

IN QUEEN VICTORIA'S DESERT.

AUSTRALIA TWICE TRAVERSED:

The Romance of Exploration,

BEING

A NARRATIVE COMPILED FROM THE JOURNALS

OF

FIVE EXPLORING EXPEDITIONS

INTO AND THROUGH

Central South Australia, and Western Australia,

FROM 1872 TO 1876.

BY

ERNEST GILES,

Fellow, and Gold Medallist, of the Royal Geographical Society of London.

GO FORTH, MY BOOK, AND SHOW THE THINGS,
PILGRIMAGE UNTO THE PILGRIM BRINGS.
Bunyan.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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AUSTRALIA TWICE TRAVERSED.

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CHAPTER IX.

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THE country towards the other ranges eastwards appeared poor and scrubby. We went first to a hill a good deal south of east, and crossed the dry bed of a broad, sandy, and stony creek running north. I called it the Rebecca. From it we went to a low saddle between two hills, all the while having a continuous range to the north; this was the extension beyond the pinnacle of the wall-like

crescent. A conspicuous mount in this northern line I called Mount Sargood.* From this saddle we saw a range of hills which ran up from the south-west, and, extending now eastwards, formed a valley nearly in front of us. I called this new feature the Petermann Range. In it, a peculiar notch existed, to which we went. This new range was exceedingly wall-like and very steep, having a serrated ridge all along; I found the notch to be only a rough gully, and not a pass. We continued along the range, and at four miles farther we came to a pass where two high hills stood apart, and allowed an extremely large creek—that is to say, an extremely wide one—whose trend was northerly, to come through. Climbing one of the hills, I saw that the creek came from the south-west, and was here joined by another from the south-east. There was an exceedingly fine and pretty piece of park-like scenery, enclosed almost entirely by hills, the Petermann Range forming a kind of huge outside wall, which enclosed a mass of lower hills to the south, from which these two creeks find their sources. This was a very extraordinary place; I searched in vain in the pass for water, and could not help wondering where such a watercourse could go to. The creek I called the Docker.* The pass and park just within it I called Livingstone Pass and Learmouth* Park. Just outside the pass, northerly, was a high hill I called Mount Skene.*

Finding no water in the pass, we went to the more easterly of the two creeks; it was very small compared with the Docker. It was now dusk, and we had to camp without water. The day was hot. This range is most singular in construction; it rises on either side almost perpendicularly, and does not

appear to have very much water about it ; the hills indeed seem to be mere walls, like the photographs of some of the circular ranges of mountains in the



VIEW ON THE PETERMANN RANGE.

moon. There was very fine grass, and our horses stayed well. We had thunder and lightning, and the air became a little cooled. The creek we were on appeared to rise in some low hills to the south ; though it meandered about so much, it was only by travelling, we found that it came from a peculiar ridge, upon whose top was a fanciful-looking, broken wall or rampart, with a little pinnacle on one side. When nearly abreast, south, of this pinnacle, we found some water in the creek-bed, which was now very stony. The water was impregnated with ammonia from the excreta of emus, dogs, birds, beasts, and fishes, but the horses drank it with avidity. Above this we got some sweet water in rocks and sand. I called the queer-looking wall the Ruined Rampart. There was a quantity of

different kinds of water, some tasting of ammonia, some saltish, and some putrid. A few ducks flew up from these strange ponds. There was an overhanging ledge and cave, which gave us a good shade while we remained here, the morning being very hot. I called these MacBain's* Springs.

Following the creek, we found in a few miles that it took its rise in a mass of broken table-lands to the south. We still had the high walls of the Petermann to the north, and very close to us. In five miles we left this water-shed, and descended the rough bed of another creek running eastwards; it also had some very queer water in it—there were pink, green, and blue holes. Ducks were also here; but as we had no gun, we could not get any. Some sweet water was procured by scratching in the sand. This creek traversed a fine piece of open grassy country—a very park-like piece of scenery; the creek joined another, which we reached in two or three miles. The new creek was of enormous width; it came from the low hills to the south and ran north, where the Petermann parted to admit of its passage. The natives were burning the country through the pass. Where on earth can it go? No doubt water exists in plenty at its head, and very likely where the natives are also; but there was none where we struck it. I called this the Hull.*

The main range now ran on in more disconnected portions than formerly; their general direction was 25° south of east. We still had a mass of low hills to the south. We continued to travel under the lee of the main walls, and had to encamp without water, having travelled twenty-five miles from the Ruined Rampart. A high cone in the range I called Mount Curdie.* The next morning I as-

cended the eastern end of Mount Curdie. A long way off, over the tops of other hills, I could see a peak bearing 27° south of east; this I supposed was, as it ought to be, the Sugar-loaf Hill, south-westward from Mount Olga, and mentioned previously. To the north there was a long wall-like line stretching across the horizon, ending about north-east; this appeared to be a disconnected range, apparently of the same kind as this, and having gaps or passes to allow watercourses to run through; I called it Blood's Range. I could trace the Hull for many miles, winding away a trifle west of north. It is evident that there must exist some gigantic basin into which the Rebecca, the Docker, and the Hull, and very likely several more further east, must flow. I feel morally sure that the Lake Amadeus of my former journey must be the receptacle into which these creeks descend, and if there are creeks running into the lake from the south, may there not also be others running in, from the north and west? The line of the southern hills, connected with the Petermann wall, runs across the bearing of the Sugar-loaf, so that I shall have to pass over or through them to reach it. The outer walls still run on in disconnected groups, in nearly the same direction as the southern hills, forming a kind of back wall all the way.

Starting away from our dry encampment, in seven miles we came to where the first hills of the southern mass approached our line of march. They were mostly disconnected, having small grassy valleys lying between them, and they were festooned with cypress pines, and some pretty shrubs, presenting also many huge bare rocks, and being

very similar country to that described at Ayres's Range, through which I passed in August. Here, however, the rocks were not so rounded and did not present so great a resemblance to turtles. At two miles we reached a small creek with gum-timber, and obtained water by digging. The fluid was rather brackish, but our horses were very glad of it, and we gave them a couple of hours' rest. I called this Louisa's Creek. A hill nearly east of Mount Curdie I called Mount Fagan; another still eastward of that I called Mount Miller. At five miles from Louisa's Creek we struck another and much larger one, running to the north; and upon our right hand, close to the spot at which we struck it, was a rocky gorge, through and over which the waters must tumble with a deafening roar in times of flood. Just now the water was not running, but a quantity was lodged among the sand under the huge boulders that fill up the channel. I called this the Chirnside.* A hill in the main range eastward of Mount Miller I called Mount Bowley. At ten miles from Louisa's Creek we camped at another and larger watercourse than the Chirnside, which I called the Shaw.* All these watercourses ran up north, the small joining the larger ones—some independently, but all going to the north. Crossing two more creeks, we were now in the midst of a broken, pine-clad, hilly country, very well grassed and very pretty; the hills just named were on the north, and low hills on the south. Ever since we entered the Livingstone Pass, we have traversed country which is remarkably free from the odious triodia. Travelling along in the cool of the next morning through this "wild Parthenius, tossing

in waves of pine," we came at six miles along our course towards the Sugar-loaf, to a place where we surprised some natives hunting. Their wonderfully acute perceptions of sight, sound, and scent almost instantly apprised them of our presence, and as is usual with these persons, the most frantic yells rent the air. Signal fires were immediately lighted in all directions, in order to collect the scattered tribe, and before we had gone a mile we were pursued by a multitude of howling demons. A great number came running after us, making the most unearthly noises, screeching, rattling their spears and other weapons, with the evident intention of not letting us depart out of their coasts. They drew around so closely and so thick, that they prevented our horses from going on, and we were compelled to get out our revolvers for immediate use; we had no rifles with us. A number from behind threw a lot of spears; we were obliged to let the pack-horse go—one spear struck him and made him rush and jump about. This drew their attention from us for a moment; then, just as another flight of spears was let fly at us, we plunged forward on our horses, and fired our revolvers. I was horrified to find that mine would not go off, something was wrong with the cartridges, and, though I snapped it four times, not a single discharge took place. Fortunately Mr. Tietkens's went off all right, and what with that, and the pack-horse rushing wildly about, trying to get up to us, we drove the wretches off, for a time at least. They seemed far more alarmed at the horses than at us, of whom they did not seem to have any fear whatever. We induced them to retire for a bit,

and we went on, after catching the pack-horse and breaking about forty of their spears. I believe a wild Australian native would almost as soon be killed as have his spears destroyed. The country was now much rougher, the little grassy valleys having ceased, and we had to take to the hills.

