligence subsequently received from Mr. Stapylton, that she was married, on her arrival, to Joey, the King of the Murrumbidgee.

Mr. Stapylton had also received my several communications, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, which he dug from the earth at various camps; thus we had, for once, eluded the keen eye of the aborigines, in this kind of correspondence, although on my first journey, we had not been so successful. My original plan, on this expedition, was to bury the letter under the ashes of my fire; cutting, at the same time, a cross in the
turf where my tent had stood, as the mark by which Mr. Stapylton was to know, that something was so deposited. But I subsequently improved on this plan, and buried my letter in the centre of the cross, by merely making a hole with a stick, in the soft earth where the turf had been cut, and dropping the letter into it.

In my instructions to Mr. Stapylton, sent by Burnett, I directed him to survey the course of the Murrumbidgee upwards from Guy’s station, until he connected our interior survey, with the map of the colony. This he accomplished by measuring to the junction of the Doomot, a river he had himself previously surveyed. The direct distance between that junction and the point at which we first arrived on the Murrumbidgee, was ascertained by Mr. Stapylton’s measurement to be 34⅞ miles, but according to my map of the interior country, 36½ miles; making an error of only 1⅛ miles + or westward, in a chain-measurement continued from the station at Buree, where the journey commenced, to the Darling; thence to the southern coast; and back to this point on the Murrumbidgee. The measurement was checked by latitudes determined nightly from observations of several stars, the difference between several, amounting to a few seconds only. I availed myself of trigonometrical measurements also, with a good theodolite, wherever this was possible, in which case such a survey engaged my whole attention, and my route was often directed according to the position of good points.

The meteorological journal was kept more carefully during this journey, than on the two preceding; and with the kind assistance of my friends Captain King and Mr. Dunlop, it affords, in some parts at least, materials for comparing the atmospheric changes in the regions explored, with those occurring simultaneously on the eastern coast.

It was long before the party arrived in Sydney; for when it reached the Murrumbidgee, and the apprehension of famine no longer existed, rest was so necessary for the cattle, that it was indulged in, for their sake chiefly, to an extent much beyond the wishes of the men. The oxen looked tolerably well, therefore, when the party did reach Sydney, although from so long a journey; and my men enjoyed, at length, the triumph among their fellows, to which they had long looked forward, on conducting the boat and boat-carriage safely, once more into the yard of my office.

But Piper seemed to relish his share of triumph most, and certainly he well deserved the kindness he met with on all sides. I clothed him in my own red coat, and I gave him also a cocked hat and feather, which had once belonged to Governor Darling. His portrait, thus arrayed, soon appeared in the print-shops; an ingenious artist (Mr. Fernyhough) having drawn his likeness very accurately. Piper was just the sort of man to enjoy superlatively, all his newly acquired consequence. He carried his head high, for (as he now found) everybody knew him, and not a few gave him money. With these donations, he purchased silk handkerchiefs, and wore them in his breast — gowns for his gins, for he at last had two — and, to his great credit, he abstained from any indulgence in intoxication, looking down, apparently with contempt, on those wretched specimens of his race, who lead a gipsy life about Sydney.
The men, after having been examined in my presence by the Council, composed of the governor, his secretary, and the bishop, respecting the events of 27th May, were rewarded, according to the standing and condition of each. The government granted every indulgence I asked in their behalf. Burnett, Muirhead, Woods, and Palmer obtained absolute pardons. Woods receiving, besides, a gratuity of £10, and several, specially noticed in my report, £5 each. Those who had tickets of leave were rewarded with conditional pardons, and tickets of leave were awarded to the rest, with one or two exceptions. Among those excluded was Drysdale, a most trust-worthy man, and in whose behalf I was therefore much interested. He had not been long enough in the colony, to be entitled by the regulations to any indulgence; and all I could do was to obtain for him a very laborious place in the general hospital, by holding which he avoided the hulk.

Piper was impatient to return to “his own country,” near Bathurst, and I fulfilled all the conditions of my contract with him, by allowing him an old firelock, blankets, &c. decorating him also with a brass plate, on which he was styled, not as usual “King,” for he said there were “too many kings already,” but *Conqueror of the Interior* — surely a sufficient passport for him, among those most likely to read it, the good people of Bathurst. But when he came to bid me farewell, he was accompanied, much against his will, by the murderer of Mr. Cunningham, Bureemal, who had been placed under his protection, by Mr. Ferguson, to be conducted back to his tribe. This fellow had grown so stout, that I could perceive no resemblance in him, to the youth he appeared when captured by Lieut. Zouch, and he had acquired an impudent air, very unlike that of other natives. According to his own confession, he had put Mr. Cunningham to death in cold blood, and Mr. Ferguson had, in return, clothed and fed him for one year, and taught him the Lord’s Prayer and Ten Commandments.

The two Tommies still remained to be provided for, and they were both desirous of accompanying me to England. I had seriously intended to take one with me, but so docile and so much attached to my service were both of these youths, that I felt much difficulty in choosing between them. Meanwhile they remained at Sydney, while official cares and troubles so thickened about me, that I at length abandoned my intention, however reluctantly, and when they were about to return, at last, to their own country, I gave to each what clothes I could spare, and they both shed tears, when they left my house. They were to travel through the colony under the protection of Charles Hammond, one of my steadiest men, who, having obtained his freedom in reward for his services with me, was proceeding towards Bathurst, in charge of the teams of a Parcel Delivery Company.

The little Ballandella, child of the widow, was a welcome stranger to my children, among whom she remained, and seemed to adopt the habits of domestic life *con amore*, evincing a degree of aptness which promised very favourably. The great expense of the passage home of a large family, obliged me at last to leave her at Sydney, under the care of my friend Dr. Nicholson, who kindly undertook the superintendence of her education, during my absence in England.

My experience enables me to speak in the most favourable terms of the
aborigines, whose degraded position in the midst of the white population, affords no just criterion of their merits. The quickness of apprehension of those in the interior was very remarkable, for nothing in all the complicated adaptations we carried with us, either surprised or puzzled them. They are never awkward; on the contrary, in manners and general intelligence, they appear superior to any class of white rustics, that I have seen. Their powers of mimicry seem extraordinary, and their shrewdness shines even through the medium of imperfect language, and renders them, in general, very agreeable companions.

On comparing a vocabulary of the language spoken by the natives on the Darling, with other vocabularies obtained by various persons on different parts of the coast, I found a striking similarity in eight words, and it appears singular, that all these words should apply to different parts of the human body. I could discover no term in equally general use, for any other object, as common as the parts of the body, such, for instance, as the sun, moon, water, earth, &c. By the accompanying list of words used at different places to express the same meaning, * it is obvious, that those to which I have alluded, are common to the natives both in the south-eastern and south-western portions of Australia; while no such resemblance can be traced between these words and any in the language spoken by natives on the northern coast. Now, from this greater uniformity of language prevailing throughout the length of this large island, and the entire difference at much less distance latitudinally, it may perhaps be inferred, that the causes of change in the dialect of the aborigines, have been more active on the northern portion of Australia, than throughout the whole extent from east to west. The uniformity of dialect prevailing along the whole southern shore, seems a fact worthy of notice, as connected with any question respecting the origin of the language, and whether other people or dialects have been subsequently introduced from the northern or terrestrial portion of the globe. These words, although few, may be useful to philologists, as specimens of the general language; and as the names of parts of the body can be obtained by travellers, from men the most savage, by only pointing to each part, comparisons may be thus extended to the natives of other shores.

I am not aware that any affinity has been discovered, at least in single words, between the Australian language and that of the Polynesian people; * — but with very slight means of comparison, I may perhaps be excused for noticing the resemblance of Murròa, the name of the only volcanic crater as yet found in Australia, to Mouna-roa, the volcano of the Sandwich Islands; and that Tao, the name of the small yam or root, eaten by Australians, is similar to Tam, the name of thirty-three varieties of an edible root, and having the same meaning, in the Friendly and Society Isles, and also in the Sandwich Islands. (See Cook’s Voyages, and Polynesian Researches, by Wm. Ellis.)

The natives of Van Diemen’s Land, the only inhabited region south of Australia, are said to have been as dark as the negro race, and to have had woolly hair like them. Little is known of the language and character of the unfortunate Tasmanian aborigines, and this is the more to be regretted, considering how useful a better knowledge of either might have been, in tracing the progressive extension of the
Australasian people. The prevailing opinion at present is, that the natives of Van Diemen’s Land, were also much more ferocious than the natives of Australia. But, brief as the existence of these islanders has been on the page of history, these characteristics, are very much at variance, with the descriptions we have of the savages seen by the earliest European visitors, and, especially, by Captain Cook, who thus describes those he saw at Adventure Bay, in 1777: — “Their colour is a dull black, and not quite so deep as that of the African negroes. It should seem also, that they sometimes heighten their black colour by smoking their bodies, as a mark was left behind on any clean substance, such as white paper, when they handled it.” Captain Cook then proceeds to describe the hair as being woolly, but all the other particulars of that description are identical with the peculiarities of Australian natives; and Captain King stated, according to the editor of the Northern Voyage of Cook, that “Captain Cook was very unwilling to allow that the hair of the natives seen in Adventure Bay was woolly.” The hair of the natives, we saw in the interior, and especially of the females, had a very frizzled appearance, and never grew long; and I should rather consider the hair of the natives of Tasmania, as differing in degree only from the frizzled hair of those of Australia.

Instead of the ferocious character latterly attributed to the natives of Van Diemen’s Land, we find, on the contrary, that Captain Cook describes them as having “little of that fierce or wild appearance common to people in their situation,” and a historian* draws a comparison, also in their favour, between them and the natives of Botany Bay, of whom three stood forward to oppose Captain Cook, at his first landing. The ferocity subsequently displayed by natives of Van Diemen’s Land, cannot fairly be attributed to them, therefore, as characteristic of their race, at least until extirpation stared them in the face, and excited them to acts of desperate vengeance against all white intruders.

The habits and customs of the aboriginal inhabitants are remarkably similar, throughout the wide extent of Australia, and appear to have been equally characteristic of those of Van Diemen’s Land: geological evidence also leads us to suppose, that this island has not always been separated from the main land by Bass’s Straits. The resemblance of the natives of Van Diemen’s Land to those of Northern Australia, seemed indeed so perfect, that the first discoverers considered them, “as well as the kangaroo, only stragglers from the more northern parts of the country;” and as they had no canoes fit to cross the sea, that New Holland, as it was then termed, “was nowhere divided into islands, as some had supposed.” Their mode of life, as exhibited in the temporary huts made of boughs, bark, or grass,* and of climbing trees, to procure the opossum, by cutting notches in the bark, alternately with each hand, as they ascend, prevails not only from shore to shore in Australia, but is so exactly similar in Van Diemen’s Land, and at the same time so uncommon elsewhere, that Tasman, the first discoverer of that island, concluded, “that the natives either were of an extraordinary size, from the steps having been five feet asunder, or that they had some method which he could not conceive, of climbing trees by the help of such steps.” It is strong presumptive evidence, therefore, of the connexion of the inhabitants of Van Diemen’s Land with the race
in Australia, that a method of climbing trees, now so well known as peculiar to the natives of Australia, should have been equally characteristic of those of Tasmania. The notches made in climbing trees, are cut by means of a small stone hatchet — and, as already observed, with each hand alternately. By long practice, a native can support himself with his toes, on very small notches, not only in climbing, but while he cuts other notches necessary for his further ascent with one hand, the other arm embracing the tree. The elasticity and lightness of the simple handle of the mogo or stone hatchet employed (see fig. 5, page 269), are well adapted to the weight of the head — and assist the blow necessary to cut the thick bark with an edge of stone. As the natives live chiefly on the opossum, which they find in the hollow trunk or upper branches of tall trees, and, as they never ascend by old notches — but always cut new ones, such marks are very common in the woods; and on my journeys in the interior, I knew, by their being in a recent state, when I was approaching a tribe; or, when they were not quite recent, how long it was since the natives had been in such parts of the woods; whether they had any iron hatchets, or used still those of stone only; &c.

The men wear girdles, usually made of the wool of the opossum, and a sort of tail of the same material is appended to this girdle, both before and behind, and seems to be the only part of their costume suggested by any ideas of decency. The girdle answers, besides, the important purpose of supporting the lower viscera, and seems to have been found necessary for the human frame by almost all savages. In these girdles, the men, and especially their coradjes or priests, frequently carry crystals of quartz or other shining stones, which they hold in high estimation, and very unwillingly shew to any one, taking care, when they do, that no woman shall see them.*

The natives wear a neatly wrought bandage or fillet round the head, and whiten it with pipe-clay, as a soldier cleans his belts.† They also wear one of a red colour under it. The custom is so general, without obvious utility, at least when the hair is short, that we may suppose it is also connected with some superstition. But still more remarkable is the practice of striking out one of the front teeth at the age of puberty, a custom observed, both on the coast and, as far as I penetrated, in the interior. On the western coast also, Dampier observed, that the two fore-teeth were wanting in all the men and women he saw. According to Piper, certain rites belong to this strange custom. The young men retire from the tribe to solitary places, there to mourn and abstain from animal food, for many days previous to their being subjected to this mutilation. The tooth is not drawn, but knocked out by an old man, or coradje, with a wooden chisel, struck forcibly, and so as to break it. It would be very difficult to account for a custom so general and also so absurd, otherwise than by supposing it a typical sacrifice, probably derived from early sacrificial rites. The cutting off of the last joint of the little finger of females, seems a custom of the same kind; also boring the cartilage between the nostrils in both sexes, and wearing therein, when danger is apprehended, a small bone or piece of reed.*

To paint the body red, seems also a custom of the natives, in all parts that I have visited: but the most constant use of colours both white and red, appears on the
narrow shield or hieleman (See page 349), which is seldom to be found without some vestiges of both colours, about the carving with which they are also ornamented.†

The “large punctures or ridges raised on different parts of their bodies, some in straight and others in curved lines,” distinguish the Australian natives wherever they have been yet seen, and in describing these raised scars, I have quoted the words of Captain Cook, as the most descriptive, although having reference to the natives of Adventure Bay, in one of the most southern isles of Van Diemen’s Land, when first seen in 1777.

It is also customary for both men and women to cut themselves in mourning for relations. I have seen old women in particular, bleeding about the temples from such self-inflicted wounds.*

Respect for age is universal among the aborigines. Old men, and even old women, exercise great authority among assembled tribes, and “rule the big war” with their voices, when both spears and bommerengs are ready to be thrown.† Young men are admitted into the order of the seniors, according to certain rites, which their coradjes, or priests, have the sagacity to keep secret and render mysterious. No young men are allowed to eat the flesh or eggs of the emu; a kind of luxury which is thus reserved exclusively for the old men and the women. I understood from Piper, who abstained from eating emu, when food was very scarce, that the ceremony necessary in this case, consisted chiefly in being rubbed all over with emu fat by an “old man.” Richardson, one of our party, was an old man, and Piper reluctantly allowed himself to be rubbed with emu fat by Richardson; but from that time, he had no objection to eat the flesh of that bird. The threatened penalty was, that young men, after eating it, would be afflicted with sores all over the body.

The native dog, so common in Australia, is not found in Tasmania; while, on the other hand, two animals, the *dasyurus ursinus* and *thylacynus*, exist in Tasmania, but have not been found hitherto in Australia. Have these been extirpated in Australia by the dog, on his introduction subsequently to the opening of the straits? It may be observed that this is the more likely, as the above-mentioned species found in Van Diemen’s Land only, consist of those two unable to climb and avoid such an enemy. The Australian natives evince great humanity in their behaviour to these dogs. In the interior, we saw few natives who were not followed by some of these animals, although they did not appear of much use to them. The women not unfrequently suckle the young pups, and so bring them up, but these are always miserably thin, so that we knew a native’s dog from a wild one, by the starved appearance of the former. The howl of a native dog in the desert wilds, is the most melancholy sound imaginable, much resembling that of a tame dog, when he has lost his master. We find no remains of this genus among the fossils, and it seems therefore probable that the dog accompanied the native, wherever he came from.