While travelling along here we saw, having previously heard its rustle, one of those very large iguanas which exist in this part of the country. We had heard tales of their size and ferocity from the natives near the Peake (Telegraph Station); I believe they call them Parenties. The specimen we saw to-day was nearly black, and from head to tail over five feet long. I should very much have liked to catch him; he would make two or three good meals for both of us. Occasionally we got a glimpse of the Sugar-loaf. At nine miles from where we had encountered the enemy, we came to a bold, bare, rounded hill, and on ascending it, we saw immediately below us, that this hilly country ceased immediately to the east, but that it ran on south-easterly. Two or three small creeks were visible below, then a thick scrubby region set in, bounded exactly to the east by Mount Olga itself, which was sixty miles away. There was a large area of bare rock all about this hill, and in a crevice we got a little water and turned our horses out. While we were eating our dinner, Mr. Tietkens gave the alarm that the enemy was upon us again, and instantly we heard their discordant cries. The horses began to gallop off in hobbles. These wretches now seemed determined to destroy us, for, having considerably augmented their numbers, they swarmed around us on all sides.



ATTACK AT THE FARTHEST EAST.

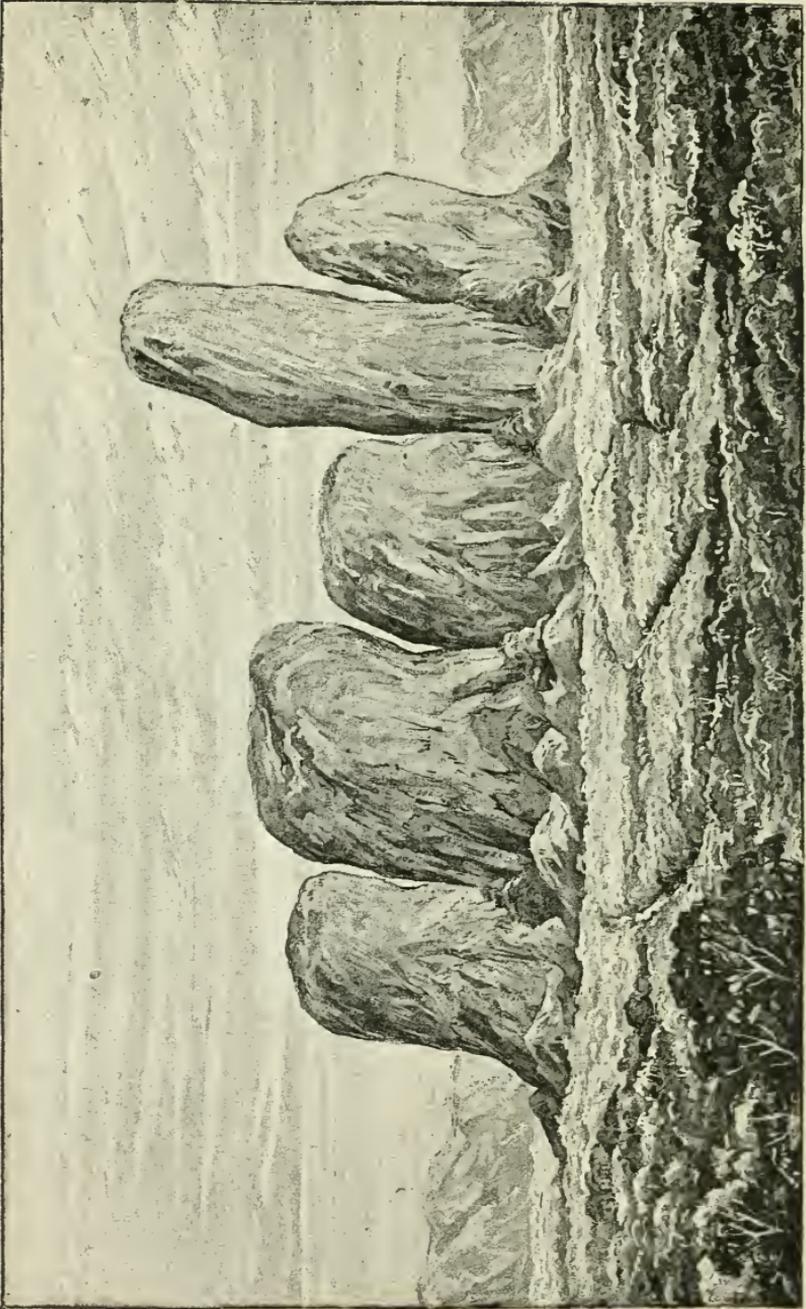
Two of our new assailants were of commanding stature, each being nearly tall enough to make two of Tietkens if not of me. These giants were not, however, the most forward in the onslaught. The horses galloped off a good way, with Tietkens running after them: in some trepidation lest my revolver should again play me false, though of course I had cleaned and re-loaded it, I prepared to defend the camp. The assailants immediately swarmed round me, those behind running up, howling, until the whole body were within thirty yards of me; then they came on more slowly. I could now see that aggression on my part was the only thing for it; I must try to carry the situation with a coup. I walked up to them very fast and pointed my revolver at them. Some, thinking I was only pointing my finger, pointed their fingers at me. They all had their spears ready and quivering in their wommerahs, and I am sure I should in another instant have been transfixed with a score or two of spears, had not Mr. Tietkens, having tied up the horses, come running up, which caused a moment's diversion, and both our revolvers going off properly this time, we made our foes retreat at a better pace than they had advanced. Some of their spears were smashed in their hands; most of them dropped everything they carried, and went scudding away over the rocks as fast as fear and astonishment would permit. We broke all the spears we could lay our hands on, nearly a hundred, and then finished our dinner.

I would here remark that the natives of Australia have two kinds of spears—namely, the

game- and the war-spear. The game-spear is a thick, heavy implement, barbed with two or three teeth, entirely made of wood, and thrown by the hand. These are used in stalking large game, such as emus, kangaroos, &c., when the hunter sneaks on the quarry, and, at a distance of forty to fifty yards, transfixes it, though he may not just at the moment kill the animal, it completely retards its progress, and the hunter can then run it to earth. The war-spears are different and lighter, the hinder third of them being reed, the other two-thirds mulga wood; they are barbed, and thrown with a wommerah, to a distance up to 150 yards, and are sometimes ten feet long.

After our meal we found a better supply of water in a creek about two miles southward, where there was both a rock reservoir and sand water. We had now come about 130 miles from Sladen Water, and had found waters all the way; Mount Olga was again in sight. The question was, is the water there permanent? Digging would be of no avail there, it is all solid rock; either the water is procured on the surface or there is none. I made this trip to the east, not with any present intention of retreat, but to discover whether there was a line of waters to retreat upon, and to become acquainted with as much country as possible.

The sight of Mount Olga, and the thoughts of retreating to the east, acted like a spur to drive me farther to the west; we therefore turned our backs upon Mount Olga and the distant east. I named this gorge, where we found a good supply of water, Glen Robertson,* and the creek that



MOUNT OLGA, FROM SIXTY MILES TO THE WEST.

comes from it, Casterton Creek. Mount Olga, as I said, bore nearly due east; its appearance from here, which we always called the farthest east, was most wonderful and grotesque. It seemed like five or six enormous pink hay-stacks, leaning for support against one another, with open cracks or fissures between, which came only about half-way down its face. I am sure this is one of the most extraordinary geographical features on the face of the earth, for, as I have said, it is composed of several enormous rounded stone shapes, like the backs of several monstrous kneeling pink elephants. At sixty miles to the west its outline is astonishing. The highest point of all, which is 1500 feet above the surrounding country, looked at from here, presents the appearance of a gigantic pink damper, or Chinese gong viewed edgewise, and slightly out of the perpendicular. We did not return to the scene of our fight and our dinner, but went about two miles northerly beyond it, when we had to take to the rough hills again; we had to wind in and out amongst these, and in four miles struck our outgoing tracks. We found the natives had followed us up step by step, and had tried to stamp the marks of the horses' hoofs out of the ground with their own. They had walked four or five abreast, and consequently made a path more easy for us to remark. We saw them raising puffs of smoke behind us, but did not anticipate any more annoyance from them. We pushed on till dark, to the spot where we had met them in the morning; here we encamped without water.

Before daylight I went for the horses, while Mr. Tietkens got the swag and things ready to start

away. I returned, tied up the horses, and we had just begun to eat the little bit of damper we had for breakfast, when Mr. Tietkens, whose nervous system seems particularly alive to any native approach, gave the alarm, that our pursuers were again upon us, and we were again saluted with their hideous outcries. Breakfast was now a matter of minor import; instantly we slung everything on to the horses, and by the time that was done we were again surrounded. I almost wished we had only one of our rifles which we had left at home. We could do nothing with such an insensate, insatiable mob of wretches as these; as a novelist would say, we flung ourselves into our saddles as fast as we could, and fairly gave our enemies the slip, through the speed of our horses, they running after us like a pack of yelping curs, in maddening bray. The natives ran well for a long distance, nearly three miles, but the pace told on them at last and we completely distanced them. Had we been unsuccessful in finding water in this region and then met these demons, it is more than probable we should never have escaped. I don't sigh to meet them again; the great wonder was that they did not sneak upon and spear us in the night, but the fact of our having a waterless encampment probably deterred them. We kept at a good pace till we reached the Chirnside, and gave our horses a drink, but went on twenty miles to Louisa's Creek before we rested. We only remained here an hour. We saw no more of our enemies, but pushed on another twenty-two miles, till we reached the Hull, where we could find no water.