We trace a further resemblance between this rude people and the orientals, in their common method of carrying children on their shoulders; and the sketch of Turandurey with Ballandella so mounted, (Pl. 24. page 69) affords the best
illustration of a passage in Scripture, which has very much puzzled commentators.*

But the savage tribes of mankind, as they approach nearer to the condition of animals, seem to preserve a stronger resemblance to themselves and to each other. The uniform stability of their manners seems a natural consequence of the uncultivated state of their faculties; and it is satisfactory to discover such direct illustrations of ancient history, among these rude and primitive specimens of our race.

The weapons used by the natives, are not more remarkable and peculiar in their construction, than general in their use on every shore of New Holland. The spear is thrown by means of a *wammera*, which is a slight rod, about three feet long, having at one end a niche to receive the end of the spear. The missile is shot forward by this means, with great force and accuracy of direction; for by the peculiar method of throwing the spear, the wammera affords a great additional impetus, from this most ingenious lengthening of the arm to that extent.*

The *bommereng*, a thin curved missile, can be thrown by a skilful hand, so as to rise upon the air, and thus to deviate from the ordinary path of projectiles, its crooked course being, nevertheless, equally under control. It is of the form here represented, being about two feet four inches long. These weapons are cut, according to the grain, from the curved parts of acacia or other standing trees of compact hard wood. They usually weigh about 9½ ounces. One side, which is the uppermost in throwing, is slightly convex, and is sometimes elaborately carved. The lower side is flat, and plain. The bommereng is held, not as a sabre, but sicklewise, or concave towards the thrower; and, as a rotatory motion is imparted to it when sent off, the air presents so much resistance to the flat side, and so little to the sharp edge as it cuts forward, that the long sustained flight of the whirling missile, seems independent of the common effect of gravitation.

The native, from long practice, can do astonishing things with this weapon. He seems to determine, with great certainty, what its crooked and distant flight shall be, and how and where it is to end. Thus he frequently amuses himself in hurling the formidable weapon to astonishing heights and distances, from one spot to which the missile returns, to fall beside him. Sometimes, the earth is made a *fulcrum*, to which the bommereng descends only to resume a longer and more sustained flight, or to leap, perhaps, over a tree, and strike an object behind it.

The contrivance probably originated in the utility of such a missile for the purpose of killing ducks, where they are very numerous, as on the interior rivers and lagoons, and where, accordingly, we find it much more in use than on the sea-coast, and better made, being often covered with good carving.* (See Cambo, frontispiece to Vol. 1, also small figures in pl. 28, page 132.)

There is also much originality in the shield or *hieleman* of these people. It is merely a piece of wood, of little thickness, and 2 feet 8 inches long, tapering to each end, cut to an edge outwards, and having a handle or hole in the middle, behind the thickest part. This is made of light wood, and affords protection from missiles, chiefly by the facility with which it is turned round the centre or handle.

*Shield or Hieleman.*
Great ingenuity is necessary, and is as cleverly practised by the natives, in approaching the kangaroo. This they display, in creeping, stalking with bushes, advancing behind trees, &c. and to such a degree are their wits sharpened by their appetites, that they can even distinguish when the kangaroo kills a fly; and they consider in their proceedings, from the habit of the kangaroo to kill flies and smell the blood, whether the animal may discover from the blood the fly contains, that men are near.

The natives are accustomed to cook such animals, by digging a hole in the ground, making a fire in it, and heating the stones found about. The kangaroo is placed in this hole with the skin on, and is covered with heated embers or warm stones.

The opossum, which constitutes the more ordinary food of the native, is not cooked so much, but only singed, so as to have a flavour of the singed wool; but it is nevertheless palatable enough, even to a white man.

The young natives of the interior usually carry a small wooden shovel (See foreground figure, pl. 12. vol. 1. page 194), with one end of which they dig up different roots, and with the other, break into the large ant-hills for the larvae, which they eat: the labour necessary to obtain a mouthful even, of such indifferent food, being thus really more than would be sufficient for the cultivation of the earth, according to the more provident arrangements of civilized men. Yet in a land affording such meagre support, the Australian savage is not a cannibal: while the New Zealander, who inhabits a much more productive region, notoriously feasts on human flesh.

Were it expedient to enter here into further details, or upon a longer description of the natives of Australia, I might quote largely from Captain Cook’s account of those he saw at Adventure Bay, Van Diemen’s Land, as being more detailed and descriptive, both of the natives in the interior, and of those also around the whole circumference of Australia, than any I could give. In the descriptions by Dampier and other navigators, who have touched on any part of these shores, we recognize the same natives, with all their characteristics, and are led to conclude, that they are derived from the same stock; and as the judicious compiler of the first History of New Holland, considered it most probable from this and other circumstances, “that the number is small, and that the interior parts of the country are uninhabited,” I may observe, that I have had no reason to entertain a contrary opinion, from what I saw of the interior country beyond the Darling. The native population is very thinly spread over the regions I have explored, amounting to nearly a seventh part of Australia. I cannot estimate the number at more than 6000; but on the contrary, I believe it to be considerably less. They may increase rapidly, if wild cattle become numerous; and as an instance, I may refer to the number and good appearance of the Cudjallagong tribe, near Macquarie range, where they occasionally fell in with a herd of wild cattle. The kangaroo disappears from cattle runs, and is also killed by stockmen, merely for the sake of the skin; but no mercy is shewn to the natives who may help themselves to a bullock or a sheep. Such a state of things must infallibly lead to the extirpation of the aboriginal natives, as in Van Diemen’s Land,
unless timely measures are taken for their civilization and protection. I have heard some affecting allusions made by natives, to the white men’s killing the kangaroo. At present almost every stockman has several strong kangaroo dogs; now it would be only an act of justice towards the aborigines, to prohibit white men by law from killing these creatures, which are as essential to the natives, as cattle are to the Europeans. The prohibition would be at least a proof of the disposition of the strangers to act as humanely as they possibly could, towards the natives. If wild cattle, on the contrary, become numerous, the natives also might increase in number, and if not civilized and instructed now, might become formidable and implacable enemies then, as no absolute right to kill even wild cattle would be conceded to them. The evils likely to result from such circumstances, were apparent both in the commencement and termination of my first journey; but although the desert character of the interior, renders such a state of things less likely to happen, at least on a larger scale, the unfortunate race whom we have found on the shores of Australia, are not the less entitled to our protection.

Some adequate provision for their civilization and maintenance, is due on our part, to this race of men, were it only in return for the means of existence, of which we are depriving them. The bad example of the class of persons sent to Australia, should be counteracted by some serious efforts to civilize and instruct these aboriginal inhabitants. That they are capable of civilization and instruction, has been proved recently, in the case of a number who were sentenced for some offence, to be confined with a chain gang, on Goat Island, in Sydney harbour. By the exertions of Mr. Ferguson, who was, I believe, a missionary gentleman, these men were taught in five months to read tolerably well; and also to explain, in English, the meaning of the Lord’s Prayer and Ten Commandments. During that time, they had been initiated in the craft of stone-cutting and building, so as to completely erect a small house. They grew fat and muscular, and appeared really stronger men, when well fed, than the white convicts.

The natives have also proved very good shepherds, when any of them have been induced, by proper encouragement and protection, to take charge of a flock. “Tommy Came-first,” one of the lads who travelled with me, had previously tended sheep for a year, and had given great satisfaction.

My experiment with the little native girl, Ballandella, will be useful, I trust, in developing hereafter, the mental energies of the Australian aborigines, for, by the last accounts from Sydney, I am informed, that she reads as well as any white child of the same age.
Chapter XV.

Geological specimens collected — Connection between soil and rocks — Limestone — Granite — Trap-rocks — Sandstone — Geological structure and physical outline — Vallies of excavation — Extent of that of the Cox — Quantity of rock removed — Valley of the Grose — Wellington Valley — Limestone caverns — Description and view of the largest — of that containing osseous breccia — First discovery of bones — Small cavity and stalagmitic crust — Teeth found in the floor — A third cavern — Breccia on the surface — Similar caverns in other parts of the country — At Buree — At Molong — Shattered state of the bones — Important discoveries by Professor Owen — Gigantic fossil kangaroos — Macropus Atlas — Macropus Titan — Macropus indetem. Genus Hypsiprymnus, new species, indetem. — Genus Phalangista — Genus Phascolomys — Ph. Mitchellii, a new species — New Genus Diprotodon — Dasyurus laniarius, a new species — General results of Professor Owen’s researches — Age of the breccia considered — State of the caverns — Traces of inundation — Stalagmitic crust — State of the bones — Putrefaction had only commenced when first deposited — Accompanying marks of disruption — Earthy deposits — These phenomena compared with other evidence of inundation — Salt lakes in the interior — Changes on the sea coast — Proofs that the coast was once higher above the sea than it is at present — Proofs that it was once lower — and of violent action of the sea — At Wollongong — Cape Solander — Port Jackson — Broken Bay — Newcastle — Tuggerah Beach — Bass’s Straits.

As any geological information respecting a country so little known as the eastern coast of Australia, may be acceptable to the public, I venture to subjoin a few observations on some of the more prominent subjects of my researches, — and I do so with the more confidence, because it will appear how largely I am indebted for the interest they possess, to the kindness of my scientific friends in England.

During the surveys and expeditions, I carefully collected specimens at every important locality, and I have thus been enabled, since my return to England, to mark upon my maps the geological structure of the country. By this means also I have been able to determine the relative value of the land in the districts recently explored — and to compare it with that of the country previously known.

By a little attention to the geological structure of Australia, we learn how much the superficial qualities of soil and productions depend upon it, — and where to look for arable spots amid the general barrenness. The most intelligent surveyors of my department have, on several occasions, contributed considerably to my collection.

Curiosity led me to investigate some of the fossil remains of those lately discovered regions, while my public duties obliged me to study also the external features of the country; and I have thus been enabled to draw some inferences respecting various changes which have taken place in the surface, and in the relative
level of sea and land.

The following are the principal rocks which I noticed in the country.

Limestone occurs of different ages, and quality, presenting a considerable variety.

1st. A light coloured compact calcareous rock, resembling mountain limestone; at Buree and Wellington, rising, at the former place, to the height of about 1500 feet above the sea.

2nd. A dark grey limestone appears, at perhaps a still greater height, on the Shoalhaven river; in immediate contact with granite.

3rd. A crystalline variegated marble is found, in blocks, a few miles westward of the above, near the Wollondilly.

4th. Another variety of this rock is very abundant in the neighbourhood of Limestone plains, on the interior side of the Coast ranges, and near the principal sources of the Murrumbidgee. This contains corals belonging to the genus favosites; crinoideæ are also found abundantly in the plains, and distinguish this limestone from the others above-mentioned.

These rocks present little or no appearance of stratification.

A remarkably projecting ridge on the banks of Peel’s river, contained limestone of so peculiar an aspect, as to resemble porphyry, and it was associated with a rock having a base of chocolate-coloured granular felspar. (See page 38, vol. 1.)

A yellow highly calcareous sandstone, apparently stratified, occurs near the banks of the Gwydir. Large rounded boulders of argillaceous limestone have been denuded in the bed of Glendon brook; and an impure limestone is found in the neighbourhood of William’s river, both belonging to the basin of the Hunter, and not much elevated above the sea. Calcareous tuff or grit, may be observed in various localities — and calcareous concretions abound in the blue clay of almost all the extensive plains — on both sides of the mountains.

A soft shelly limestone, most probably of recent origin, though slightly resembling some of the oolites of England, occurs extensively on the southern coast, between Cape Northumberland and Portland bay, where it forms the only rock, with the exception of amygdaloidal trap.

Granite, or granitic compounds, are more or less apparent at or near the sources of the principal rivers; but, with the exception of the Southern Alps, and some patches in the counties of Bathurst and Murray, this fundamental rock is visible in Australia, only where it appears to have cracked a thick overlying stratum of ferruginous sandstone. Thus, near the head of the river Cox, where the latter attains its greatest elevation; and, from the character of the valley has evidently been violently disturbed; we find granite in the valley, near the bed of the stream.

Obs. 1. Such is the character of the country where the waters separate, or in the line of greatest elevation, which we are accustomed to term the Coast Range. The general direction of this range is N.N.E. and accords perfectly with the hypothesis of Dr. Fitton, founded on the general parallelism observed in the range of the strata, even on the north-western coast, as noticed in his interesting little volume, the first ever devoted to Australian Geology.* The parallelism so remarkable in the range of strata in that portion; the general tendency of the coast-lines to a course
from the west of south to the east of north, on the main land, and even in the
islands west of the Gulf of Carpentaria; and a general elevation of the strata
towards the south-east, as deduced from Flinders’ remarks, are all facts which
should be studied in connexion with the direction of the granite along this part of
the eastern coast.

Obs. 2. It may be also observed that the sandstone reposing on the rock eastward
of this division or watershed, is slightly inclined towards the sea, whereas all the
sandstone on the interior side, or westward of it, dips to the north-west.

Trap rocks are displayed in a great variety of situations. They often occur
connected with limestone in vallies; sometimes constitute lofty ranges, as on the
north or left bank of the Hunter; and along the sea shore at the Illawarra; they
likewise cap the summit of isolated hills; but no particular place can be assigned to
them with reference to the position of any other rocks. Trap forms a good soil on
decomposition, as is shewn in the rich districts of the Illawarra, Cowpastures, Valley
of the Hunter, Liverpool Plains, Wellington Valley, and Buree.

Vesicular lava and amygdaloid, are the chief ingredients of some of the best parts
of Australia Felix. In that region volcanic phenomena are more apparent than in
other parts of Eastern Australia, especially where the Grampians, consisting of a
mass of sandstone 4000 feet thick, seem a portion of the great formation covering
the districts of the north. The strata in these mountains are inclined to the north-
west, as if in obedience to the upheavings of Murröa or Mount Napier, an extinct
volcano, in the very line of their outcrop.

Obs. We found in the interior, hills of sandstone only, but at this extremity of the
great Coast range, granite is extensively exposed in ridges, between which, in one
extensive district, are round heights of mammeloid form, consisting of pure lava: —
and in another, tabular masses of trap reposing on granite, occupy one side of a
valley.

Beds of gravel are not common in these parts of Australia; but occur partially in the
basins of the larger streams, on the interior side of the Coast range, where the
pebbles, in general, consist of quartz.

Sandstone. The prevailing geological feature in all Eastern Australia, is the great
abundance of a ferruginous sandstone in proportion to any other rocks. The
sterility of the country where it occurs, has been frequently noticed in these
volumes. It is found on the coast at Port Jackson, and it was the furthest rock seen
by me, in the interior beyond the Darling.

A deposit, upwards of 1200 feet thick, forms the Blue Mountains west of Sydney
— ranging thence with the intersection of no other rock of importance, to the
Hawkesbury; and although declining towards the sea at the rate of only 100 feet per
mile, or 1 in 52, or at an angle of about 1° with the horizon; yet it is traversed by
ravines, which increase in depth, in proportion as the sandstone attains a greater
elevation, and present perpendicular crags and cliffs of a very remarkable character.

A region consisting of a sandstone deposit of so great thickness and so slightly
inclined, necessarily presents a monotonous aspect in all directions; and when it is
compared with European countries composed of many formations, and presenting
great diversity of scenery, it proves how much geological structure influences pictorial and physical outlines. (See pl. 10, vol. 1. page 154. also pl. 38, page 323.)