On the subject of the natives, I may inform

my reader that we often see places at native camps where the ground has been raised for many yards, like a series of babies' graves; these are the sleeping-places of the young and unmarried men, they scoop the soil out of a place and raise it up on each side: these are the bachelors' beds—twenty, thirty, and forty are sometimes seen in a row; on top of each raised portion of soil two small fires are kept burning in lieu of blankets. Some tribes have their noses pierced, others not. Some have front teeth knocked out, and others not. In some tribes only women have teeth knocked out.

Our supply of food now consisted of just sufficient flour to make two small Johnny-cakes, and as we still had over eighty miles to go, we simply had to do without any food all day, and shall have precisely the same quantity to-morrow—that is to say, none. In eleven or twelve miles next morning we reached the caves near the Ruined Rampart, where we rested and allowed the horses to feed. At night we camped again without food or water. The morning after, we reached Gill's Pinnacle early, and famished enough to eat each other. We mixed up, cooked, and ate our small remnant of flour. The last two days have been reasonably cool; anything under 100° is cool in this region. We found that during our absence the natives had placed a quantity of gum-leaves and small boughs into the interstices of the small mounds of stone, or as I call them, *teocallis*, which I mentioned previously; this had evidently been done so soon as we departed, for they were now dead and dry. After bathing, remounting, we made good another twenty

miles, and camped in triodia and casuarina sand-hills. We reached the camp at the pass by nine A.M. on the 19th, having been absent ten days. Gibson and Jimmy were there certainly, and nothing had gone wrong, but these two poor fellows looked as pale as ghosts. Gibson imagined we had gone to the west, and was much perturbed by our protracted absence.

The water in the open holes did not agree with either Gibson or Jimmy, and, when starting, I had shown them where to dig for a spring of fresh water, and where I had nearly got a horse bogged one day when I rode there, to see what it was like. They had not, however, made the slightest effort to look for or dig it out. I gave them the last of our medical spirits, only half a bottle of rum, at starting. They had shot plenty of parrots and pigeons, and one or two ducks ; but, now that the ammunition is all but gone, a single shot is of the greatest consideration. We have only a few pounds of flour, and a horse we must kill, in order to live ourselves. A few finishing touches to the smoke-house required doing ; this Mr. Tietkens and Jimmy went to do, while Gibson and I cut up a tarpaulin to make large water-bags, and with a small lot of new canvas made four pairs of water-bags that would hold seven to eight gallons each. These, when greased with horse fat or oil, ought to enable me to get out some distance from the western extremity of this range. Poor old Terrible Billy came to water early, and I was much pleased with his appearance, but his little house not being quite ready and the bags not completed, he has a day or so longer of grace. I had looked forward eagerly to the time of the

autumnal equinox, in hopes of rain. But all we got, however, was three dry thunderstorms and a few drops of rain, which fell upon us en route to some more favoured land. The next day being Sunday, we had a day of rest.

Near the place to which I had been dragged, there were several little heaps of stones, or rather, as a general rule, small circles of piled-up stones removed from where they had formerly lain, with the exception of a solitary one left in the centre. For what purpose the natives could have made or cleared these places I cannot tell; they were reserved for some ceremonies, no doubt, like those at Gill's Pinnacle. The last few days have been very cool, the thermometer indicating one day only 78° in the shade. On the 25th, Gibson took the shovel to open out the springs formerly mentioned; they lie in the midst of several little clumps of young eucalyptus suckers, the ground all round being a morass, in which a man might almost sink, were it not for the thick growth of rushes. The water appears to flow over several acres of ground, appearing and disappearing in places. The moment a small space was cleared of the rushes, it became evident that the water was perpetually flowing, and we stood on rushes over our ankles in black soil. Gibson dug a small tank, and the water soon cleared for itself a beautiful little crystal basin of the purest liquid, much more delicious and wholesome than the half brackish water in the bed of the creek. These springs have their origin at the foot of the hill on the eastern side of this pass, and percolate into the creek-bed, where the water becomes impregnated with salt or soda. The water in the open

holes in the creek-bed is always running ; I thought the supply came from up the creek—now, however, I find it comes from these fresh-water springs. I branded a tree in this pass E. Giles. with date.

On the 25th March the plump but old and doomed Terrible Billy confidently came to water at eleven o'clock at night. He took his last drink, and was led a captive to the camp, where he was tied up all night. The old creature looked remarkably well, and when tied up close to the smoke-house—innocent, unsuspecting creature of what the craft and subtilty of the devil or man might work against him—he had begun to eat a bunch or two of grass, when a rifle-bullet crashing through his forehead terminated his existence. There was some little fat about him ; it took some time to cut up the meat into strips, which were hung on sticks and placed in tiers in the pyramidal smoke-house.

We had a fine supper of horse-steaks, which we relished amazingly. Terrible Billy tasted much better than the cob we had killed at Elder's Creek. What fat there was on the inside was very yellow, and so soft it would not harden at all. With a very fat horse a salvage of fat might be got on portions of the meat, but nearly every particle of the fat drips into oil. The smoke-house is now the object of our solicitude ; a column of smoke ascends from the immolated Billy night and day. Our continual smoke induced some natives to make their appearance, but they kept at a very respectful distance, coming no nearer than the summit of the hills, on either side of the pass, from whence they had a good bird's-eye view of our proceedings. They

saluted us with a few cheers, i.e. groans, as they watched us from their observatory.

The weather is now beautifully cool, fine, and clear. We had now finished smoking Terrible Billy who still maintained his name, for he was terribly tough. I intended to make an attempt to push westward from the end of this range, and all we required was the horses to carry us away; but getting them was not the easiest thing in the world, for they were all running loose. Although they have to come to the pass to get water, there is water for more than a mile, and some come sneaking quietly down without making the slightest noise, get a drink, and then, giving a snort of derision to let us know, off they go at a gallop. They run in mobs of twos and threes; so now we have systematically to watch for, catch, and hobble them. I set a watch during the night, and as they came, they were hobbled and put down through the north side of the pass. They could not get back past the camp without the watchman both hearing and seeing them; for it was now fine moonlight the greater part of the night. We had ten or twelve horses, but only two came to-night for water, and these got away before we could catch them, as two of the party let them drink before catching them. None came in the day, and only two the next night; these we caught, hobbled, and put with the others, which were always trying to get back past the camp, so to-night I had a horse saddled to be sure of catching any that came, and keeping those we had. During my watch, the second, several horses tried to pass the camp. I drove them back twice, and had no more trouble with them; but in the morning,

when we came to muster them, every hoof was gone. Of course nobody had let them go! Every other member of the party informed me that they were ready to take their dying oaths that the horses never got away in their watches, and that neither of them had any trouble whatever in driving them back, &c. ; so I could only conclude that I must have let them all go myself, because, as they were gone, and nobody else let them go, why, of course, I suppose I must. After breakfast Mr. Tietkens went to try to recover them, but soon returned, informing me he had met a number of natives at the smoke-house, who appeared very peaceably inclined, and who were on their road down through the pass. This was rather unusual; previous to our conflict they had never come near us, and since that, they had mostly given us a wide berth, and seemed to prefer being out of the reach of our rifles than otherwise. They soon appeared, although they kept away on the east side of the creek. They then shouted, and when I cooeyed and beckoned them to approach, they sat down in a row. I may here remark that the word cooey, as representing the cry of all Australian aborigines, belonged originally to only one tribe or region, but it has been carried about by whites from tribe to tribe, and is used by the civilised and semi-civilised races; but wild natives who have never seen whites use no such cry. There were thirteen of these men. Mr. Tietkens and I went over to them, and we had quite a friendly conference. Their leader was an individual of a very uncertain age—he might have been forty, or he might have been eighty (in the shade).*

* This was written some time before the *Mikado* appeared.—E. G.

bald on the crown, but some long grizzly locks depended below the bald patch.

The others were generally much younger, but some of them, though not clean past their youth, yet had about them some smacks of the saltness of age. The old man was the most self-possessed; the others displayed a nervous tremor at our approach; those nearest us sidled closer to their more remote and, as they no doubt thought, fortunate fellows; they were all extremely ill-favoured in face, but their figures were not so outrés, except that they appeared emaciated and starved, otherwise they would have been men of good bulk. Their legs were straight, and their height would average five feet nine inches, all being much taller than Mr. Tietkens or I. Two remained at a distance; these had a great charge to superintend, it being no less than that of the trained wild dogs belonging to the tribe. There were three large dogs, two of a light sandy, and one of a kind of German colley colour. These natives were armed with an enormous number of light barbed spears, each having about a dozen. They do not appear to use the boomerang very generally in this part of the continent, although we have occasionally picked up portions of old ones in our travels. Mr. Tietkens gave each of these natives a small piece of sugar, with which they seemed perfectly charmed, and in consequence patted the seat of their intellectual—that is to say, digestive—organs with great gusto, as the saccharine morsels liquefied in their mouths. They seemed highly pleased with the appearance and antics of my little dog, who both sat and stood up at command in the midst of them.

They kept their own dogs away, I presume, for fear we might want to seize them for food—wild dog standing in about the same relation to a wild Australian native, as a sheep would to a white man. They eat all the grown dogs they can catch, but keep a few pups to train for hunting, and wonderful hunting dogs they are. Hence their fear of our taking their pets. The old gentleman was much delighted with my watch. I then showed them some matches, and the instantaneous ignition of some grass in the midst of them was rather too startling a phenomenon for their weak minds; some of them rose to depart. The old man, however, reassured them. I presented him with several matches, and showed him how to use them; he was very much pleased, and having no pockets in his coat—for I might have previously remarked they were arrayed in Nature's simple garb—he stuck them in his hair. Mr. Tietkens, during this time, was smoking, and the sight of smoke issuing from his mouth seemed to disturb even the old man's assumed imperturbability, and he kept much closer to me in consequence. I next showed them a revolver, and tried to explain the manner of using it. Most of them repeated the word bang when I said it; but when I fired it off they were too agitated to take much notice of its effect on the bark of a tree, which might otherwise have served to point a moral or adorn a tale in the oral traditions of their race for ever. At the report of the revolver all rose and seemed in haste to go, but I would not allow my dear old friend to depart without a few last friendly expressions. One of these natives was pitted with small-pox. They seemed to wish to know where

we were going, and when I pointed west, and by shaking my fingers intimated a long way, many of them pulled their beards and pointed to us, and the old man gave my beard a slight pull and pointed west; this I took to signify that they were aware that other white people like us lived in that direction. The conference ended, and they departed over the hills on the east side of the pass, but it was two hours before they disappeared.

All the horses which had escaped in hobbles the other night now came to water, and were put through the pass again. During the day we secured the remainder, and had them altogether at last. It was noon of the 7th April when we left this delectable pass, again en route for the west, hoping to see Sladen Water and the Pass of the Abencerrages no more. At fourteen miles we were delayed by Banks, carrying my boxes, as a strap broke, and he set to work to free himself of everything. Fortunately, one box with the instruments, quicksilver, &c., remained firm; everything got bucked and kicked out of the other; buckskin gloves, matches, mineral collection, rifle cartridges, bottles of medicine, eye-water, socks, specimens of plants, &c., all sent flying about in the thick triodia, for the brute went full gallop all round the mob of horses, trying to get rid of the other box and his saddle. In spite of all his efforts they remained, and it was wonderful how many things we recovered, though some were lost. By this time it was dusk, and the evening set in very cool. I now intended to encamp at the fine spring I named Fort McKellar, four miles east of the Gorge of Tarns. There was a fine and heavy clump of eucalyptus

timber there, and a very convenient and open sheet of water for the use of the camp. I had always looked upon this as an excellent and desirable spot for an encampment, though we had never used it yet. The grass, however, is neither good nor abundant; the country around being stony and sterile, except down the immediate valley of the channel, which was not wide enough to graze a mob of horses for long. We reached it again on the 9th of April.

My reader will remember that in January I had found a creek with a large, rocky tarn of water, which I called the Circus; it was the last westerly water on the range, and I was anxious to know how it was holding out, as it must be our point of departure for any farther efforts to the west. It was twenty miles from here, and Gibson and I rode up the range to inspect it. On our road we revisited the Gorge of Tarns; the water there had shrunk very much. Here we had left some useless articles, such as three pack-saddle frames, a broken thermometer, and sundry old gear; all these things the natives had carried away. I had a good swim in the old tarn, and proceeded, reaching the Circus early in the afternoon. There was the solitary eagle still perched upon its rock. The water had become greatly reduced; ten weeks and two days had elapsed since I was here; and in another fortnight it would all be gone. If I intend doing anything towards the west it must be done at once or it will be too late. The day was warm—102°. A large flock of galars, a slate-coloured kind of cockatoo, and a good talking bird, and hundreds of pigeons came to water at night; but having no ammunition,

we did not bring a gun. The water was so low in the hole that the horses could not reach it, and had to be watered with a canvas bucket. I have said previously, that at the extremity of this range there lay an ancient lake bed, but I had only been a mile or two upon it. Further on there were indications of salt, and as we were quite out of that commodity, we rode over to try and procure some, but none existed, and we had to be satisfied with a quantity of samphire bushes and salt-bush leaves, which we took home with us, returning to Fort McKellar the following day. I called the salt feature Lake Christopher. We remained at the depot for a day or two, preparing for a start to the west, and cut rails, and fixed up some palisading for the fort. I delayed entering that evidently frightful bed of sand which lay to the west, in hopes of a change, for I must admit I dreaded to attempt the western country while the weather was still so hot and oppressive. Though the thermometer may not appear to rise extraordinarily high in this region, yet the weight and pressure of the atmosphere is sometimes almost overpowering. Existence here is in a permanent state of languor, and I am sure the others in the party feel it more than I do, being consumed with the fire or frenzy of renown for opening unknown lands, all others have to pale their ineffectual fires before it. No doubt, not being well fed is some cause for our feelings of lassitude. The horses are also affected with extreme languor, as well as the men. The thermometer to-day registered only 99°. The horses are always trying to roam away back to Sladen Water, and Mr. Tietkens and I had a walk of many miles after

them to-day. I was getting really anxious about the water at the Circus. I scarcely dare to grapple with that western desert in such weather, yet, if I do not, I shall lose the Circus water.

Although we were near the change of the moon, I despaired of a change of weather. I did not ask for rain, for it would be useless on the desert sands; I only wanted the atmosphere to become a little less oppressive. I had not been round the extreme western end of the range, though we had been to it, and I thought perhaps some creek might be found to contain a good rock-hole, perhaps as far to the west, if not farther, than the Circus; on the opposite side of the range, Mr. Tietkens and Gibson, who volunteered, went to see what they could discover, also to visit the Circus so as to report upon it. Jimmy and I remained and erected some more woodwork—that is to say, rails and uprights—for the fort. We walked over to re-inspect—Jimmy had not seen them—two glens and springs lying within a couple of miles to the east of us, the first being about three-quarters of a mile off. I now named it Tyndall's Springs. Here a fine stream of running water descends much further down the channel than at any other spring in the range, though it spreads into no open sheets of water as at the depot; there was over a mile of running water. The channel is thickly set with fine tall bulrushes. There is a very fine shady clump of gum-trees here, close to the base of the range. The next spring, about a mile farther east, I called Groener's Springs; it had not such a strong flow of water, but the trees in the clump at the head of it were much larger and more numerous than at the last. Some of the trees,

as was the case at Fort McKellar, were of very considerable size. Late at night Mr. Tietkens and Gibson returned, and reported that, although they had discovered a new rock-hole with seven or eight feet of water in it, it was utterly useless; for no horses could get within three-quarters of a mile of it, and they had been unable to water their horses, having had to do so at the Circus. They said the water there was holding out well; but Gibson said it had diminished a good deal since he and I were there a week ago. On the 19th April I told the party it was useless to delay longer, and that I had made up my mind to try what impression a hundred miles would make on the country to the west. I had waited and waited for a change, not to say rain, and it seemed as far off as though the month were November, instead of April. I might still keep on waiting, until every ounce of our now very limited supply of rations was gone. We were now, and had been since Billy was killed, living entirely on smoked horse; we only had a few pounds of flour left, which I kept in case of sickness; the sugar was gone; only a few sticks of tobacco for Mr. Tietkens and Gibson—Jimmy and I not smoking—remained. I had been disappointed at the Charlotte Waters at starting, by not being able to get my old horse, and had started from the Alberga, lacking him and the 200 pounds of flour he would have carried—a deficiency which considerably shortened my intended supply. A comparatively enormous quantity of flour had been lost by the continual rippings of bags in the scrubs farther south, and also a general loss in weight of nearly ten per cent., from continual handling of the bags, and evaporation. We had

supplemented our supplies in a measure at Fort Mueller and the Pass, with pigeons and wallabies, as long as our ammunition lasted, and now it was done. When I made known my intention, Gibson immediately volunteered to accompany me, and complained of having previously been left so often and so long in the camp. I much preferred Mr. Tietkens, as I felt sure the task we were about to undertake was no ordinary one, and I knew Mr. Tietkens was to be depended upon to the last under any circumstances, but, to please Gibson, he waived his right, and, though I said nothing, I was not at all pleased.