In the eastern part of Australia, the geologist will certainly find sections in abundance, but they are nearly all of sandstone; for, with few exceptions, no other rocks have been denudated in situations similarly exposed.

The ravines which discharge their waters into the little river Cox, occupy an area of 1212 square miles, or one-half of the country of Westmoreland on the right or south side of that river, and one-fourth of the country of Cook on the other. Of this area, 796 square miles, equal to one-half of the country of Westmoreland, are on the right or south side of that river, and 416, or one-fourth of the country of Cook, on the left. The whole extent comprises the basin of this mountain stream, and is bounded by heights rising very gradually from about 1000 feet, at the gorge or outlet of the Cox, to 3400 feet on the north side at Blackheath, and on the south to Murrin and Werong, summits of still greater elevation; the lowest part of the ridge bounding this basin on the west or interior side, being nearly 3000 feet above the level of the sea. Cox’s river flows over a bed of water-worn rocks, which, in the upper part of the valley, is 2150 feet above the sea, and, on the road to Bathurst, this bed consists of trap and granite. The river falls rapidly, on leaving the granite of the vale of Clwyd, to a level not much above that of the sea, and it escapes, near its junction with the Warragamba, from this spacious basin, through a gorge about 2200 yards wide, and flanked on each side by points about 800 feet high. Supposing but two-thirds of the enclosed area of sandstone to have been excavated to the depth of 880 feet only, which I allow as the mean thickness of the stratum thus broken into, and considering the inclination of the Cox and other vallies, then, 134 cubic miles of stone must have been removed from this basin of the Cox alone.

The valley of the Grose, whose basin is contiguous to that of the Cox, on the north; is of less extent, but enclosed by cliffs of greater perpendicular height. That river has been already described in the journal, and the general character of the valley through which it flows, is represented in Plate 10. vol. 1.* We now perceive but slight indications of the action by which the great area of stone in the valley of the Cox, the Grose, &c. has been removed. There are no accumulations of sand, but huge blocks of rock, scarcely worn by attrition, occur in great abundance in the bed of the stream; neither do we find, in the larger channels of the rivers below, any sand deposits — but, on the contrary, the very rich alluvium, which distinguishes the banks of the Hawkesbury.

In the year 1830, after I had traced out the new line of descent from the Blue Mountains to the interior country, by the pass which I then named Mount Victoria, I extended my survey to the heights beyond Wellington Valley. This includes a rich alluvial tract, watered by the river Bell, one of the principal tributaries of the Macquarie, and is about 170 miles to the westward of Newcastle. It is bounded on each side by a compact calcareous rock, resembling the mountain limestone of England, and rising on the east side to about 100 feet above the Bell.

On the west side of this valley, hills of greater elevation, consisting of a red sandstone and conglomerate, extend parallel to the limestone; and, on the east side
of it, is another range, composed of trap rocks. The basis of a tract, still further eastward, dividing the watershed of the interior, from that which sends its streams to the sea, is, as has been already observed, of granite.

The limestone presents a naked and rugged surface, composed of pointed, weather-worn blocks, between which are small crevices, leading to caves and fissures. From these crevices a warm air ascends, accompanied by a smell peculiar to the caves. The worn aspect of the external rock, resembling half dissolved ice, is very remarkable, particularly near the largest caverns.

An account of the survey of these caves was communicated to the Geological Society, in a paper read on the 13th of April, 1831, of which an abstract was published in its Proceedings, but the particulars respecting the animal remains found by me, have derived great additional importance from the discoveries made by Professor Owen, since my return to England. I may be excused, therefore, for again calling attention to the situation of those curious caves, respecting which the following details are now published, with the consent of the Council of the Society.

The entrance to the caves of Wellington Valley, is in the side of a low hill, and 65 feet above the adjacent alluvial flat. It consists of two crevices between large blocks of limestone, in one side of a hollow about 12 feet deep; and which has evidently been widened by water. (Pl. 41.)

We first descended the fissure at the mouth of the large cave, and then clambered over great rocks, until, at 125 feet from the entrance, we found these inequalities to be covered by a deep bed of dry, reddish dust, forming an even floor. This red earth lay also in heaps under lateral crevices, through which it seemed to have been washed down from above. On digging to a considerable depth at this point, we found a few fragments of bone, apparently of the kangaroo. At 180 feet from the mouth, is the largest part of the cavern, the breadth being 25 feet, and the height about 50 feet. The floor consisted of the same reddish earth, but a thick stalagmitic crust extended for a short distance from a gigantic stalactite, at the further end of the cavern. On again digging several feet deep, into the red earth here, we met with no lower layer of stalagmite, nor any animal remains.

On a corner of the floor, behind the stalactite, and nearly under a vertical fissure, we found a heap of dry white dust, into which one of the party sunk to the waist.* (G. Pl. 44.)

Passing through an opening to the left of the stalactite, we came upon an abrupt descent into a lower cavern. Having reached the latter with some difficulty, we found that its floor was about 20 feet below that of the cavern above. It was equally level, and covered to a great, but unascertained depth, with the same dry red earth, which had been worn down about five feet, in a hollow or rut.

A considerable portion of the farthest part of the floor (at H) was occupied with white dust or ashes, similar to that found in the corner of the upper floor (at G).

This lower cavern terminated in a nearly vertical fissure, which not only ascended towards the external surface, but descended to an unascertained depth beneath the floor. At about 30 feet below the lowest part of the cavern, it was found to contain water, the surface of which, I ascertained, was nearly on a level with that of the
river Bell. Having descended by a rope, I found that the water was very transparent, but unfit to drink, having a disagreeable, brackish flavour.

This lower cavern is much contracted by stalactites and stalagmites. After having broken through some hollow sounding portions, (at O and N), we entered two small lateral caverns, and in one of these, after cutting through (at I) about eight inches of stalagmitic floor, we discovered the same reddish earth. We dug into this deposit also, but discovered no pebbles or organic fragments; but at the depth of two and a half feet, met with another stalagmitic layer, which was not penetrated. This fine red earth or dust seems to be a sediment that was deposited from water which stood in the caves, about 40 feet below the exterior surface; for the earth is found exactly at that height, both towards the entrance of the first cavern, and in the lateral caverns. (See Pl. 44.)

That this cave had been enlarged, by a partial sinking of the floor, is not improbable, as broken stalagmitic columns, and pillars like broken shafts, once probably in contact with the roof, are still apparent. (See the view of the largest cavern, Pl. 43.)

Eighty feet to the westward of this cave, is the mouth of another, of a different description. Here the surface consists of a breccia full of fragments of bones; and a similar compound, confusedly mixed with large blocks of limestone, forms the sides of the cavity. This cave presents, in all its features, a striking contrast to that already described. Its entrance is a sort of pit, having a wide orifice, nearly vertical, and its recesses are accessible only by means of ladders and ropes. Instead of walls and a roof, of solid limestone rock, we found shattered masses, apparently held together by breccia, also of a reddish colour, and full of fragments of bones. (Pl. 45.) The opening in the surface appears to have been formed by the subsidence of these rocks at the time when they were hurled down, mixed with breccia, into the position which they still retain. Bones were but slightly attached to the surface of this cement, as if it had never been in a very soft state, and this we have reason to infer also, from its being the only substance supporting several large rocks, and at the same time keeping them asunder. On the other hand, we find portions of even very small bones, and also small fragments of the limestone, dispersed through this cementing substance, or breccia.

The pit had been first entered only a short time before I examined it, by Mr. Rankin, to whose assistance in these researches, I am much indebted. He went down, by means of a rope, to one landing place, and then fixing the rope to what seemed a projecting portion of rock, he let himself down to another stage, where he discovered, on the fragment giving way, that the rope had been fastened to a very large bone, and thus these fossils were discovered. The large bone projected from the upper part of the breccia, the only substance which supported, as well as separated, several large blocks, as shewn in the accompanying view of the cave (Pl. 45.), and it was covered with a rough tuffaceous encrustation, resembling mortar. No other bone, of so great dimensions, has since been discovered within the breccia. (See Figs. 12 and 13, Pl. 51.)

From the second landing place, we descended through a narrow passage between
the solid rock on one side, and huge fragments chiefly supported by breccia on the other, the roof being also formed of the latter, and the floor of loose earth and stones. We then reached a small cavern ending in several fissures, choked up with the breccia. One of these crevices (K. Pl. 44.) terminated in an oven-shaped opening in the solid rock (Pl. 50.), and was completely filled, in the lower part, with soft red earth, which formed also the floor in front of it, and resembled that in the large cavern already described. Osseous breccia filled the upper part of this small recess, and portions of it adhered to the sides and roof adjoining, as if this substance had formerly filled the whole cavity. At about three feet from the floor of this cavity (Pl. 50.), the breccia was separated from the loose earth below, by three layers of stalagmitic concretion, each about two inches thick and three apart; and they appeared to be only the remains of layers once of greater extension, as fragments of stalagmite adhered to the sides of the cavity, as shewn in Pl. 50. The spaces between what remained of these layers, were filled with red ochreous matter, and bones embedded partially in the stalagmite. Those in the lower sides of the layers were most thickly encrusted with tuffaceous matter; those in the upper surfaces, on the contrary, were very white, and free from the red ferruginous ochre, which filled the cavities of those in the breccia, although they contained minute transparent crystals of carbonate of lime.

On digging (at K) into the soft red earth forming the floor of this recess, some fragments of bone, apparently heavier than those in the breccia, were found, and one portion seemed to have been gnawed by a small animal. We obtained also, in this earth, the last phalange of the greatest toe of a kangaroo, and a small water-worn pebble of quartz. By creeping about 15 feet under a mass of solid rock, — which left an opening less than a foot and a half above the floor, we reached a recess about 15 feet high and 12 feet wide (L). The floor consisted of dry red earth, and on digging some feet down, we found fragments of bones — a very large kangaroo tooth (Fig. 6. Pl. 47.), a large tooth of an unknown animal (Figs. 4 and 5, Pl. 51.), and one resembling some fragments of teeth found in the breccia. (See Figs. 6, 7, 8, and 9, Pl. 51.)

We next examined a third cave about 100 yards to the westward of the last described. The entrance, like that of the first, was tolerably easy, but the descent over the limestone rocks was steeper, and very moist and slimy. Our progress downwards was terminated by water which probably communicated with the river Bell, as its level was much lower when the cave was first visited, during a dry season. I found very pure iron ochre in some of the fissures of this cavern, but not a fragment of bone.

Perceiving that the breccia, where it occurred below, extended to the surface, I directed a pit to be dug on the exterior, about 20 feet from the mouth of the cave, and at a part where no rocks projected. (N, Pl. 44.) We found that the hill there consisted of breccia only; which was harder and more compact than that in the cave, and abounded likewise in organic remains.

Finally, I found on the summit of the same hill some weathered blocks of breccia, from which bones protruded, as shewn in the accompanying drawing of a large and
remarkable specimen. (Pl. 46.)

Other caverns containing breccia of the same description, occur in various parts within a circuit of 50 miles, — and they may probably be found throughout the limestone country not yet examined.

On the north bank of the Macquarie, 8 miles east from the Wellington caves, and at Buree, about 50 miles to the southeast of them, I found this breccia at considerable depths, having been guided to it by certain peculiar appearances of subsidence and disruption, and by yawning holes in the surface, which previous experience had taught me to consider as indications of its existence.

On entering one of these fissures, from the bed of the little stream near Buree, and following, to a considerable distance, the subterraneous channel of the rivulet, we found a red breccia containing bones as abundantly as that of Wellington Valley. It occurred also amidst masses of broken rocks, between which we climbed until we saw daylight above; and being finally drawn out with ropes, we emerged near the top of a hill, from a hole very similar, in appearance, to the mouth of the cave at Wellington — which it also resembled, in having breccia both in the sides of the orifice, and in the surface around it.

At Molong, 36 miles east of Wellington Valley, I found some concreted matter within a small cavity of limestone rock on the surface, and when broken, this proved to be also breccia containing fragments of bone.

It was very difficult to obtain any perfect specimens of the remains contained in the breccia — the smallest of the various portions brought to England, have, nevertheless, been carefully examined by Professor Owen at the Hunterian Museum, and I have received from that distinguished anatomist, the accompanying letter, containing the result of those researches and highly important determinations, by which he has established several points of the greatest interest, as connected with the natural history of the Australian continent.

Royal College of Surgeons, May 8th, 1838.

DEAR SIR,

I have examined, according to your request, the fossil remains which you discovered in Wellington Valley, Australia, and which are now deposited in the Museum of the Geological Society; they belong to the following genera —

MACROPS Shaw.

Sp. 1. Macropus Atlas. O. This must have been at least one-third larger than Macropus major, the largest known existing species: it is chiefly remarkable for the great size of its permanent spurious molar; in which respect it approaches the subdivision of Shaw’s genus, called Hypsiprymnus by Illiger. The remains of this species consist of a fragment of the right ramus, of the lower jaw. (I*) Fig. 1, Pl. 47.

Sp. 2. Macropus Titan. O. I give this name to an extinct species, as large as the preceding, but differing chiefly in the smaller size of the permanent spurious molar; which in this respect more nearly corresponds with the existing Macr. major. The remains of this species consist of a fragment of the right ramus of the lower jaw. (II) Fig. 3, Pl. 47.

In both the above specimens the permanent false molar is concealed in its
alveolus, and was discovered by removing part of the substance of the jaw, indicating the nonage of the individuals.

A portion of cranium with the molar series of teeth of both sides. (II*) Figs. 4 and 5, Pl. 47. This specimen I believe to belong to Macropus Titan.

The permanent false molar, which is also concealed in this upper jaw, is larger than that of the lower jaw of Macr. Titan, but I have observed a similar discrepancy in size in the same teeth of an existing species of Macropus.

To one or other of the two preceding gigantic species of kangaroo, must be referred:

II. a. Crown of right inferior incisor, Fig. 6, Pl. 47.

II. b. Lower extremity of right femur.

II. c. Lower extremity of right femur, with the epiphysis separated, shewing its correspondence in age with the animals to which the fossil jaws belonged.

II. d. 5th Lumbar vertebra, Fig. 8, Pl. 47.

II. e. 10th or 11th Caudal vertebra. The proportion of this bone indicates that these great kangaroos had a relatively stouter and perhaps shorter tail than the existing species.

Macropus, sp. indeterm. Agrees in size with Macropus major, but there is a difference in the form of the sacrum: the second vertebra of which is more compressed, — to this species which cannot be determined till the teeth be found, I refer the specimens marked:

III. Sacrum. III. a. Proximal end of left femur. III. b. Proximal end of left tibia, in which the anterior spine sinks more gradually into the shaft than in Macr. major. As this is the only species with the skeleton of which I have been enabled to compare the preceding fragments, I am not able to pronounce as to their specific distinctness from other existing species of equal size with the Macropus major.

Macropus, sp. indeterm. From want of skeletons of existing species of kangaroo, I must also leave doubtful the specific determination of a species smaller than Macropus major — represented by the left ramus of the lower jaw, (IV.) in which the permanent false molar is in place together with four true molars, and which would therefore be a species of Halmaturus of Fred. Cuvier.

Macropus (V.) Part of the left ramus of the lower jaw, with two grinders in place, and a third which has not quite cut through the jaw.

(V. a.) Sixth and seventh grinders according to the order of their development, right side, upper jaw, of a kangaroo not quite so large as Macropus major.

Several other bones and portions of bone are referrible to the genus Macropus, but they do not afford information of sufficient interest or importance to be specially noticed.

Genus HYPSIPRYMNUS.

Hypsiprymnus, sp. indeterm. (No. VI.) Figs. 1 and 2, Pl. 48. A portion of the upper jaw and palate with the deciduous false molar and four true molars in place on each side; the fifth or posterior molar is concealed in the alveolus, as also the crown of the permanent false molar.