CHAPTER X.

FROM 20TH APRIL TO 21ST MAY, 1874.

Gibson and I depart for the west—His brother with Franklin—Desert oaks—Smoked horse—Ants innumerable—Turn two horses back—Kegs in a tree—No views—Instinct of horses—Sight a distant range—Gibson's horse dies—Give him the remaining one—The last ever seen of him—Alone in the desert—Carry a keg—Unconscious—Where is the relief party—A dying wallaby—Footfalls of a galloping horse—Reach the depot—Exhausted—Search for the lost—Gibson's Desert—Another smoke-house—Jimmy attacked at Fort McKellar—Another equine victim—Final retreat decided upon—Marks of floods—Peculiarity of the climate—Remarks on the region—Three natives visit us.

APRIL 20TH, 1874.—Gibson and I having got all the gear we required, took a week's supply of smoked horse, and four excellent horses, two to ride, and two to carry water, all in fine condition. I rode the Fair Maid of Perth, an excellent walker; I gave Gibson the big ambling horse, Badger, and we packed the big cob, a splendid bay horse and fine weight-carrier, with a pair of water-bags that contained twenty gallons at starting. The other horse was Darkie, a fine, strong, nuggetty-black horse, who carried two five-gallon kegs of water and our stock of smoked horse, rugs, &c. We reached the Circus, at twenty miles, early, and

the horses had time to feed and fill themselves after being watered, though the grass was very poor.

21st April.—While I went for the horses Gibson topped up the water-bags and kegs, and poured a quantity of water out of the hole on to a shallow place, so that if we turned any horses back, they could drink without precipitating themselves into



THE CIRCUS.

the deep and slippery hole when they returned here. As we rode away, I remarked to Gibson that the day, was the anniversary of Burke and Wills's return to their depot at Cooper's Creek, and then recited to him, as he did not appear to know anything whatever about it, the hardships they endured, their desperate struggles for existence, and death there, and I casually remarked that Wills had a brother who also lost his life in the field of discovery. He had gone out with Sir John Frank-

lin in 1845. Gibson then said, "Oh! I had a brother who died with Franklin at the North Pole, and my father had a deal of trouble to get his pay from Government." He seemed in a very jocular vein this morning, which was not often the case, for he was usually rather sulky, sometimes for days together, and he said, "How is it, that in all these exploring expeditions a lot of people go and die?" I said, "I don't know, Gibson, how it is, but there are many dangers in exploring, besides accidents and attacks from the natives, that may at any time cause the death of some of the people engaged in it; but I believe want of judgment, or knowledge, or courage in individuals, often brought about their deaths. Death, however, is a thing that must occur to every one sooner or later." To this he replied, "Well, I shouldn't like to die in this part of the country, anyhow." In this sentiment I quite agreed with him, and the subject dropped. At eleven miles we were not only clear of the range, but had crossed to the western side of Lake Christopher, and were fairly enclosed in the sandhills, which were of course covered with triodia. Numerous fine casuarinas grew in the hollows between them, and some stunted blood-wood-trees, (red gum,) ornamented the tops of some of the sandhills. At twenty-two miles, on a west course, we turned the horses out for an hour. It was very warm, there was no grass. The horses rested in the shade of a desert oak-tree, while we remained under another. These trees are very handsome, with round umbrageous tops, the leaves are round and fringe-like. We had a meal of smoked horse; and

here I discovered that the bag with our supply of horseflesh in it held but a most inadequate supply for two of us for a week, there being scarcely sufficient for one. Gibson had packed it at starting, and I had not previously seen it. The afternoon was oppressively hot—at least it always seems so when one is away from water. We got over an additional eighteen miles, making a day's stage of forty.

The country was all sandhills. The Rawlinson Range completely disappeared from view, even from the tops of the highest sandhills, at thirty-five miles. The travelling, though heavy enough, had not been so frightful as I had anticipated, for the lines of sandhills mostly ran east and west, and by turning about a bit we got several hollows between them to travel in. Had we been going north or south, north-easterly or south-westerly, it would have been dreadfully severe. The triodia here reigns supreme, growing in enormous bunches and plots, and standing three and four feet high, while many of the long dry tops are as high as a man. This gives the country the appearance of dry grassy downs; and as it is dotted here and there with casuarina and blood-wood-trees, and small patches of desert shrubs, its general appearance is by no means displeasing to the eye, though frightful to the touch. No sign of the recent presence of natives was anywhere visible, nor had the triodia been burnt for probably many years. At night we got what we in this region may be excused for calling a grass flat, there being some bunches of a thin and wiry kind of grass, though white and dry as a chip. I

never saw the horses eat more than a mouthful or two of it anywhere, but there was nothing else, and no water.

22nd.—The ants were so troublesome last night, I had to shift my bed several times. Gibson was not at all affected by them, and slept well. We were in our saddles immediately after daylight. I was in hopes that a few miles might bring about a change of country, and so it did, but not an advantageous one to us. At ten miles from camp the horizon became flatter, the sandhills fell off, and the undulations became covered with brown gravel, at first very fine. At fifty-five miles it became coarser, and at sixty miles it was evident the country was becoming firmer, if not actually stony. Here we turned the horses out, having come twenty miles. I found one of our large water-bags leaked more than I expected, and our supply of water was diminishing with distance. Here Gibson preferred to keep the big cob to ride, against my advice, instead of Badger, so, after giving Badger and Darkie a few pints of water each, Gibson drove them back on the tracks about a mile and let them go, to take their own time and find their own way back to the Circus. They both looked terribly hollow and fatigued, and went away very slowly. Sixty miles through such a country as this tells fearfully upon a horse. The poor brutes were very unwilling to leave us, as they knew we had some water, and they also knew what a fearful region they had before them to reach the Circus again.

We gave the two remaining horses all the water contained in the two large water-bags, except a

quart or two for ourselves. This allowed them a pretty fair drink, though not a circumstance to what they would have swallowed. They fed a little, while we remained here. The day was warm enough. The two five-gallon kegs with water we hung in the branches of a tree, with the pack-saddles, empty water-bags, &c. of the other two horses. Leaving the Kegs—I always called this place by that name—we travelled another twenty miles by night, the country being still covered with small stones and thickly clothed with the tall triodia. There were thin patches of mulga and mallee scrub occasionally. No view could be obtained to the west; all round us, north, south, east, and west, were alike, the undulations forming the horizons were not generally more than seven or eight miles distant from one another, and when we reached the rim or top of one, we obtained exactly the same view for the next seven or eight miles. The country still retained all the appearance of fine, open, dry, grassy downs, and the triodia tops waving in the heated breeze had all the semblance of good grass. The afternoon had been very oppressive, and the horses were greatly disinclined to exert themselves, though my mare went very well. It was late by the time we encamped, and the horses were much in want of water, especially the big cob, who kept coming up to the camp all night, and tried to get at our water-bags, pannikins, &c. The instinct of a horse when in the first stage of thirst in getting hold of any utensil that ever had water in it, is surprising and most annoying, but teaching us by most persuasive reasons how akin they are to human things. We had one small water-bag hung in a tree. I did

not think of this just at the moment, when my mare came straight up to it and took it in her teeth, forcing out the cork and sending the water up, which we were both dying to drink, in a beautiful jet, which, descending to earth, was irrevocably lost. We now had only a pint or two left. Gibson was now very sorry he had exchanged Badger for the cob, as he found the cob very dull and heavy to get on ; this was not usual, for he was generally a most willing animal, but he would only go at a jog while my mare was a fine walker. There had been a hot wind from the north all day. The following morning (23rd) there was a most strange dampness in the air, and I had a vague feeling, such as must have been felt by augurs, and seers of old, who trembled as they told, events to come ; for this was the last day on which I ever saw Gibson. It was a lamentable day in the history of this expedition. The horizon to the west was hid in clouds. We left the camp even before daylight, and as we had camped on the top of a rim, we knew we had seven or eight miles to go before another view could be obtained. The next rim was at least ten miles from the camp, and there was some slight indications of a change.

We were now ninety miles from the Circus water, and 110 from Fort McKellar. The horizon to the west was still obstructed by another rise three or four miles away ; but to the west-north-west I could see a line of low stony ridges, ten miles off. To the south was an isolated little hill, six or seven miles away. I determined to go to the ridges, when Gibson complained that his horse could never reach them, and suggested that the next rise to the west might

reveal something better in front. The ridges were five miles away, and there were others still farther preventing a view. When we reached them we had come ninety-eight miles from the Circus. Here Gibson, who was always behind, called out and said his horse was going to die, or knock up, which are synonymous terms in this region. Now we had reached a point where at last a different view was presented to us, and I believed a change of country was at hand, for the whole western, down to the south-western, horizon was broken by lines of ranges, being most elevated at the south-western end. They were all notched and irregular, and I believed formed the eastern extreme of a more elevated and probably mountainous region to the west. The ground we now stood upon, and for a mile or two past, was almost a stony hill itself, and for the first time in all the distance we had come, we had reached a spot where water might run during rain, though we had not seen any place where it could lodge. Between us and the hilly horizon to the west the country seemed to fall into a kind of long valley, and it looked dark, and seemed to have timber in it, and here also the natives had formerly burnt the spinifex, but not recently. The hills to the west were twenty-five to thirty miles away, and it was with extreme regret I was compelled to relinquish a farther attempt to reach them. Oh, how ardently I longed for a camel! how ardently I gazed upon this scene! At this moment I would even my jewel eternal, have sold for power to span the gulf that lay between! But it could not be, situated as I was; compelled to retreat—of course with the intention of coming again



FIRST VIEW OF THE ALFRED AND MARIE RANGE.

with a larger supply of water—now the sooner I retreated the better. These far-off hills were named the Alfred and Marie Range, in honour of their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. Gibson's horse having got so bad had placed us both in a great dilemma; indeed, ours was a most critical position. We turned back upon our tracks, when the cob refused to carry his rider any farther, and tried to lie down. We drove him another mile on foot, and down he fell to die. My mare, the Fair Maid of Perth, was only too willing to return; she had now to carry Gibson's saddle and things, and we went away walking and riding by turns of half an hour. The cob, no doubt, died where he fell; not a second thought could be bestowed on him.

When we got back to about thirty miles from the Kegs I was walking, and having concluded in my mind what course to pursue, I called to Gibson to halt till I walked up to him. We were both excessively thirsty, for walking had made us so, and we had scarcely a pint of water left between us. However, of what we had we each took a mouthful, which finished the supply, and I then said—for I couldn't speak before—"Look here, Gibson, you see we are in a most terrible fix with only one horse, therefore only one can ride, and one must remain behind. I shall remain: and now listen to me. If the mare does not get water soon she will die; therefore ride right on; get to the Kegs, if possible, to-night, and give her water. Now the cob is dead there'll be all the more for her; let her rest for an hour or two, and then get over a few more miles by morning, so that early to-morrow you will sight the

Rawlinson, at twenty-five miles from the Kegs. Stick to the tracks, and never leave them. Leave as much water in one keg for me as you can afford after watering the mare and filling up your own bags, and, remember, I depend upon you to bring me relief. Rouse Mr. Tietkens, get fresh horses and more water-bags, and return as soon as you possibly can. I shall of course endeavour to get down the tracks also."

He then said if he had a compass he thought he could go better at night. I knew he didn't understand anything about compasses, as I had often



THE LAST EVER SEEN OF GIBSON.

tried to explain them to him. The one I had was a Gregory's Patent, of a totally different construction from ordinary instruments of the kind, and I was

very loth to part with it, as it was the only one I had. However, he was so anxious for it that I gave it him, and he departed. I sent one final shout after him to stick to the tracks, to which he replied, "All right," and the mare carried him out of sight almost immediately. That was the last ever seen of Gibson.

I walked slowly on, and the further I walked the more thirsty I became. I had thirty miles to go to reach the Kegs, which I could not reach until late to-morrow at the rate I was travelling, and I did not feel sure that I could keep on at that. The afternoon was very hot. I continued following the tracks until the moon went down, and then had to stop. The night was reasonably cool, but I was parched and choking for water. How I longed again for morning! I hoped Gibson had reached the Kegs, and that he and the mare were all right. I could not sleep for thirst, although towards morning it became almost cold. How I wished this planet would for once accelerate its movements and turn upon its axis in twelve instead of twenty-four hours, or rather that it would complete its revolution in six hours.

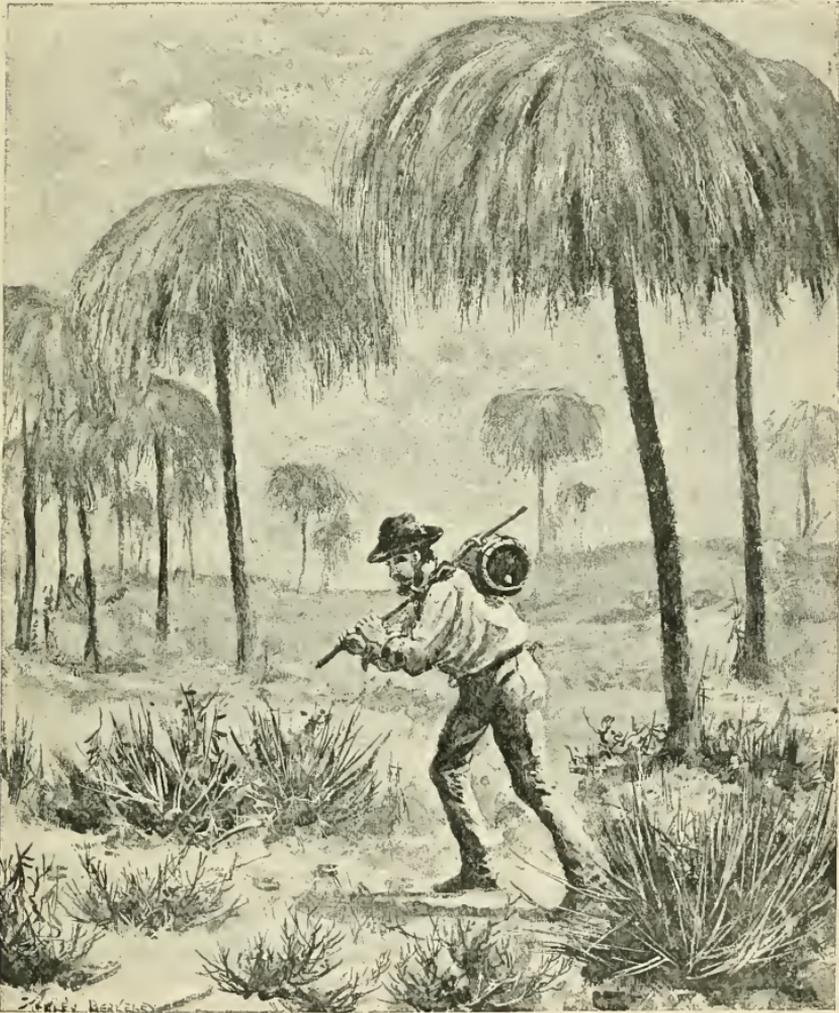
April 24th to 1st May.—So soon as it was light I was again upon the horse tracks, and reached the Kegs about the middle of the day. Gibson had been here, and watered the mare, and gone on. He had left me a little over two gallons of water in one keg, and it may be imagined how glad I was to get a drink. I could have drunk my whole supply in half an hour, but was compelled to economy, for I could not tell how many days would elapse before assistance could come: it could not

be less than five, it might be many more. After quenching my thirst a little I felt ravenously hungry, and on searching among the bags, all the food I could find was eleven sticks of dirty, sandy, smoked horse, averaging about an ounce and a half each, at the bottom of a pack-bag. I was rather staggered to find that I had little more than a pound weight of meat to last me until assistance came. However, I was compelled to eat some at once, and devoured two sticks raw, as I had no water to spare to boil them in.

After this I sat in what shade the trees afforded, and reflected on the precariousness of my position. I was sixty miles from water, and eighty from food, my messenger could hardly return before six days, and I began to think it highly probable that I should be dead of hunger and thirst long before anybody could possibly arrive. I looked at the keg; it was an awkward thing to carry empty. There was nothing else to carry water in, as Gibson had taken all the smaller water-bags, and the large ones would require several gallons of water to soak the canvas before they began to tighten enough to hold water. The keg when empty, with its rings and straps, weighed fifteen pounds, and now it had twenty pounds of water in it. I could not carry it without a blanket for a pad for my shoulder, so that with my revolver and cartridge-pouch, knife, and one or two other small things on my belt, I staggered under a weight of about fifty pounds when I put the keg on my back. I only had fourteen matches.

After I had thoroughly digested all points of my situation, I concluded that if I did not help myself

Providence wouldn't help me. I started, bent double by the keg, and could only travel so slowly that I thought it scarcely worth while to travel at



ALONE IN THE DESERT.

all. I became so thirsty at each step I took, that I longed to drink up every drop of water I had in the keg, but it was the elixir of death I was burdened with, and to drink it was to die, so I

restrained myself. By next morning I had only got about three miles away from the Kegs, and to do that I travelled mostly in the moonlight. The next few days I can only pass over as they seemed to pass with me, for I was quite unconscious half the time, and I only got over about five miles a day.