Hypsiprymnus. (No. VI. a.) Fig. 3, Pl. 48. Part of the right ramus of the lower jaw,
exhibiting a corresponding stage of dentition.

Obs. This species is rather larger than any of the three species with the crania of which I have had the opportunity of comparing them: there is no evidence that it agrees with any existing species.

Genus PHALANGISTA.
No. VII. Cranium, coated with stalactite.
No. VII. a. Part of right ramus, with spurious and 2nd molar.
No. VII. b. Right ramus, lower jaw.

Obs. The two latter specimens disagree with *Phal. Vulpina*, in having the spurious molar of relatively smaller size, and the 2nd molar narrower: the symphysis of the lower jaw is also one line deeper in the fossil. As the two latter specimens agree in size with the cranium; they probably are all parts of the same species, of which there is no proof that it corresponds with any existing species. But a comparison of the fossils with the bones of these species (which are much wanted in our osteological collections), is obviously necessary to establish the important fact of the specific difference or otherwise of the extinct Phalanger.

Genus PHASCOLOMYS.
Sp. *Phasc. Mitchellii*. (VIII.) Fig. 4, Pl. 48. Mutilated cranium.
(VIII. a.) Fig. 5, Pl. 48. Part of lower jaw, belonging to the above.
(VIII. b.) Fig. 6, Pl. 48. Right series of molar teeth *in situ*.
(VIII. c.) Right ramus of the lower jaw.

Obs. These remains come nearer to the existing species than do those of any of the preceding genera; but after a minute comparison I find, that there is a slight difference in the form of the grinders, which, in the fossil, have the antero-posterior diameter greater in proportion than the transverse; the first grinder also is relatively larger, and of a more prismatic form; the upper incisors are less compressed and more prismatic; this difference is so well marked that, once appreciated, any one might recognise the fossil by an incisor alone. There is a similar difference in the shape of the lower incisor. The fossil is also a little larger than the largest wombat’s cranium in the Hunterian Collection. From these differences, I feel no hesitation in considering the species to which these fossils belong as distinct; and propose to call it, “*Phascolomys Mitchellii*.”

Genus DIPROTODON. I apply this name to the genus of Mammalia, represented by the anterior extremity of the right ramus, lower jaw, with a single large procumbent incisor. (IX.) Fig. 1. Pl. 49. This is the specimen conjectured to have belonged to the Dugong, but the incisor resembles the corresponding tooth of the wombat in its enamelled structure, and position. See Fig. 2, Pl. 49, and a section of the wombat’s teeth, in Fig. 7, Pl. 48. But it differs in the quadrilateral figure of its transverse section, in which it corresponds with the inferior incisors of the hippopotamus.

To this, or to some distinct species, of equal size, have belonged the fragments of bones of extremities marked X. X. a, X. b.

Genus DASYURUS.
*Das. laniarius*, O. — I apply this name to the species to which the following
remains belong.

(XI.) Figs. 3 and 4, Pl. 49. Portions of the left side of the upper jaw.

(XI. a) Fig. 5. Ditto.

(XI. b) Fig. 6. Left ramus lower jaw, with last grinders.

(XI. c) Fig. 7. Anterior part of the right ramus of lower jaw.

This species closely resembles *Das. ursinus*, but differs in being one-third larger, and in having the canines, or laniaries, of proportionately larger size.

The position of the teeth in the specimen (marked XI. c) Fig. 7, which are wider apart; leads me to doubt whether it is the lower jaw of *Das. laniarius*, or of some extinct marsupial carnivore of an allied but distinct species.

The general results of the above examination are, —

1st. That the fossils are not referrible to any known extra-Australian genus of mammals.

2ndly. That the fossils are not referrible, from the present evidence, to any existing species of Australian mammal.

3rdly. That the greater number certainly belong to species either extinct or not yet discovered living in Australia.

4thly. That the extinct species of *Macropus*, *Dasyurus*, *Phascolomys*, especially *Macr. Atlas*, and *Macr. Titan*, are larger than the largest known existing species.

5thly. That the remains of the saltatory animals, as the *Macropi*, *Halmaturi*, and *Hypsiprymnii*, are all of young individuals; while those of the burrowing Wombat, the climbing Phalanger, and the ambulatory Dasyure, are of adults.

I remain, dear Sir, &c.

(Signed) RICHARD OWEN.

Nothing could be discovered in the present state of these caverns, at all likely to throw any light on the history or age of the breccia — but the phenomena they present seem to indicate more than one change in the physical outline of the adjacent regions, and probably of more distant portions of Australia; at a period antecedent to the existing state of the country.

Dry earth occurred in the floor of both the caverns at Wellington Valley, and in the small chamber (Pl. 28) of the breccia cave, it was found, as before stated, beneath the three lines of stalagmite and the osseous breccia. It seems probable, therefore, that this earth once filled the cave also to the same line, and that the stalagmite then extended over the floor of red earth. Moreover, I am of opinion that the interval between the stalagmite and the roof, was partly occupied by the bone breccia, of which portions remain attached to the roof and sides above the line of stalagmite. It is difficult to conceive how the mass of red earth and stalagmitic floors could be displaced, except by a subsidence in the original floor of the cave. But the present floor contains no vestiges of breccia fallen from the roof, nor any remains of the stalagmitic crust once adhering to the sides — which are both therefore probably deposited below the present floor.

In the external or upper part of the same cave, as shewn in Plate 45, the floor consisted of the red dust, and was covered with loose fragments of rock, apparently fallen from conglomerated masses of limestone and breccia, which also, however,
extended under the red earth there. Thus it would appear that traces remain in these
caverns: — First, of an aqueous deposit, in the red earth found below the stalagmite
in one cavern, and beneath breccia in the other. Secondly, of a long dry period, as
appears in the thick crust of stalagmite covering the lowest deposit in the largest
cavern; and during which some cavities were filled with breccia, even with the
external surface. Thirdly, of a subsidence in the breccia, and associated rocks; —
and, lastly, of a deposit of red earth similar to the first.

The present floor in both caves, bears all the evidence of a deposition from water,
which probably filled the interior of the cavern to an unknown height. It is clear
that sediment deposited in this manner would, when the waters were drawn off, be
left in the state of fine mud, and would become, on drying, a more or less friable
earth. Any water charged with carbonate of lime, which might have been
subsequently introduced, would have deposited the calcareous matter in stalactites
or stalagmites; but the general absence of these is accounted for in the dryness of
the caves. This sedimentary floor contained few or no bones, except such as had
previously belonged to the breccia, as was evident from the minuter cavities having
been still filled with that substance.

I do not pretend to account for the phenomena presented by the caverns — yet it
is evident, from the sediments of mud forming the extensive margins of the
Darling, that at one period the waters of that spacious basin were of much greater
volume than at present — and it is more than probable that the caves of Wellington
Valley were twice immersed under temporary inundations. I may, therefore, be
permitted to suggest, from the evidence I am about to detail of changes of level on
the coast, that the plains of the interior were formerly arms of the sea: and that
inundations of greater height have twice penetrated into, or filled with water, the
subterranean cavities, and probably on their recession from higher parts of the
land, parts of the surface have been altered, and some additional channels of
fluviatile drainage hollowed out. The accumulation of animal remains very much
broken, and filling up hollow parts of the surface, shew at least, that this surface has
been modified since it was first inhabited; and these operations appear to have
taken place subsequently to the extinction, in that part of Australia, of the species
whose remains are found in the breccia; and previously to the existence, in at least
the same districts, of the present species.

No entire skeleton has been discovered, and very rarely were any two bones of
the same animal found together. On the contrary, even the corresponding
fragments of a bone were frequently detected some yards apart, (as for instance,
those in Figures 2 and 1, Pl. 49.) — On the other hand, it would appear from the
position of the teeth in one skull (Fig. 4, Pl. 48.), that they were only falling out
from putrefaction, at the time the skull was finally deposited in the breccia, and
from the nearly natural position of the smaller bones in the foot of a dasyurus (Fig.
2, Pl. 51.), it can scarcely be doubted that this part of the skeleton was imbedded in
the cement when the ligaments still bound the bones together. The united radius
and ulna of a kangaroo (Fig. 1, Pl. 51.), are additional evidence of the same kind;
and yet, if the bones have been so separated and dispersed and broken into minute
fragments, as they now appear in this breccia, while they were still bound together by ligaments, it is difficult to imagine how that could take place under any natural process with which we are acquainted. It may, however, be observed, that the breccia is never found below ground without unequivocal proofs in the rocks accompanying it, of disruption and subsidence, and that the best specimens of single bones have been found wedged between huge rocks, where the breccia occurs like mortar between them, in situations eight or ten fathoms under ground.

That changes have taken place in the relative level of land and sea, is evident from the channel of the Glenelg, which is worn in the rock to a depth of five fathoms below the sea level. The sea must have either risen, or the earth must have subsided, since that channel was worn by any current of water, for it is now as still as a canal, the tide making a difference of only a few inches.

The features on the shores of Port Jackson extend under water, preserving the same forms as they have above it; while the bays and coves now subject only to the ebb and flow of a tide, present extensive ramifications, and can only be considered the submerged vallies of a surface originally scooped out by erosion, at a period when the land stood higher above the sea.

The hills on the margins of the Australian salt lakes are always on the north-east side, or opposite to that of the prevailing south-west winds. The formation of these hills is probably due to the action of the wind; the growth and decomposition of small shells; the carbonate of lime disengaged by evaporation, and the concretion of calcareous matter and friable tuff so common in these ridges.

In two of the most remarkable, Mitre Lake and Greenhill Lake, a portion of the basin of each, between the hilly curves and the water, was filled by a dark-coloured perfectly level deposit, apparently of vegetable mould. This being of a quality different from that of the hills, it would appear that any process by which these heights may have originated through the agency of the water adjacent and the wind, could not continue after this different formation had accumulated between them. Accordingly, where this dark-coloured deposit is most extensive, the curved hill concentric with the outer margin seems less perfect; but whether worn by time or sweeping inundations, I cannot pretend to say.

That some affinity exists between such accumulations and the salt water in the lakes, is the more probable from the present state of those of Cockajemmy, which occur in the bed of a former current, and between the rocky sides of a kind of ravine. Even in such a situation a mound of very firm ground has been formed on the eastern bank of each, and was found very convenient for the passsage of the ravine by the carts of the party. (See page 269.)

In those hills beside salt lakes on the plains, a tendency to regular curvature was the chief feature: the relative situation with respect to the water and the wind was always the same; while in some cases, where grassy flats had once been lakes, crescent-shaped green mounds were still apparent on the north-eastern sides of each. If these remains of salt water are of less volume than they have been formerly, as may be presumed from these circumstences; and if the waters, according to Professor Faraday's analysis, “are solutions of common salt, and, except in strength,
very much resemble those of the ocean,* we cannot have much difficulty in believing that the sea deposited the water in these situations at no very remote period.

As a dark-coloured soil is also found in the ridges about some of these lakes, we must look deeper for the original cause of such depressions in those extensive plains; and may attribute them either to cavities or protuberances in the lower rocks, which may not have been sufficiently filled, or covered, by the superincumbent deposits: or they may be due to partial subsidences in a thin stratum of limestone.

The sea, probably when higher relatively to the land than it is at present, appears to have acted with some violence in isolating various points along the eastern coast; most of which we now find curiously analogous, in their situation on the southern sides of inlets, and in being now united to the main land by mounds of sand. The point of Wollongong was formerly an island, and is now only connected by drifted sand-hills, with the seite of the township. — Cape Solander, the south head of Botany Bay, on which Captain Cook first landed, was evidently once an island, though at present connected with the main land by the neck of sand which separates Botany Bay from Port Hacking. The south head of Port Jackson has also been isolated, but is again connected with the shore of Bellevue between Bondi Bay and Rose Bay, by drifted hills of sand. The north head appears to have been likewise isolated. Baranjuay, the south head of Broken Bay, is connected only by a low beach of sand. The Beacon head of Newcastle was once an island; and the drifted sand forming the hills on which the town is built, has since been thrown up by the sea. Brisbane Water, Tuggerah beach, and Lake Macquarie, are also striking proofs of change of the same character as those at Port Jackson, especially as they occur in a country possessing no inland lakes, and along a coast line which is very even and straight in other respects.

The line of rocky islets extending across Bass’s Strait, seems to be the remains of land once continuous between the two shores, probably when the current was still active in the channel of the Glenelg, and before the sea had penetrated far within the heads of Port Jackson.

Thus it would appear that the Australian continent bears marks of various changes in the relative height of the sea; on its shores and in the interior; and that the waters have been at some periods much higher, and at another period, lower, with respect to the land, than they are at present.

ROCKS IN BASS’S STRAITS.
Pyramid Rock bearing E. dist. 3 miles.
Rock (of Granite) bearing E. by N.

*** The men whose names are printed in italics, had obtained their freedom as a reward for past services in the interior. The asterisks distinguish the names of men who had been with me on one or both the former expeditions. Those to whose names the letter T is also prefixed, having previously obtained a ticket of leave releasing them from a state of servitude. Each man was also furnished with a small case containing six cartridges, which he was ordered always to wear about his waist.
To this end they stretch a skin very tight over the knees, and thus may be said to use the tympanum in its rudest form, this being the only instance of a musical instrument that I have seen among them. Burder says, — “By the timbrels which Miriam and the other women played upon when dancing, we are to understand the tympanum of the ancient Greeks and Romans, which instrument still bears in the East the name that it has in Hebrew, namely, doff or diff, whence is derived the Spanish adufe, the name of the Biscayan tabor. Niebuhr describes this instrument in his Travels, Part I., page 181. It is a broad hoop, with a skin stretched over it; on the edge there are generally thin round plates of metal, which also make some noise, when this instrument is held up in one hand, and struck with the fingers of the other hand. Probably no musical instrument is so common in Turkey as this; for when the women dance in the harem, the time is always beat on this instrument. We find the same instrument on all the monuments in the hands of the Bacchante. It is also common among the negroes of the Gold Coast and Slave Coast.” — Oriental Customs, Vol. I.

* See a further account of these caves, and some others, in Chapter XV. at the end of this volume.

A genus chiefly inhabiting the Cape of Good Hope, India, the Levant, and North America, of which no species have before been published from Australia. I was subsequently fortunate enough to discover two more species of this genus; which with one, as yet unpublished, found by Mr. Allan Cunningham in 1818, in the rocky islands of Dampier’s Archipelago, on the north-west coast, makes the number inhabiting Australia to be 4: all of which are remarkable for their resemblance to the North American form of the genus. The species we observed on this occasion, was a small spreading herbaceous plant. P. patens, (Lindl. MSS.); herbacea, pubescens, foliis pinnatum trifoliolatis, foliolis dentatis punctatis lateralibus oblongis obtusis intermedio ovato obtuso basi cuneato, racemo pedunculato laxo multifloro folis multo longiore, bracteis subrotundis striatis obscure multipunctatis, ramis divaricatis.

* P. tenax, (Lindl. MSS.); herbacea, depressa, perennis, glabra, foliis glandulosae palmatim 5-foliolatis, foliolis linearibus vel lineari-oblongis obtusiis, racemis cylindraceis longissimè pedunculatis erectis, leguminibus ovatis scabris glabris.

† Plotosus Tandanus, (see page 95.) Vol. 1.