To people who cannot comprehend such a region it may seem absurd that a man could not travel faster than that. All I can say is, there may be men who could do so, but most men in the position I was in would simply have died of hunger and thirst, for by the third or fourth day—I couldn't tell which—my horse meat was all gone. I had to remain in what scanty shade I could find during the day, and I could only travel by night.

When I lay down in the shade in the morning I lost all consciousness, and when I recovered my senses I could not tell whether one day or two or three had passed. At one place I am sure I must have remained over forty-eight hours. At a certain place on the road—that is to say, on the horse tracks—at about fifteen miles from the Kegs—at twenty-five miles the Rawlinson could again be sighted—I saw that the tracks of the two loose horses we had turned back from there had left the main line of tracks, which ran east and west, and had turned about east-south-east, and the tracks of the Fair Maid of Perth, I was grieved to see, had gone on them also. I felt sure Gibson would soon find his error, and return to the main line. I was unable to investigate this any farther in my present position. I followed them about a mile, and then returned to the proper line, anxiously looking at

every step to see if Gibson's horse tracks returned into them.

They never did, nor did the loose horse tracks either. Generally speaking, whenever I saw a shady desert oak-tree there was an enormous bulldog ants' nest under it, and I was prevented from sitting in its shade. On what I thought was the 27th I almost gave up the thought of walking any farther, for the exertion in this dreadful region, where the triodia was almost as high as myself, and as thick as it could grow, was quite overpowering, and being starved, I felt quite light-headed. After sitting down, on every occasion when I tried to get up again, my head would swim round, and I would fall down oblivious for some time. Being in a chronic state of burning thirst, my general plight was dreadful in the extreme. A bare and level sandy waste would have been Paradise to walk over compared to this. My arms, legs, thighs, both before and behind, were so punctured with spines, it was agony only to exist; the slightest movement and in went more spines, where they broke off in the clothes and flesh, causing the whole of the body that was punctured to gather into minute pustules, which were continually growing and bursting. My clothes, especially inside my trousers, were a perfect mass of prickly points.

My great hope and consolation now was that I might soon meet the relief party. But where was the relief party? Echo could only answer—where? About the 29th I had emptied the keg, and was still over twenty miles from the Circus. Ah! who can imagine what twenty miles means in such a case? But in this April's ivory moonlight I plodded

on, desolate indeed, but all undaunted, on this lone, unhallowed shore. At last I reached the Circus, just at the dawn of day. Oh, how I drank! how I reeled! how hungry I was! how thankful I was that I had so far at least escaped from the jaws of that howling wilderness, for I was once more upon the range, though still twenty miles from home.

There was no sign of the tracks, of any one having been here since I left it. The water was all but gone. The solitary eagle still was there. I wondered what could have become of Gibson; he certainly had never come here, and how could he reach the fort without doing so?

I was in such a miserable state of mind and body, that I refrained from more vexatious speculations as to what had delayed him: I stayed here, drinking and drinking, until about ten A.M., when I crawled away over the stones down from the water. I was very footsore, and could only go at a snail's pace. Just as I got clear of the bank of the creek, I heard a faint squeak, and looking about I saw, and immediately caught, a small dying wallaby, whose marsupial mother had evidently thrown it from her pouch. It only weighed about two ounces, and was scarcely furnished yet with fur. The instant I saw it, like an eagle I pounced upon it and ate it, living, raw, dying—fur, skin, bones, skull, and all. The delicious taste of that creature I shall never forget. I only wished I had its mother and father to serve in the same way. I had become so weak that by late at night, I had only accomplished eleven miles, and I lay down about five miles from the Gorge of Tarns, again choking for water. While lying down here, I thought I heard the sound

of the foot-falls of a galloping horse going campwards, and vague ideas of Gibson on the Fair Maid—or she without him—entered my head. I stood up, and listened, but the sound had died away upon the midnight air. On the 1st of May, as I afterwards found, at one o'clock in the morning, I was walking again, and reached the Gorge of Tarns long before daylight, and could again indulge in as much water as I desired ; but it was exhaustion. I suffered from, and I could hardly move.

My reader may imagine with what intense feelings of relief I stepped over the little bridge across the water, staggered into the camp at daylight, and woke Mr. Tietkens, who stared at me as though I had been one, new risen from the dead. I asked him had he seen Gibson, and to give me some food. I was of course prepared to hear that Gibson had never reached the camp ; indeed I could see but two people in their blankets the moment I entered the fort, and by that I knew he could not be there. None of the horses had come back, and it appeared that I was the only one of six living creatures—two men and four horses—that had returned, or were now ever likely to return, from that desert, for it was now, as I found, nine days since I last saw Gibson.

Mr. Tietkens told me he had been in a great state of anxiety during my absence, and had only returned an hour or two before from the Circus. This accounted for the sounds I heard. He said he had planted some smoked horse-sticks, and marked a tree. This was a few hours after I had left it in the morning. He said he saw my foot-marks, but could not conclude that I could be on

foot alone, and he thought the tracks must be older than they looked. Any how, we had missed meeting one another somewhere on the range. We were both equally horrified at Gibson's mischance. When we woke Jimmy up he was delighted to see me, but when told about Gibson, he said something about he knowed he worn't no good in the bush, but as long as I had returned, &c., &c. I told them both just what had occurred out there; how Gibson and I had parted company, and we could only conclude that he must be dead, or he would long before have returned. The mare certainly would have carried him to the Circus, and then he must have reached the depot; but it was evident that he had gone wrong, had lost himself, and must now be dead. I was too much exhausted and too prostrate to move from the camp to search for him to-day, but determined to start to-morrow. Mr. Tietkens got everything ready, while I remained in a state of semi-stupor. I was cramped with pains in all my joints, pains in the stomach, and violent headaches, the natural result of having a long empty stomach suddenly filled. Gibson's loss and my struggles formed the topic of conversation for most of the day, and it naturally shed a gloom over our spirits. Here we were, isolated from civilisation, out of humanity's reach, hundreds of miles away from our fellow creatures, and one of our small party had gone from us. It was impossible for him to be still in existence in that fearful desert, as no man would or could stay there alive: he must be dead, or he would have returned as I did, only much sooner, for the mare he had, would carry him as far in a day as I could walk in a week in this country.

The days had not lately been excessively hot, Mr. Tietkens said 96° to 98° had been the average, but to-day it was only 90° . This afternoon it was very cloudy, and threatened to rain. I was now, however, in hopes that none would fall. That evil spirit of this scene—Mount Destruction—frowned upon us, and now that Gibson was dead, exploration was ended; we had but to try to find his remains, and any little trifling shower that fell would make it all the more difficult to trace him, while a thorough downpour would obliterate the tracks of our lost companion, entirely from the surface of the sandy waste into which he had so unfortunately strayed. Before daylight on the 2nd we were awoke by the sprinkling of a light shower of rain, which was of not the slightest use; but it continued so long, making everything wet and clammy, that I felt sure we should have some trouble in following Gibson's tracks. The rain ceased about seven o'clock. Mr. Tietkens and Jimmy got all the things we required, and the horses. I was so weak I could do nothing. We took three pack-horses to carry water, and two riding-horses, Blackie and Diaway, to ride, with Widge, Fromby, and Hippy. Though Mr. Tietkens and Jimmy had not been attacked during my absence, the natives were always prowling about, and I did not like the idea of leaving Jimmy alone; but as he said he was willing to remain, we left him. I had to be literally put on to my horse Blackie, and we rode away. Not to worry my reader more than I can help, I may say we had to return to the Kegs, to get the bags left there, and some indispensable things; also Gibson's saddle, which he left nine or

ten miles beyond the Kegs in a tree. Going all that distance to get these things, and returning to where Gibson's tracks branched off, we had to travel 115 miles, which made it the third night the horses had been out. We gave them some of the water we carried each night, and our supply was now nearly all gone. It was on the 6th May when we got back to where Gibson had left the right line. We fortunately had fine, cool weather. As long as Gibson remained upon the other horse-tracks, following them, though not very easy, was practicable enough; but the unfortunate man had left them, and gone away in a far more southerly direction, having the most difficult sandhills now to cross at right angles. He had burnt a patch of spinifex, where he left the other horse-tracks, and must have been under the delusion that they were running north, and that the main line of tracks must be on his right, instead of his left hand, and whether he made any mistake or not in steering by the compass, it is impossible to say, but instead of going east as he should, he actually went south, or very near it. In consequence of small reptiles, such as lizards, always scratching over all horse tracks in this region during the night, and also the slight rain we had the other morning, combined with wind, the shifting nature of the sandy soil, and the thick and bushy spinifex, we could make but poor headway in following the single track, and it was only by one of us walking while the other brought on the horses, that we could keep the track at all. Although we did not halt during the whole day, we had not been able to track him by night more than thirteen miles. Up to this point there was

evidently no diminution of the powers of the animal he bestrode. We camped upon the tracks the fourth night without water, it being impossible to follow in the moonlight. We gave our horses all our remaining stock of water.