1. Tr. alopecuroideum, (Lindl. MSS.); caule ramoso glabro, foliis lanceolatiis glabris subitus scabriusculis, spicis cylindraceis elongatis, bracteis rotundatis, calycibus herbaceis sursum calvis acutis, rachi pilosâ, cyatho staminum dentato. 2. Tr. parviflorum, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis ovatis acutis petiolatis subtus et caule furfuraceo-tomentosis, spicis gracilibus elongatis, bracteis acuminatis seariosis, calycibus lanatis, rachi lanata, staminibus inegalibus distinctis. 3. Tr. sessilifolium, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis oblongis obtusiis sessilibus et caule furfuraceo-tomentosis, spicis oblongis, bracteis rotundatis lanatis, calycibus longè tubulosiis lanatis ssum pedunculatiis, rachi tormentosâ, staminibus inegalibus distinctis.
† *S. corrugata*, (Lindl. MSS.); incana, prostrata, pusilla, foliis subrotundis augulatis cordatis palminerviis serratis, pedunculis 2–3 filiformibus petiolis longioribus, fructu disciformi corrugato, coccis monospermis commissuris muricatis.

‡ This proved to be a very distinct, undescribed species. *A. loucophylla*, (Lindl. MSS.); gracilis, ramulis filiformibus angulatis albido-sericeis, phyllodiis lineari-lanceolatis falcatis apice uncinatis obscure 2-nerviis appressæ et densissimè sericeis: margine superiore basi subglanduloaso, racemis umbellatis axillaris phyllodio multo brevioribus.

§ *Waagan* means a crow in the native language.

* This proves to be a new genus of Caprifoliaceæ, § Sambuceæ. *Tripetelus australasicus*, (Lindl. MSS.) ((Unclear) having 3 leaves; the calyx has 3 sepals, the corolla 3 petals, the stamens are 3, and the carpels are also 3). Calyx superus tridentatus. Corolla rotata, tripartita, lutea, laciniiis concavis conniventibus. Antheræ tres, fauce sessiles. Ovarium 3-loculare; ovulis solitariis pendulis; stigmata 3, sessilia. Fructus subsessucess, 3-queter, 3-pyrenus, putamine chartaceo. — Caulis herbacceus. Folia opposita, glabra, pinnata, 2-juga cum imari, laciniiis lanceolatis acuminatis serratis; glandulis 2 verruciformibus loco stipularum. Flores laxè paniculati.

* Mr. James Collits of Mount York.

* I. aacantho carpa, (Lindl. MSS.); caule herbaceo erecto ramiisque angulatis scabriusculis, foliis pinnatis 5-jugis viscido-pubescentibus; foliolis lineari-lanceolatis mucronulatis margine scabris, racemis folio æqualibus, leguminibus subrotundo-ovalibus compressis mucronatis echinatis monospermis.

* This is allied in some respects to *A. verniciflua* and *exudans*, but is a very distinct and well marked species. *A. salicina*, (Lindl. MSS.); glaucescens, ramulis angulatis, phyllodiis divaricatis lineari et oblongo-lanceolatis utrinque angustatis obtusissimis uninerviis venulis pinntatis: ipso apice glandulosus subtus resinoso-punctatis, capitulis 3–5 racemos phyllodiis triplò brevioribus.

* Cernua Bidyana.

† Plotosus Tandanus.

‡ *Tr. nobile*, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis cauliniis obovatis cuspidatis subundulatis ramiisque corymbosis angulatis glabris, spicâ cylindraceâ: rachi lanatâ, calycis laciniiis 3 acutis 2 retusis, bracteis puberulis. Differs from *Tr. densum*, Cunn. in the bracts not being villous at the base, and from *T. macrocephalum*, R. Br. in having much larger flowers, which are yellow not lilac, and in three of the segments of the calyx being acute.
† Procyon, in Canis Minor and Regulus in Leo. The latter being also called Hercules and Cor Leonis.

* Danthonia pectinata, (Lindl. MSS.); spicâ simplici secundâ pleiostachyâ pectinatâ foliis multo longiore, paleâ inferiore villosissimâ; laciniiis lateraliâ membranaceis aristae æqualibus.


* Resembling C. rupicola of Cunningham, but with larger and shorter flowers, and differently shaped leaves. The young shoots were covered with a white down which easily rubbed off. C. leucoclada, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis albo-tomentosis gracilibus, foliis ovato-oblungis obtusissimis petiolatis supra glabris scabriusculis subtûs tomentosis, floribus subsessilibus, corollâ campanulâtâ quadrifidâ, calyce cupulâri truncato.

† Calostemma carneum, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis. . . . , tubo perianthii limbo subæquali, coronâ truncatâ dentibus sterilibus nullis, umbellis densis, pedicellis articulâtis exterioribus longioribus. Flowers pink.

* See note to page 90.

* X. typhina, (Lindl. MSS.); acaulis, foliis longissimis angusto-linearibus margine lævibus filamentosis basi laceris, capitulis omnibus cylindraceis lanatis fœmineis simplicibus masculis interruptis.

* Lappago racemosa, W. and Aristida ramosa, R. Br.

† Croly’s Gems.

‡ See page 39.

* Willi — an opossum.

† S. esuriæ, (Lindl. MSS.); caule humili suffruticoso, aculeis subulatis tenuibus in apice ramulorum et costâ, foliis lineari-oblungis obtusis subrependis utrinque cinereis stellato-pilosis, pedunculis subtrifloris, calycibus campanulatis pentagonis 5-dentatis stellato-pilosis corollis tomentosis multò brevioribus.

* This proved to be the rare A. quadrilateralis of De Candolle.
* S. *fibulifera*, (Lindl. MSS.); incano-tomentosa, pusilla, diffusa, foliis ovato-oblungis obtusis dentatis basi cordatis, stipulis longissimis setaceis, pedunculis axillaris aggregatis filiformibus petiolis longioribus, calycibus lanatis corolla parum brevioribus, fructu disciformi convexo tomentoso, coccis monospermis.

*S. bicornis*, (Lindl. MSS.); caule lanato ramoso, foliis linearibus succulentis glabris, calycibus solitariis bispinosis lanâ albâ involutis.

*C. glabra*, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis incanis, foliis ovalibus obtusis in petiolum angustatis glubris subtus punctatis, corolla brevi campanulata tomentosa 4-dentata calye truncato cupulari triplio longiore.

*Panicum flavidum* of Retz.

* The wood named Bimbel by the natives, grows with a shining green lance-shaped leaf, and is in much request with them, for the purpose of making their spears, bommerengs, waddies, &c.

*S. feroxissimum*, (Lindl. MSS.); caule herbaceo erecto: aculeis confertissimis pugioniformibus arcuatis, foliis linearibus obtusis utrinque præsertim subtus furfuraco-tomentosis aculeatissimis, pedunculis subtrifloris foliorum longitudine, calycibus inermibus.

*Trigonella suavissima*, (Vol. I. page 255.)

† On leaving Sydney for this expedition I placed in charge of Mr. McLeay, colonial secretary, the first specimen of this plant produced by cultivation. It grew luxuriantly in a flower-pot, from seeds brought from the Darling, where it was discovered. Vol. I. 255.

‡ See Vol. I. page 319.

§ The third species of *Psoralea* before referred to (March 19th), *P. cinerea*, (Lindl. MSS.); herbacea, incana, foliis pinnatim trifoliolatis, foliolis dentatis punctatis ovatis acutis intermedio basi cuneato, racemo pedunculato denso multifloro foliis triplio longiore, bracteis minimis ovatis acuminatis, calycibus pellucidê pauci-punctatis, caule ramisque strictis.

*Fusanus acuminatus.*

† *Loranthus Quandany*, (Lindl. MSS.); incanus, foliis oppositis linearis oblongis obsoletè triplinervis
obtusis, pedunculis axillaribus folio multò brevioribus apice divaricato-bifidis 6 floris, floribus pentameris æqualibus, petalis linearibus, antheris linearibus basi insertis. — Next L. Gaudichaudi.

* Röpera aurantiaca, (Lindl. MSS.); foliolis linearibus obtusis succulentis petiolo æqualibus, petalis obovatis obtusissimis, fructibus orbiculatis. November, 1838. — This Ropera has grown in the gardens of the Horticultural Society at Chiswick, and proves a pretty new annual flower.

* A Pou near P. australis, R. Br. and Bromus australis of R. Br.

* Meaning, “Soldiers are no joke!”

* “And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones: and they took stones, and made a heap, and they did eat there upon the heap.” Genesis xxxi. 46. — “Thevenot describes the way of roasting a sheep, practised by the Armenians, by which also the use of smoky wood is avoided; for having flayed it, they cover it again with the skin, and put it into an oven upon the quick coals, covering it also with a good many of the same coals, that it may have fire under and over to roast it well on all sides; and the skin keeps it from being burnt.” — Harmer. Whoever has seen the Australian natives cook a kangaroo must recognise in this description, the very same process.

* See comparative sections of these and other rivers, to one scale, on the General Map in Vol. I.

† Having experienced on this journey the inconvenient want of terms relative to rivers, I determined to use such of those recommended by Colonel Jackson in his able paper on the subject, in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society for 1833, as I might find necessary. They are these: — Tributary — Any stream adding to the main trunk. Ana-branches — Such as after separation unite. Berg — bergs — Heights now at some distance, once the immediate banks of a river or lake. Bank — That part washed by the existing stream. Border — The vegetation at the water’s edge, forest trees, or quays of granite, &c. Brink — The water’s edge. Margin — The space between the brinks and the bergs.

* Instead of handing a chair, the equivalent politeness with Australian natives is, to smooth down or remove with the foot, any sharp spikes or rubbish on the ground, where you wish your friend to be seated before you.

* See page 90.

* X. effusa, (Lindl. MSS.); acaulis, foliis linearibus longissimis semiteretibus margine scabris dorso striatis: apice dentato tabescente, paniculá masculá effusá abbreviáta, bracteis acuminatis scariosis pedicello
brevioribus.

* See page 90.

* Isaiah lxv. 4. [Who remain among the graves] “The old Hebrews are charged by the prophet Isaiah with remaining among the graves and lodging in the monuments.” — See Lewis’s Origines Hebrae, vol. iii. p. 381.

* For a proof of this, see extract from Sydney Herald of May 21st, 1838, in Appendix.

* § See pl. 16. page 262. vol. i.

† Page 253. vol. i.

‡ Pl. 20. page 321. vol. i.

& Verbar; Page 71.

* B. crassifolia, (Lindl. MSS.); glaberrima, foliis subrotundis oblongisque obtusis plano-convexis crassis, floribus solitariis axillaribus pedicellatis cernuis, laciniis calycinis marginatis integerrimis petalis integris brevioribus.

* A new and genuine species of Gyrostemon. Gyrostemon pungens, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis rhomboideis acutis glaucis in petiolum angustatis. The capsules are arranged in a single verticillus, and consequently this species will belong to Gyrostemon, as distinguished from Codonocarpus by Mr. Endlicher.

* C. bitoroloba, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis bijugis linearibus carnosis citò deciduis apicè mucronulatis recurvis, glandulâ parvâ conicâ inter omnia, petiolo compresso herbaceo nunc aphyllo mucronulato, racemis paucifloris folio brevioribus, leguminibus oblongis planis obtusis papyraceis continuus aut varié strangulatis.

† L. cordifolius, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis pubescentibus, foliis sessilibus subrotundis planis patentibus cordatis mucronatis margine seabras supra levigatis subtus striatis, floribus solitariis sessilibus axillaribus.

* Tr. lanatum, (Lindl. MSS.); incano-tomentosum, caule corymbose, foliis obovatis cuneatisque, capitulis hemisphericis lanatis, bracteis dorso villosis.
* See page 90.

* The original has been deposited in the Sydney Museum, but, having shewn my friend Mr. Ogilby a drawing of it, he has noticed the discovery in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society for 1838, describing the animal as “belonging to a new genus closely allied to Perameles, but differing in the form of the fore-feet, which have only two middle toes resembling those of a hog, and in the total absence of tail. This genus has been named by Mr. Ogilby *Chœropus Ecaudatus*.”

* Having brought home specimens of most of the woods of the interior, I find that several of the acacias would be valuable for ornamental work, having a pleasing perfume resembling that of a rose. Some are of a dark colour, of various shades, and very compact; others light coloured, and resembling in texture, box or lancewood. The new caper tree, also, resembles the latter so much as not to be distinguished from it. Specimens of these woods may be seen at Hallet’s, No. 83, High Holborn.

* An Andropogon allied to *A. bombycinus*.

* *A. sclerophylla*, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis angulatis glabriusculis, phyllodiis rigidis carnosis rectiusculis linearibus apice latioribus mucronulatis multinervii glabris eglandulosis, capitulis 1–2 sessilibus glaberrimis.

† *A. aspera*, (Lindl. MSS.); phyllodiis oblengo-linearibus uninnervii mucronatis eglandulosisRamisque angulatis asperrimis, capitulis 1–2 axillaribus, pedunculis villosis phyllodiis duplō brevioribus.

* This appears to be a species of Jerboa, thus, for the first time, seen by us in Australia. My friend, Mr. Ogilby, has described this animal in the Linnæan Transactions from my drawing and descriptions; the specimen itself having been deposited in the Australian Museum at Sydney. *Dipus Mitchellii*, D. plantis subpentadactylis; corpore supra cinereo-fusco, subtus albido; auriculis magnis, cauda longissima, floccosa.

† *P. Rodneyanum*, (Lindl. MSS.); patentim pilosum, caule subterraneo horizontali crasso fragili ramos erectos promente apice tantum epigeos foliosos, ramulis herbaceis erectis, foliis ovato-oblongis sublobatis basi cuneatis obtusis grosse crenatis tenuibus glabriusculis longipetiolatis, pedunculis erectis foliis longioribus, umbellis tomentosis 8–10-floris demum laxis laxis divaricatis, petalis angustē obovatis calyce triplō longioribus, staminum tubo obliquo: sterilium 3 denticuliformibus, fortillium 2 sterilibus interjectis cæteris longioribus.

* It is found to be an acacia related to *A. multinervia*. *A. farinosa*, (Lind. MSS.); ramulis angulatis
For description see 19th Sept.

* July 17, 1838. This plant has at length flowered in the Horticultural Gardens at Chiswick, and proves to be a new species of Picris, of which Dr. Lindley has favoured me with the following description: — *P. barbarorum*; sparsè hispida, foliis ciliatis supra nitidis scabriusculis radicalibus spathulato-lanceolatis subdentatis caulinis oblongis sessilibus amplexicaulis recurvis dentatis integrisque, caule stricto ramoso, involucri foliolis lineari-lanceolatis acutis apice vel secus dorsum serie simplici pilorum longorum reflexorum appendiculatis, achæniis badiis longè rostratis transversè rugosissimis disci sterilibus.

* *Bæckea micrantha.*

† *D. pectinata,* (Lindl. MSS.); glabra, aphylla, ramis lateralis ensiformibus crassis rigidis spinosis verticalibus pectinatim spiralibus dorso decurrentibus racemulis glomeratis multò longioribus.

* Isaiah xxiv. 17. — Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee.] “These images are taken from the different methods of hunting and taking wild beasts, which were anciently in use. The snare or toils were a series of nets, inclosing, at first, a great space of ground, in which the wild beasts were known to be; and drawn in by degrees into a narrower compass, till they were at last closely shut up and entangled in them.” — Harmer. This is precisely the method adopted by the Australian natives at present for the same or similar purposes.

* *Anguillaria dioica.*

† *E. pungens,* (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis teretibus pilosulis, foliis acrosis pungentibus glandulosis, pedicellis solitariis axiliaribus brevibus unifloris, staminibus glabriusculis, antheris inappendiculatis.

‡ *P. incana,* (Lindl. MSS.); foliis linearibus obtusis tomentosis marginibus revolutis costam tangentibus, floribus sessilibus terminalibus, staminibus 6 imà basi monadelphis.

* Warrabangle is a very similar name, and belongs to a hill similarly situated, five degrees further to the northward. See Map.

* This has been ascertained to be a new species of the genus Pigea. *P. floribunda,* (Lindl. MSS.); caule erecto ramoso, foliis alternis linearibus et lineari-lanceolatis obtusis glabris, racemulis secundis panicifloris.
foliis brevioribus, sepalis petalisque glabrosis ovatis acutis, labelli laminâ obovata rotundata basi bilamellata, antheris sessilibus syngenistis apice lamina oblonga membranacea acutis, processibus 2 corniformibus basi staminum 2 anteriorum.

* L. glacialis, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis pubescentibus, foliis lineari-lanceolatis erectis contortis acutis ciliatis margine scabris, floribus terminalibus solitariis et aggregatis, pedicellis pubescentibus distantibus squamatis, calycibus glabris.

† E. alpina, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis brevibus rigidis angulatis, foliis alternis petiolatis ovato-oblongis viscosa basi obliquis, umbellis axillaris panniculi petolis brevioribus, operculo hemisphærico verrucoso inaequi tubo calycis turbinato verrucoso breviore.

* E. tomentosa, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis ovatis acutis planis crenatis tomentosis, floribus cernuis, corolla arcuata infundibulari lacinii obtusis apiculis.

* P. bilobum, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis tomentosis, foliis ovato-oblongis viscosis basi obliquis, umbellis axillaris panniculi petolis brevioribus, ovario tricorni.

† C. tomentosa, (Lindl. MSS.); undique densè tomentosa, ramulis racemosis, foliis fasciculatis lineariibus obtusis marginibus revolutis contiguus, capitulis terminalibus congestis, calycibus campanulatis bracteis acutis scariosis parum longioribus. Next to C. propinqua.

‡ B. alpina, (Lindl. MSS.); tota pubescens, foliis lineari-ovatis petiolatis obtusis concavis, pedicellis axillariis et terminalibus foliis longioribus supra medium bibracteatis; bracteis oppositis obovatis cucullatis, lacinii calycinis cordatis obtusi petalis denticulatis duplex brevioribus, antheris apice verruciferis.

§ P. montana, (Lindl. MSS.); foliis obcordatis muticis lobis rotundatis supra scabris utrinque ramulsque hisritis, capitulis solitariis terminalibus sessilibus foliis parum longioribus, calycibus villosis laciniiis subulatis appressis.

& Verbar; B. rosmarinifolia, (Lindl. MSS.); ramis teretibus villosis, foliis linearibus pungentibus margine revolutis supra glabris subtus pallidi pilosis, floribus solitariis axillariis.

¶ G. alpestris, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis piloso-hispidis, foliis linearibus tetragonis scabros pilosis, capitulis sessilibus terminalibus nudis rachi lanata, tubo ovarii pentagono pubescente, sepalis petalis pluriis brevioribus, stigmate glaberrimo.
**G. Aquifolium**, (Lindl. MSS.) (propria); foliis oblougis extra medium incisis: lobis triangularibus apice spinosis; adultis supér glabratis: subter mollibus pubescentibus, racemis pedunculatis, calycibus villosis, ovario hirsutissimo, stylo glabo.

* G. variabilis, (Lindl. MSS.) (propria); incana, foliis cuneatis angulatis oblongisve basi cuneatis pinnatifidis sinuatis angulatisque subtus tomentosis lobis mucronatis triangularibus vel rotundatis, racemis tomentosis pedunculatis.

† G. alpina, (Lindl. MSS.) (Ptychocarpa); foliis linearis-oblongis tomentosis muticis margine revolutis suprà scabris subtilis pilis appressis sericis, racemis paniculatis, pistillis basi hirsutissimis, calycibus ferrugineis tomentosis.—α, ramis erectis, foliis longioribus angustioribus——β, ramis diffusis intricatis, foliis brevioribus nunc mollibus nunc suprà scabris.

‡ L. rufus, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis foliis que subtus pubescentibus, foliis ovatis acuminatis apice spinosis erectis concavis suprà lævigatis subtús striatis margine lævibus, floribus subsolitariis sessilibus axillariis, barbâ corollæ cinnamomeā.

* “Procedo, et parvam Trojam, simulataque magnis Pergama, et arenem Xanthi cognomine rivum, Agnosco.” ÆN. lib. 3.

* A. strigosa, (Lindl. MSS.); glanduloso-hirsuta, phyllodiis linearibus v. lineari-oblongis obovatisque uninnervis eglandulosis apice rotundatis mucronatis obliquis, stipulis subulatis villosis, capitulis solitariis sessilibus.

* B. calycina, (Lindl. MSS.); glaberrima, foliis planis sparsè punctatis oblongocuneatis acutis, floribus pedicellatis terminali-axillariis, lacinis calycinis petaloideis petalis longioribus. Near B. virgata.

† Having modelled this feature, I have the satisfaction of presenting to the reader, the first specimen of a plan of ground, worked from a model by the anaglyptograph; an important invention recently perfected in this country by Mr. Bates, and likely to be of very considerable value in the representation of the earth’s surface, under the skilful management of Mr. Freebairn.

* For Professor Faraday’s analysis of these waters, see page 268.

† This was a truncatella, a salt-water shell, of which there are several species on the English and French coasts. The one found here has been named by Mr. J. De Carl Sowerby, T. filosa.

* Consisting of white felspar and quartz, and silvery mica.

* This granite varied considerably in the size of its component parts, which sometimes, especially in quartz and felspar, exceeded a foot square, and in this I found distinctly imbedded friable masses, apparently of sandstone, but which proved to consist of a very fine grained grey granite, approaching in character to mica slate.

* D. brevifolia, (Lindl. MSS.); glabra, ramis rigidis strictis apice spinescentibus, foliis conicis spinosis subrecurvis, racemis foliis duplici longioribus, bracteolis obovatis cucullatis.

* T. ciliata, (Lindl. MSS.); caulibus erectis tomentosis filiformibus, foliis oppositis verticillatis obovatis ovatis ciliatis subtus glabris, pedicellis setosis, sepalis ovatis concavis acutis, petalis obovatis.

* A. exudans, (Lindl. MSS.); ramis crassis rigidis angulatis leviter pubescentibus, phyllodiis oblongo-lanceolatis mucronatis obliquè binervis viscido-punctatis basi obsolete glandulosis, capitulo 1–2 axillariibus, pedunculis lanatis, bracteolis rigidis acutis pubescentibus alabastris longioribus (capitulo echinatis).

* C. rotundifolia, (Lindl. MSS.); ramulis rufis villosissimis, foliis subrotundis brevi-petiolatis suprà scabris subtus villosis sapiùs emarginatis, corollis campanulatis brevibus subtetrapetalis, calyce truncato rufo villosissimo.

* See Colonel Jackson’s paper, also referred to at page 90.

* In the fragments brought home, Mr. George Sowerby found a nucula, very much resembling some species of South America, although not like any from Australia. Portions of lucine, echinus, spatangi, and turritella or melania, were comprised in specimens from a softer stratum, which was the lowest.
* This was the only fish caught in the Glenelg, notwithstanding the men threw in their lines, whenever we encamped on its banks. The weather was too cold, for it was evident the river did contain fish, from the trelliced work which the natives had set across it in the upper parts.

* At that time, I supposed the difference had arisen from some error or omission in my map, and took much pains to discover it; but not having succeeded, my work having also closed to a mile and three-quarters, on my return to the country connected by trigonometrical survey with Sydney — I have been obliged to represent these parts of the coast according to this land survey.

* C. *cordifolia*, (Lindl. MSS.); *stellato-tomentosa*, foliis *subsessilibus cordatis ovatis denticulatis obtusis planis suprà glabris, corollis tubulosis cernuis, calyce truncato brevissimo.*

* Page 165.*

* The Australian woods are in general very brittle, and no experienced bush-man likes to sleep under trees, especially during high winds.

* D. *hispida*, (Lindl. MSS.); *ramulis hispidulis, foliis linearibus patulis verrucosis obtusis hispidulis, corymbis longè pedunculatis terminalibus laxis paucifloris, pedunculo glaberrimo, pedicellis calycibusque pubescentibus.*

* P. *mollis*, (Lindl. MSS.); *ramulis villosis, foliis linearibus v. lineari-lanceolatis obtusis v. acuminatis subtùs convexis suprà sulcatis serieo-pilosis capitulis sessilibus longioribus, stipulis ovato-linearibus acutis glabris badiis, calycibus villos.*

* See Plates 23 and 36.*

† The specimens of natural history were deposited in the Museum at Sydney, according to my letter of instructions. — The seeds, amounting to 134 varieties, have been brought home and distributed, with the obliging assistance of my friend Dr. Lindley, amongst the principal gardens in this country. — The bulbs, 62 in number, were planted soon after my arrival in England, in the gardens of the Horticultural Society at Chiswick. — It was not without regret that I left at Sydney, the single specimens of the Charopus and Dipus, but I took drawings, representing each, of the natural size, and from these, the figures in Plates 37 and 38, have been very accurately reduced by Mr. Picken.

* A. *furcifera*, (Lindl. MSS.); stipulis spinescentibus persistentibus, phyllodiis obliquis ovato-oblongis mucronatis uninerviis hinc venosis glabris, ramis hirsutis, capitulis solitariis foliis brevioribus.
† This was most nearly related to *A. hispidula*, but the leaves were quite smooth and much smaller. *A. acinacea*, (Lindl. MSS.); glaberrima; ramulis alato-angulatis rigidis, phyllodis brevibus aciculiformibus mucronatis 1-nervis et enerviis: margine suprerieure infra medium glandulosoi, capitulis geminis axillaribus, pedunculis phyllodiorum longitudine.

* Having submitted specimens of the water from these and other salt lakes of the interior to my friend, Professor Faraday, I have been favoured with the following particulars respecting their contents: — “All of them are solutions of common salt much surpassing the ocean or even the Mediterranean in the quantity of salt dissolved. Besides the common salt there are present, (in comparatively small quantity), portions of sulphates and muriates of lime and magnesia: the waters are neutral, and except in strength, very much resemble those of the ocean. That labelled *Greenhill Lake*, 24th July, had a specific gravity of 1049.4 and three measured ounces gave on evaporation 97 grains of dry salts. That labelled *Mitre Lake*, 24th July, had a specific gravity of 1038.6, and three measured ounces of it yielded 77 grains of dry saline matter. The water labelled *Cockajemmy Lake*, Camp, 20th Sept. had a specific gravity of 1055.3, and the amount of dry salts from three measured ounces was 113 grains.”

* This has been planted with the others in the Horticultural Gardens at Chiswick, and was the first to flower there, a head having been sent to me on the 8th May last, by Dr. Lindley, who describes it thus: — *Bulbine suavis*; radice fasciculatâ, foliis longissimis attenuatis semiteretibus basi canaliculatis glaucis, racemo erecto multifloro, petalis oblongis subundulatis sepalis duplò latioribus, staminibus ascendentibus, filamentis apice stuposis petalinis patentibus sepalinis erectis apice incurvis brevioribus.

* Consisting of pink felspar, white quartz, and silvery mica.

* This has been ascertained to be a new species of the genus *Campylanthera* of Hooker, or Pronaya of Baron Hugel, of which two species were found by the latter botanist and the late Mr. Frazer, at Swan River. — *Campylanthera ericoides*, (Lindl. MSS.); erecta, fruticosa, glabra, foliis oblongo-cuneatis mucronatis margine revolutis, floribus solitariis terminalibus erectis, antheris subrotundis.

* Geboor is the native name of this hill, as since ascertained by my friend Capt. King, and it is a much better one, having fewer letters, and being aboriginal.

* The use of these masks, which I on several occasions displayed with success, was first suggested to me by Sir John Jamison.

† A distressing instance of this hostility towards the whites, on the part of the aborigines, has since occurred, not far from the very spot where I wrote the above portion of my journal. Our line of route soon became the high road from Sydney to Port Phillip, and it appears by the Sydney newspapers (see
Appendix), that the natives attacked a party of fifteen men proceeding with cattle into these recently explored regions. Although the whites had fire-arms, the blacks killed seven of them, leaving another so severely wounded that his recovery was deemed hopeless. The “Winding swamp” where this sudden attack by aboriginal natives took place, is marked “Swampy River” on the map, and from the assembling of such a number at that point, exactly midway between the Murrumbidgee and Port Phillip, therefore the most remote from settled parts; — and especially from the suddenness of that attack, the reader may imagine the perilous situation of my party on the Darling, and the lower part of the Murray; where, had any such attack but commenced successfully, it is extremely improbable that any white man would have returned to the settled districts.

* This river has been unfortunate in obtaining a variety of names, and therefore less objection can be made to my preference of the aboriginal, which I ascertained through Piper to be “Bayúnga.” We already have a river Goulburn in New South Wales.

* How this man could have died in the water in so short a time we did not understand, but it was conjectured that he had received some blow from the horse, until we were subsequently informed when on the Murrumbidgee, by a person there who knew Taylor, that he was subject to fits — a fact which satisfied us all as to the sudden manner of his death.

* Danthonia eriantha, (Lindl. MSS.); paniculá subcoarctatá lanceolatá, spiculis sub-4-floris glumá lævi multò brevioribus, paleá exteriori lævigatá basi apiceque villosissimá, aristis lateralibus subulatis debilibus intermediá brevioribus, foliis setaceis vaginisque patentim pilosis, collo barbato.

* See figure with the fowling piece in plate 17 — vol. I. p. 250.

* A new market for cattle and sheep, has just opened on the interior side, by the establishment of the new colony of South Australia; an event more fortunate for New South Wales, than the most sanguine friend of that colony could have foreseen. It is to be regretted, however, that the colonists are so slow in availing themselves of such a market, by the direct line of road already traced by my wheels along the right banks of the rivers Lachlan, Murrumbidgee, and Murray, by which flocks and herds may be driven to the new colony, without any danger of their wanting water, or the necessity for their crossing any rivers of importance.

* See Appendix.

* Mr. Threlkeld has detected in it a similarity of idiom to the languages of the South Sea islanders — and the peculiarity of a dual number, common to all. See his Australian Grammar, Sydney, 1834.

* Many usages of these rude people much resemble those of the wandering Arabs. Dr. Pococke mentions some open huts made of boughs raised about three feet above the ground, which he found near St. John D'Acre. He observes, — "These materials are of so perishing a nature, and trees and reeds, and bushes are so very scarce in some places, that one would wonder they should not all accommodate themselves with tents, but we find they do not in fact." — Vol. II. p. 158. "And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written." — Nehemiah viii. 15.

* Genesis xxviii. 18. “From this conduct of Jacob and this Hebrew appellative, the learned Bochart, with great ingenuity and reason, insists that the name and veneration of the sacred stones called Baetyl, so celebrated in all Pagan antiquity, were derived. These baetyl were stones of a round form, they were supposed to be animated, by means of magical incantations, with a portion of the Deity; they were consulted on occasions of great and pressing emergency, as a kind of divine oracles, and were suspended either round the neck or some other part of the body.” — Burder's Oriental Customs, vol. i. page 40.


* The aborigines of Australia seem to resemble more, although at so great a distance, those of the Sandwich Islands, than the natives of any other of the numerous isles so much nearer to them. According to Cook, this strange custom of striking out the teeth, prevails also there. “The knocking out their fore teeth,” says that navigator, “may be, with propriety, classed among their religious customs. Most of the common people, and many of the chiefs, had lost one or more of them; and this, we understood, was considered as a propitiatory sacrifice to the Eatooa, to avert his anger; and not like the cutting off a part of the finger at the Friendly Islands, to express the violence of their grief at the death of a friend.” — Cook's Voyage.

† “A German pays no attention to the ornament of his person; his shield is the object of his care; and this he decorates with the liveliest colours.” Tacitus de Mor. Germ. c. 6.

* “We often read of people cutting themselves, in Holy Writ, when in great anguish; but we are not commonly told what part they wounded. The modern Arabs, it seems, gash their arms, which with them are often bare: it appears from a passage of Jeremiah, that the ancients wounded themselves in the same part, Every head shall be pale, and every beard clip: upon all hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth. — Chap. xlviii. 37.” Harmer, vol. iv. page 436.

† Leviticus xix. 32. Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man. — The
Lacedemonians had a law, that aged persons should be reverenced like fathers. See also Homer Il. xv. 204, et xxiii. 788. Odyss. xiii. 141.

* —— “Was the custom anciently the reverse of this? So it might be imagined from Isaiah xlix. 22. They shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.”! — Harmer’s Oriental Customs.

* For the shape of the Wammera, see Moyengully, Plate 49, page 323; and the manner of throwing the spear may be seen in Plate 8, page 51. vol. I.

* That Dampier saw this weapon also on the western coast, in latitude 16° 50', is evident from the following observation. “These swords were afterwards found to be made of wood, and rudely shaped something like a cutlass.”

* Remains of Peter Corcoran. Blackwood’s Magazine.

* A petition had been got up in favour of another line, said to be more direct; and it is a remarkable fact, that numerous signatures were obtained, even to such a petition, although it was found at last, that the line laid down after a careful survey, was not only twelve chains shorter, than the other proposed — but also avoided the steepest hills.

* My predecessor in office had declared the operation to be impracticable in such a country; but to this general survey I was pledged, on accepting my appointment in London. Two other commissioners for the division of the territory, were each receiving a guinea a day, but yet could do nothing, until this survey was accomplished; and I therefore set about the work with the resolution necessary for the performance of what was deemed almost impossible. Universal wood — impassable ravines — a total absence of artificial objects, and the consequent necessity for clearing summits as stations for the theodolite, were great impediments; but I made the most of each station when it had once been cleared, by taking an exact panoramic view with the theodolite, of the nameless features it commanded. The accompanying fac-simile of a page of my field-book, includes the view between north and north-west, taken for the above purpose, from the summit of Jellore, and extends over the ravines of the Nattai, to the crest of the Blue Mountains. (Pl. 38.)

* One of the most palpable consequences of the interruption my plan experienced was, that it interfered with the prospects of an inn-keeper, whose inn had already been half built of brick, in anticipation of the opening of the new line.

* History of New Holland, pp. 31, and 232.
* An account of some Geological specimens from the coasts of Australia, by William Henry Fitton, M.D., F.R.S., V.P.G.S., &c. 1826.

* This book is already almost too full of plates, and I beg to refer the geological reader to my three-sheet map of the Colony, for the superficial forms and extent of these vallies.

* The dust, when chemically examined by Dr. Turner, was found to consist principally of carbonate of lime with some phosphate of lime and animal matter. — Proceedings of Geological Society for 1831.

* The numbers and letters within a parenthesis in this letter, refer to labels on the specimens.

* See note to page 269.
Appendix.

VOCABULARY OF WORDS HAVING THE SAME MEANING IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF AUSTRALIA.

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<td>Ballang</td>
<td>Maggol</td>
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<td>Kion</td>
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<td>Mil</td>
<td>Mil</td>
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<td>Murro</td>
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<td>Adiera or adgara</td>
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<td>Yârreng</td>
<td>Yarreu</td>
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<td>Erera</td>
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<td>Bòyo</td>
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**Vocabulary.**

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## Table of Translations

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<td>Wapwar</td>
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<td>Bäenmüga</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>To drink</td>
<td></td>
<td>Calingaròguey</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>To sit</td>
<td></td>
<td>Narrèe</td>
<td>Weya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To stand</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warrèy</td>
<td>Warrungga</td>
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<tr>
<td>I go away</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go away!</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Yours
Mine
Long
Short
Now
Yes

Kai kai
Ee ee
Nàwa
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Pall pall</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Néérí</th>
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<tr>
<td>By and bye</td>
<td>Poortack</td>
<td>Goo, goo</td>
<td>Will-mor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Will-moróó</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A nail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lipé lipé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A canoe</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallpox</td>
<td>Oie boie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A gift</td>
<td>Niday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A dance</td>
<td>Dagara wamba</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A stone</td>
<td>Arickba</td>
<td>Cullur</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Give it me</td>
<td>Yad, ma, rew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come here</td>
<td>Ah, wee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come with me</td>
<td>Go, wee</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>(A shrill and long whistle)</td>
<td>A sound like drawing a cork repeated quickly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(expression of,)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quarramé</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A tree</td>
<td></td>
<td>Town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A hill</td>
<td>Cabba</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Birds</td>
<td>Oorwengoär or wengo wengo</td>
<td>Mangoor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleepy lizard</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>An owl</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bonoonor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make haste</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring it</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gougadine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take it</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burruma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look!</td>
<td></td>
<td>Narga-narga</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What name?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ninyung</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Sleepy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nuree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop!</td>
<td></td>
<td>Warratha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You speak false</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yambuldari</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Give it to me</td>
<td>Oeka</td>
<td>Oonga-dine</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Take care</td>
<td></td>
<td>Burrunggee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great many</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cullung gu bung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You</td>
<td></td>
<td>Judoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me</td>
<td></td>
<td>Uttoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Bonagee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stump</td>
<td>Walaroo</td>
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There

Ac. longifolia of the river borders

*Vocabulary.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant Name</th>
<th>Local Language</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosewood (acacia)</td>
<td>Pallegål</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callitris</td>
<td>Càrra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucalyptus (blue gum)</td>
<td>Yarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucalyptus (box on flooded land)</td>
<td>Gobòrro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spear wood</td>
<td>Bimbel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casmarina</td>
<td>Nyén</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fusansus acuminatus</td>
<td>Quandat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenochilus maculatus</td>
<td>Deeko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygonum junceum</td>
<td>Gweearg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittisporum</td>
<td>Tingarra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesembryanthemnum</td>
<td>Bèrudùr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atriplex</td>
<td>Maràngra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red creeper with an edible root</td>
<td>Kinner, root màl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small pignut root</td>
<td>Taö</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root of the bulrush</td>
<td>Bályan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solanum esuriale</td>
<td>Còmyn</td>
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**COMPARATIVE JOURNAL, kept during the Journey, in 1836, and at Paramatta, and other places.**

**Register at the Observatory, Paramatta.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE AND TIME OF OBSERV.</th>
<th>BARO.</th>
<th>THER.</th>
<th>WIND.</th>
<th>STATE OF THE SKY, &amp;c.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1836.</td>
<td>29.144</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>Ti A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(At sunrise ther. 43°.) Clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Weather Conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp of Chilberengaba, 20 feet above the bed of the Byrne’s Creek.</td>
<td>8 29.192 56½ S.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.240 68</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.174 69½ S.E.</td>
<td>Cirrocumulus in the E.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.191 71</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon.</td>
<td>29.192 76½ 61 N.N.W.</td>
<td>Cumulus chiefly in E. or N.E.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.183 77</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulostratus to E. of Meridian.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>29.100 78</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overcast, with cumulostratus.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.086 75</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulus. (Zenith clear.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29.095 77</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulus, subsiding.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.060 74</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cirrocumulus in the N.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>29.100 68½ S.</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.150 64</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.142 57</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.138 57</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clear with light clds. of cirrostrat.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.142 56½ 51 N.</td>
<td>Clear.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22.</td>
<td>6 29.148 43 Calm.</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon.</td>
<td>29.238 76</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>— N.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Hour</td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>Cond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
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<td>March 23.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.153</td>
<td>59½</td>
<td>E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9½</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.N.W.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.800</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon.</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Waâgan.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.052</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.004</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>28.982</td>
<td>51</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>En route.</td>
<td>Noon.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td>N.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp beyond Waâgan.</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td>28.974</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9½</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td>Calm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 26.</td>
<td>6½</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td>Calm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.074</td>
<td>44</td>
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</table>

- Cir. & cirrocum. in W. & N.W.
- Clear.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Noon.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>W.N.W.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Camp W. of Buccabajal.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>Clear.</td>
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<td>March 27.</td>
<td>6½</td>
<td>29.322</td>
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<td>6½</td>
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<td>29.379</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>29.318</td>
<td>74½</td>
<td>S.W. strong.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>29.324</td>
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<td>— 28.</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>29.412</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>Camp Eerrimbäh.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.510</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>E.</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>W.</td>
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<td>March 29.</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>29.486</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Light cumulus over E. horizon.</td>
<td>N.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Cumulus on E. half of Do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp E. of Mount Cunningham.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.408</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Cumulostratus in N.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.414</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Clear.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>Heavy cu. in N.E. Stra. in hor.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>29.424</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Cumulostratus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Wind Direction</td>
<td>Weather Conditions</td>
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<td>-------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Under Mt. Cunningham.</td>
<td>Noon.</td>
<td>29.416</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>82</td>
<td>N.E.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Nimbus in W. with thunder.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp in Lagoon.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.372</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>N.E. strong.</td>
<td>Nimbus all round with thunder.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Overcast. Rain from the N.W.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 31.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.434</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Clear. 7</td>
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<td>29.450</td>
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<td>76½</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noon.</td>
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<td>73</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>— occasional sunshine. N.</td>
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<td>67</td>
<td>N.E.</td>
<td>Raining.</td>
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Observations by Capt. P.P. King, R.N. at (Unclear:) Dunheved.

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1st Camp under Goobang.

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Noon. 72 S.E. — N.

2nd Camp under Goobang.

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<td>Haze or fog.</td>
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<td>Cumulus around horizon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>— some stars appearing</td>
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<td>— 9.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.768</td>
<td>S.</td>
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</table>

Yambarrènga.

| 5     | 29.757 | 67         | Calm. Cu. in senith, stratu. on horizon. |
| 8     | 29.786 | 59         | Cloudy.                               |
| 10    | 29.780 | 56         | — stars visible S. and W.             |
| — 10. | 7     | 29.758     | S.E.                                 |
|       | 8     | 29.774     | —                                    |
| Noon. |       | 75         | — Clear.                             |

Bedyingoga.

| 9     | 29.820 | 56         | S.W.                                 |
| 10    | 29.812 | 53         | —                                    |

May 11.

| 7     | 29.900 | 48         | Calm.                                |
| Noon. |       | 80         | —                                    |

Camp in wood.

| 9     | 29.896 | 60         | Calm. Cloudy, (showers.)            |
| 10    | 29.898 | 57         | N.W.                                 |

May 12.

| 8     | 29.876 | 54         | N. Heavy rain.                      |
| Wéyeba.| 8     | 29.828 | 54         | E. Cloudy.                          |
|       | 10    | 29.840 | 55         | —                                    |

May 13.

| 8     | 29.894 | 50         | N.E. (Sunrise 40.) Clear.           |
|       | 9     | 29.912 | 52         | —                                    |
| — 14  | 6     | 29.730 | 63         | Squall from N.W. Rain suddenly set in. |
|       | 7     | 29.750 | 59         | N.W. Rain.                          |
|       | 9     | 29.744 | 56         | — Showers.                          |

May 14.

<p>| 10½   | 29.732 | 54         | N.W. Showers.                       |
| — 15. | 8     | 29.764 | 45         | — high. (At 7 ther. 40.) Clear.     |
| 9     | 29.800 | 49         | —                                    |
| 10    | 29.800 | 52         | —                                    |</p>
<table>
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<th>Date</th>
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<th>Pressure</th>
<th>Weather Notes</th>
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<td>(3rd Camp.)</td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>30.120</td>
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<td>Calm. Clearing up, after a shower.</td>
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<td>N. light.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>29.930</td>
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<td>N.W. strong. Large cumuli.</td>
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<td>29.850</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>29.846</td>
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<td>— strong. Nimbus, (after rain stormy.)</td>
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<td>S.S.W. light. — cir. cu. in N.E.</td>
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<td>30.332</td>
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<td>(At sunr. ther. 30.) —</td>
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<td>— 23.</td>
<td>7½</td>
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<td>No on.</td>
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<td>Sandhill Camp (in desert scrub.)</td>
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<td>Wind</td>
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<td>(At sunr. ther. 42.) cumu. strat.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>30.230</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Clear.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 28.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>30.180</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>(Sunr. th. 42.) fog, (clearing up.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp on Murray (3rd.)</td>
<td>6½</td>
<td>30.156</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>N.E. Overcast with cumulus in zenith.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30.150</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Overcast with cirrostratus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 29.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>30.128</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Cumulus.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>30.150</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp on Murray (4th.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30.116</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Calm. Nimbus, (rain.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.200</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Cumulus.</td>
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<td>30.180</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>N.W. Overcast.</td>
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<tr>
<td>— 30.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>30.220</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>S. Continued rain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 30.</td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>30.234</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>S. Continued rain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp 40 feet above the Murray, (5th.)</td>
<td>3½</td>
<td>30.212</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Cumulonimbus and nimbus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30.218</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>30.276</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>W. Cirrocumulus (dispersing).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.286</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>30.294</td>
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<td>S.W. Overcast with cumulus.</td>
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<td>May 31.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.332</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>E. (At sunr. ther. 42.) Clear.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.342</td>
<td>46½</td>
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<td>The Darling.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.364</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>W.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.364</td>
<td>47</td>
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</tr>
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<td>June 1.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>30.290</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>S. Cirrostratus.</td>
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<td>2nd Camp Darling.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.200</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Condition</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<td>June 2.</td>
<td>6½</td>
<td>30.052</td>
<td>Calif. Rain.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>30.060</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Camp Darling.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30.000</td>
<td>S. Drizzling rain.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30.010</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>30.046</td>
<td>Fair.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>30.070</td>
<td>Drizzling rain.</td>
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<td>June 3.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.080</td>
<td>(Sunr. th. 42.) Clear E. cumu. W.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.060</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.070</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp of Greenhill.</td>
<td>6½</td>
<td>29.990</td>
<td>W. Cirrostratus on W. horizon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>30.012</td>
<td>N.W. Clear.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>30.026</td>
<td>Cumulus.</td>
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<td>June 4.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.934</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>30.050</td>
<td>Cirrostratus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp near Golgol Crk.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29.840</td>
<td>(At 12th. 68.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 4.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.868</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>— 5.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.740</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.720</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Red Bank.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.420</td>
<td>— high.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.360</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.426</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>June 6.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.362</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.364</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp Lagoon.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29.446</td>
<td>—</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.518</td>
<td>Quite clear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Other Details</td>
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<td>June 7</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.570</td>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>drizzling</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8½</td>
<td>29.568</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp on Hill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>West.</td>
<td>Cumulostratus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29.510</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Showery</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>29.512</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>29.550</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Just after a heavy shower &amp; squall.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.590</td>
<td>51</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rain</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.590</td>
<td>52</td>
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<td>June 8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29.640</td>
<td>S.W.</td>
<td>Clear</td>
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<td>29.660</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>29.752</td>
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<td>29.792</td>
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<tr>
<td>9½</td>
<td>29.792</td>
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<td>June 9</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.876</td>
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<td>8½</td>
<td>29.876</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>S.</td>
<td>Cumulostratus</td>
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<td>29.840</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.892</td>
<td>49½</td>
<td>Clear, after a shower.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.904</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>Clear</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.034</td>
<td></td>
<td>(At sunrise ther. 32.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.056</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>30.078</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>30.118</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>N.W. by N.</td>
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<td>30.124</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>50.142</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>(At sunrise ther. 32.)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>30.136</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>Cirrus</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>30.056</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Clear</td>
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<td>— 12.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.130</td>
<td>N.E.</td>
<td>Cirrostratus</td>
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<td>Camp of Passage</td>
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<td>53½</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cirrus</td>
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<td>9½</td>
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<td>June 13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.000</td>
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<td>29.920</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>29.948</td>
<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>June 14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.884</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td>Continued rain from 2 A.M.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.924</td>
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<td>Cirrostratus and Cumulus.</td>
</tr>
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<td>No on.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.908</td>
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<td>Rain.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.990</td>
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<td>(a shower.)</td>
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<td>June 15</td>
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<td>30.010</td>
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<td>— 15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.164</td>
<td>43½</td>
<td>(At sunrise ther. 41.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30.210</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>30.190</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>30.212</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>30.280</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.280</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>— 16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.286</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(At sunrise ther. 36.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Camp.</td>
<td>10½</td>
<td>30.266</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>(At 12. 52.)</td>
</tr>
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<td>30.254</td>
<td>N.</td>
<td>(At sunrise 48.) overcast.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>June 18</td>
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<td>30.250</td>
<td>S.W</td>
<td>(Sunrise 31.) Clear.</td>
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<td>30.270</td>
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<td>Cirrus.</td>
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<td>30.292</td>
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<td>30.292</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>(Sunrise 40.)</td>
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<td>5th Camp.</td>
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<td>30.284</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>(Noon 54.) Cumulus.</td>
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<td>30.292</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>— overcast.</td>
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<td>June 20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.272</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>(Sunrise 36.) Clear.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>30.234</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>30.180</td>
<td>S.</td>
<td>(Sunrise 29.)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.206</td>
<td>36½</td>
<td>Fog. (an Iris or bow.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flat near river.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30.250</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>At ½ past 11 the mist began to rise in the West.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Sky Condition</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>June 22.</td>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>30.148</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>(Sunrise 29.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9:30</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp on</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.126</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Calm.) (Noon 54.) —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flooded</td>
<td></td>
<td>7:30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>branch.</td>
<td></td>
<td>10:30</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 23.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.108</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Sunrise 30.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Creek.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.084</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Noon 57.) —</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 24.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.036</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Sunrise 30.) Cumulus and cirrocculus in the S.W.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp ana-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30.064</td>
<td></td>
<td>— over Zenith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>branch.</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 25.</td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.768</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Sunrise 44.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8½</td>
<td>29.750</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cumulostratus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3½</td>
<td>29.614</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Noon 52.) Nimbo. Rain.</td>
</tr>
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<td>7½</td>
<td>29.604</td>
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<td>Cumulostratus.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>29.578</td>
<td></td>
<td>— overcast.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>29.424</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Sunrise 43.) Overcast. rain.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>Calm.</td>
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<td>E.S.E.</td>
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<td>29.704</td>
<td>— high</td>
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<td>29.800</td>
<td>S.S.W.</td>
<td>(Sunrise 43.)</td>
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<td>Camp in Wood</td>
<td>6½</td>
<td>29.900</td>
<td>N.W.</td>
<td>(Noon 54.)</td>
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<td>S.W.</td>
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<td>(Sunrise 39.) Clear (Shower.)</td>
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<td>N.E.</td>
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<td>Thick fog.</td>
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| 9½   | 29.212 | 50  | —         | Cumulostratus
<p>| 4    | 29.292 | 45  | S.W.      | Clearing after showers. |
| 8    | 29.336 | 50  | —         | Cirrus. |
| 9    | 29.386 | 51  | —         | Cirrus in the W. after a shower. |
| Camp, Narrow Creek. |       |      | —         | Clear. |
| 6½   | 29.252 | 51  | —         | —         |
| 7    | 29.324 | 50  | —         | —         |
| — 5. | 29.424 | 47  | N.W.      | Overcast. (Showery.) |
| 10   | 29.458 | 53  | —         | —         |
| 11   | 29.456 | 54  | S.W.      | —         |
| 2½   | 29.440 | 58  | —         | Cumulus. |
| 7    | 29.484 | 50  | N.W.      | Clear in the West. |
| 9    | 29.502 | 51  | —         | —         |
| — 6. | 29.424 | 47  | N.W.      | Clear in the West. |
| 7½   | 29.520 | 51  | —         | Cumulus. |
| 8    | 29.534 | 52  | —         | —         |
| Heath. |       |      | —         | Nimbus. (after a shower.) |
| 6    | 29.576 | 51  | —         | —         |
| August 6. | 10   | 29.620 | 52  | Calm. | Cirrus. |
| — 7. | 29.646 | 50  | —         | —         |
| Muddy Camp. | 5    | 29.576 | 53  | —         | —         |
| 8    | 29.614 | 48  | —         | Clear. |
| 9    | 29.596 | 47  | N.E.      | —         |
| Aug. 8. | 7    | 29.530 | 46  | E.       | (Sun-rise 38.) Cirrus. |
| 6    | 29.432 | 50  | E.N.E.    | Clear. |
| 10   | 29.402 | 50  | —         | —         |
| — 9. | 29.307 | 47  | South.    | (Sun-rise 46.) Rain. |
| 8    | 29.322 | 49  | E.N.E.    | Nimbus. (Clear in the Zenith.) |
| Camp hill, S. Creek. | 4    | 29.410 | 53  | N.W.    | Clear. |
| 8    | 29.434 | 41  | S.E.      | —         |</p>
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above the Glenelg.

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6 29.710 52 — high. Cumulus after rain.
10 29.754 51 — —
7 29.858 46 West. Cirrus.
Camp under high hill 6½ 29.896 59 Calm. (Noon 60.) Clear.
10 29.920 46 — —
28. 7 29.850 50 N.W. Cumulus.
10 29.823 55 — —
31. 9 29.626 51 N.E. (light.) Clear.
September 1. 7 29.440 50 West. (Sun-rise 50.) Cumulostratus.
9½ 29.488 51 — (higher.) —
11 29.550 53 — Drizzling rain. N
1 29.550 54 — —
3 29.588 54 South. Cumulus. (Clear in Zenith.)
7½ 29.660 53 Calm. Cirrus.
10 29.660 52 — —
2. 7 29.490 42 N.W. (Sun-rise 38.) — Overcast.
8 29.474 43 — —
4 29.340 55 — —
8 29.314 51 — Clear.
10 29.264 50 — Cirrus.
3. 7 29.250 44 — (Sun-rise 44.) Continued rain.
8 29.284 45 Calm. Nimbus.
10 29.286 49 N.W. light. Rain.
1 29.300 50 W.S.W. Heavy and
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<th>Weather</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>29.412</td>
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<td>Cumulus.</td>
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(Stars appear.)

<table>
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(Sun-rise 42.)

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<tr>
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<td>29.630</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>Nimbus.</td>
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(Shower.)

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(Sun-rise 35.)

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<tr>
<td>— 7</td>
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(Sun-rise 33.)

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<th>Remarks</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Camp on Track.</td>
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<td>29.390</td>
<td>59</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Remarks</th>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>Wind</td>
<td>Condition</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>29.632</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>Light Cirrocumulus.</td>
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<td>Clear.</td>
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<td>Clear.</td>
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<td>— 11.</td>
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<td>29.640</td>
<td>East</td>
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<td>Camp on the Wannon</td>
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<td>29.580</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>— Zenith clear.</td>
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<td>South</td>
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<td>On forest hills.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.276</td>
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<td>— high. Cumulostratus.</td>
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<td>— light.</td>
<td>Drizzling rain.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>29.300</td>
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<td>(Sun rise 48.) Cumulostratus.</td>
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<td>8½</td>
<td>29.292</td>
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<td>S.S.E.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>6½</td>
<td>29.214</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>September 16</td>
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<td>29.154</td>
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<td>52</td>
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</tr>
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<td>66</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>Condition</td>
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<td>Sept. 26.</td>
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<td>Camp near Mastoid hills.</td>
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<td>29.306</td>
<td>W. Nimbus.</td>
<td>Showery.</td>
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<td>Bed of river.</td>
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<td>29.406</td>
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<td>29.508</td>
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<td>(S.R. 32.)</td>
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<td>Creek, 636 chains.</td>
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<td>29.326</td>
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<td>Camp near Mt. Byng.</td>
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<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Wind Direction</td>
<td>Weather Description</td>
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<td>October 1, on</td>
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<td>W.N.W.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>hill. at Camp.</td>
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<td>— 2.</td>
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<td>28.382</td>
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<td>Rain (heavy squalls in night.)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>No on.</td>
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<td>28.374</td>
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<td>Nimbus.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>28.364</td>
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<td>— high</td>
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<td>6½</td>
<td>28.400</td>
<td>W.N.W.</td>
<td>Squally, rain, hailstones.</td>
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<td>— 3.</td>
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<td>28.446</td>
<td></td>
<td>S.W. Clear.</td>
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<td>Squally, nimbus.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>28.460</td>
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<td>— rain, light.</td>
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<td>Clear.</td>
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<td>Falls.</td>
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<td>October 4.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.898</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>(S.R. 32.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28.800</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>Top water-fall.</td>
<td>5½</td>
<td>28.840</td>
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<td>River-bed below.</td>
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<td>28.934</td>
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<td>Cliffs of trap above.</td>
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<td>28.684</td>
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<td>Camp.</td>
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<td>28.850</td>
<td>S. light.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>28.796</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>October 5.</td>
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<td>28.760</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Wind</td>
<td>Condition</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>28.778</td>
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<td>29.030</td>
<td>W.</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9½</td>
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<td>29.052</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>29.108</td>
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<td>29.142</td>
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<td>Continued rain.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>29.154</td>
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<td>(Noon 60.) Violent squall, rain.</td>
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<td>29.214</td>
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<td>Stormy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>29.244</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>29.476</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>29.574</td>
<td>N.</td>
<td>Cumulus.</td>
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<td>Bank of the Bayungun</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29.574</td>
<td>N.</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>29.644</td>
<td>N.W.</td>
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<td>29.676</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>29.748</td>
<td>N.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Hour</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Condition</td>
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<td>29.644</td>
<td>N.E.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>29.350</td>
<td>N. (Noon 80½.)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>29.382</td>
<td>S. light</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.424</td>
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<td>29.408</td>
<td>E. light</td>
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<td>K.</td>
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<td>29.158</td>
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<td>ditto.</td>
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<td>Calm.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29.374</td>
<td>N.W. light</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>29.396</td>
<td></td>
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<td>The Ovens.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29.500</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>of the water</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of the Ovens.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Direction</td>
<td>Condition</td>
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<td>29.606</td>
<td>N.E</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7½</td>
<td>29.624</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
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<td>Camp Granite</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range.</td>
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<td>October 17.</td>
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<td>29.096</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>29.164</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>On the</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29.726</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murray.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.746</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>29.726</td>
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<td>29.774</td>
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<td>Right bank,</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29.532</td>
<td>E.</td>
<td>Cirrus.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Murray.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.496</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Clear.</td>
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<td>October 19.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29.480</td>
<td>N.W.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.520</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>Cumulostratus.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29.550</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>(Noon 81.) —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on Ponds.</td>
<td>No on.</td>
<td>29.758</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Calm.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>Clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29.746</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>October 21.</td>
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<td>29.522</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No on.</td>
<td>29.560</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>Camp on</td>
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<td>29.616</td>
<td>N. light</td>
<td>Cirrocumulus.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Creek.</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>October 22.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29.624</td>
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<td>Overcast.</td>
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<td>Camp.</td>
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<td>29.164</td>
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<td>October 23.</td>
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<td>29.746</td>
<td>S.W.</td>
<td>Continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>rain.</td>
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</table>

- Camp 10 feet higher.
- Camp on Creek.
- Camp on Ponds.
- Right bank, Murray.
- Camp on Ponds.
From Mr. Scott Nind.

† Dr. Wilson.

‡ Mr. Larmer.

§ Major Clunie, late Commandant.

* A plant with an edible root in the South Sea Islands is there called “Taro.” Of this there are, according to Ellis, no less than 33 varieties.

* These results show how much the error arising from atmospheric changes at great distances may amount to. These two last observations would place the stations 24 feet and 27 feet respectively lower than the sea at Sydney.
Extract From the Sydney Herald of May 21, 1838.

THE murder of Mr. Faithful’s servants, by the blacks, having created a more than ordinary sensation among the settlers in the interior, we have obtained the following authentic particulars of that desperate outrage. It appears that on the morning of the 11th ult., a party of men in charge of Mr. Faithful’s sheep, on the route to Port Phillip, were preparing to proceed from the Winding Swamp, about 30 miles beyond the Ovens River, on their way to the Goulburn, where it was understood that good sheep stations might be had; and while the bullocks were being yoked, the men with the drays heard the shouts of the shepherds crying out for help. These men, who were at a short distance from the encampment collecting the sheep, were presently seen running with great speed towards the dray, pursued by a body of blacks throwing spears after them. Their companions near the encampment, three of whom were armed with guns, immediately ran to their assistance, and if possible to drive off the blacks, who, by that time, were within 300 or 400 yards of the camp. One of these men, named Bentley, fired his gun in the air, thinking that such a display would intimidate them; but it had no effect. The blacks still came forward, cautiously sheltering themselves behind the trees in their path, until, when within near approach of the adverse party, one came forward, and was in the act of deliberately poising his spear, when Bentley shot him dead, and was himself immediately after pierced with three spears. This unfortunate man was last seen desperately fighting with the butt-end of his musket. The combat now became general — spears flew in all directions, and several shots were fired without effect, owing to the caution exercised by the blacks of interposing the trees between themselves and the defensive party, but still gradually closing upon the latter. It was now seen that further resistance would be of no avail, and that in flight lay the only chance of safety, as the blacks continued to increase in numbers as they advanced. There was fifteen in all of Mr. Faithful’s servants, out of which seven in number were killed by the blacks, and one other so severely wounded that his recovery is considered hopeless. When attempting to make their escape a line was opened by the blacks, consisting of about 150 in number, who thus appeared at the fugitives’ right and left as they passed. At about 100 yards distance from the scene of this outrage, another strong party of armed blacks was drawn up, doubtless as a reserve, but they took no part in the contest. There could not, we are assured, have been fewer than 300 fighting men present — not an old man was seen among them. The party in charge of the sheep and cattle had remained at this particular place from the Saturday previous, waiting the arrival of Mr. George Faithful, who was only a day’s stage behind, and was then momentarily expected. During their stay every precaution was taken by the overseer and the rest to keep on friendly terms with the natives, who constantly hovered about the encampment in groups of 10 or 20 at a time. So friendly did they appear, that neither the overseer nor any of the men, save Bentley, anticipated any hostile intention; but his suspicion was excited by the
fact of no women appearing at any time among the blacks, and by finding, while
going his rounds as guard, the night preceding the attack, a large number of spears,
at a short distance from the camp, which he concealed. All the sheep, except 130,
we understand, have been recovered, and some of the cattle; the remainder, it is
expected, may also be recovered when a party sufficiently strong to protect
themselves from the blacks can be formed to go in search of them.

AN ACCOUNT

Of the Number of Pounds of Wool, imported from New South Wales and Van
Diemen’s Land, from 1820 to 1837, distinguishing each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New South Wales</th>
<th>Van Diemen's Land</th>
<th>Both Colonies</th>
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<td></td>
<td>99415</td>
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<td>1821</td>
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<td>1822</td>
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<td>1823</td>
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<td>477261</td>
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<td>1824</td>
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<td>1106302</td>
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<td>320683</td>
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<td>1134134</td>
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NOTE. — The importation from New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land
cannot be stated separately for the years prior to 1827.

AN ACCOUNT

Of the Number of Ships, and their Tonnage, cleared out to New South Wales and
Van Diemen’s Land, from 1820 to 1837, distinguishing each year.

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<th>YEARS</th>
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<th>TONNAGE</th>
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<td>1820</td>
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<td>2823</td>
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AN ACCOUNT
Of the Number of Ships, and their Tonnage, reported inwards from New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land, from 1820 to 1837, distinguishing each year.

<table>
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<th>SHIPS</th>
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