We began to see that our chance of finding the remains of our lost companion was very slight. I was sorry to think that the unfortunate man's last sensible moments must have been embittered by the thought that, as he had lost himself in the capacity of a messenger for my relief, I too must necessarily fall a victim to his mishap.

I called this terrible region that lies between the Rawlinson Range and the next permanent water that may eventually be found to the west, Gibson's Desert, after this first white victim to its horrors.

Gibson, having had my horse, rode away in my saddle with my field glasses attached; but everything was gone—man and horse alike swallowed in this remorseless desert. The weather was cool at night, even cold, for which I was most thankful, or we could not have remained so long away from water. We consulted together, and could only agree that unless we came across Gibson's remains by mid-day, we must of necessity retreat, otherwise it would be at the loss of fresh lives, human and equine, for as he was mounted on so excellent an animal as the Fair Maid, on account of whose excellence I had chosen her to ride, it seemed quite evident that this noble creature had carried him only too well, and had been literally ridden to death, having carried her rider too far from water ever to return, even if he had known where it lay. What actual distance she had carried him,

of course it was impossible to say ; going so persistently in the wrong direction, he was simply hastening on to perish. I felt more at ease walking along the track than riding. We could only go slowly, mile after mile, rising sand-ridge after sand-ridge, until twelve o'clock, not having been able to trace him more than seven or eight miles since morning. We could not reach the Circus by night, for we were nearly fifty miles from it, and in all probability we should get no water there when we returned. We had to abandon any further attempt. The mare had carried him God knows where, and we had to desist from our melancholy and unsuccessful search. Ah! who can tell his place of rest, far in the mulga's shade? or where his drooping courser, bending low, all feebly foaming fell? I may here remark, that when we relinquished the search, Gibson's tracks were going in the direction of, though not straight to, the dry ridges that Jimmy and I visited in February. These were now in sight, and no doubt Gibson imagined they were the Rawlinson Range, and he probably ended his life amongst them. It was impossible for us to go there now ; I had difficulty enough to get away from them when I purposely visited them. We now made a straight line for the western end of the Rawlinson, and continued travelling until nearly morning, and did not stop till the edge of Lake Christopher was reached. This was the fifth night from water, and the horses were only just able to crawl, and we camped about ten miles from the Circus ; we hoped to get water for them there. During our night march, before reaching the lake—that is, owing to the horses we were driving running

along them, away from our line—we crossed and saw the tracks of the two loose horses, Badger and Darkie; they were making too southerly ever to reach the Rawlinson. Where these two unfortunate brutes wandered to and died can never be known, for it would cost the lives of men simply to ascertain.

On reaching the Circus next morning, the 8th, there was only mud and slime, and we had to go so slowly on, until we reached the Gorge of Tarns very late, reaching the depot still later. I was almost more exhausted now than when I walked into it last. Jimmy was all right with the little dog, and heartily glad at our return, as he thought it was the end of our troubles. Jimmy was but young, and to be left alone in such a lonely spot, with the constant dread of hostile attacks from the natives, would not be pleasant for any one. Our stock of poor old Terrible Billy was all but gone, and it was necessary to kill another horse. Mr. Tietkens and Jimmy had partially erected another smoke-house, and to-morrow we must work at it again. The affairs of the dead must give place to those of the living. I could not endure the thought of leaving Gibson's last resting-place unknown, although Bunyan says, "Wail not for the dead, for they have now become the companions of the immortals." As I have said, my mind could not rest easy without making another attempt to discover Gibson; but now that the Circus water was gone, it would be useless to go from here without some other water between, for where we left his tracks was seventy miles away, and by the time we could get back to them it would be time to return.

In the early part of the day we got sticks and logs, and erected a portion of the smoke-house, while Jimmy got the horses. I then determined to go with Mr. Tietkens to where he and Gibson had found a rock-hole, which they said was unapproachable. I was determined to see whether it could be used, so we delayed killing another horse until our return, and in consequence we had to draw upon our small stock of flour. In the afternoon we took five more horses, intending to load them with water at the hole if possible; but I found it utterly useless. I called the most western hill of this range Mount Forrest, and the most western watercourse Forrest's Creek.

When we arrived again at the fort, on Monday, I knew something had happened, for Jimmy was most profuse in his delight at seeing us again. It appeared that while we were preparing to start on Saturday, a whole army of natives were hidden behind the rocks, immediately above the camp, waiting and watching until we departed, and no sooner were we well out of sight and sound, than they began an attack upon poor Jim. According to him, it was only by the continued use of rifle bullets, of which, fortunately, I had a good supply—and, goodness knows, the ground in and around the fort was strewn with enough discharged cartridges—that he could keep them at bay at all. If he had killed ten per cent. for all the cartridges he fired away, I should think he would have destroyed the whole tribe; but he appeared to have been too flurried to have hit many of them. They threw several spears and great quantities of stones down from the rocks; it was fortunate he had a palisade



JIMMY AT FORT MCKELLAR.

to get inside of. Towards night he seems to have driven them off, and he and the little dog watched all night. It must indeed have been something terrible that would keep Jimmy awake all night. Before daylight on Sunday the natives came to attack him again; he had probably improved in his aim by his previous day's practice, for at length he was able to drive them away screeching and yelling, the wounded being carried in the arms of the others. One fellow, Jimmy said, came rushing up to give him his quietus, and began dancing about the camp and pulling over all the things, when Jimmy suddenly caught up a shot gun loaded with heavy long-shot cartridges, of which I had about a dozen left for defence, and before the fellow could get away, he received the full charge in his body. Jimmy said he bounded up in the air, held up his arms, shrieked, and screamed, but finally ran off with all the others, and they had not troubled him since. I gave the lad great praise for his action. He had had a most fortunate escape from most probably a cruel death, if indeed these animals would not have actually eaten him.

We finished the smoke-house this afternoon, and, having secured the new victim we were going to slay, tied him up all night. This time it was Tommy. I had brought him originally from Victoria, and he had been out on my first expedition. He was now very old and very poor, two coincidences that can only be thoroughly comprehended by the antiquated of the human race; and for my part I would rather be killed and eaten by savages, than experience such calamities at an advanced period of life. Tommy did not promise much oil.

I shot him early, and we got him into the smoke-house with the exception of such portions as we kept fresh, by the afternoon. We had to boil every bone in his body to get sufficient oil to fry steaks with, and the only way to get one's teeth through the latter was to pound them well before cooking. I wish I had a sausage machine. The thermometer to-day only 78° . Had Gibson not been lost I should certainly have pushed out west again and again. To say I was sorry to abandon such a work in such a region, though true, may seem absurd, but it must be remembered I was pitted, or had pitted myself, against Nature, and a second time I was conquered. The expedition had failed in its attempt to reach the west, but still it had done something. It would at all events leave a record. Our stores and clothes were gone, we had nothing but horseflesh to eat, and it is scarcely to be wondered at if neither Mr. Tietkens nor Jimmy could receive my intimation of my intention to retreat otherwise than with pleasure, though both were anxious, as I was, that our efforts should be successful. In our present circumstances, however, nothing more could be done. In vain the strong will and the endeavour, which for ever wrestled with the tides of fate.

We set to work to shoe some of the horses. When Tommy is smoked we shall depart. He proved to have more flesh on his bones than I anticipated, and he may last us for a month. The next few days got hot and sultry, and rain again threatened. If we could only get a good fall, out to the west we would go again without a further thought; for if heavy rain fell we would surely

find some receptacle at the Alfred and Marie Range to help us on? But no, the rain would not come. Every drop in this singular region seems meted and counted out, yet there are the marks of heavy floods on all the watercourses. The question of when did the floods occur, which caused these marks, and when, oh when, will such phenomena occur again, is always recurring to me. The climate of this region too seems most extraordinary; for both last night and the night before we could all lie on our blankets without requiring a rag to cover us, while a month ago it was so cold at night that we actually wanted fires. I never knew the nights so warm in May in any other parts I have visited, and I cannot determine whether this is a peculiarity of the region, or whether the present is an unusual season throughout this half of the continent. With the exception of a few showers which fell in January, not a drop of rain to leave water has fallen since I left the telegraph line.

I cannot leave this singular spot without a few remarks on its peculiarities and appearance, for its waters are undoubtedly permanent, and may be useful to future travellers. In the first place Fort McKellar bears 12° east of south from the highest ridge of Mount Destruction, in the Carnarvon Range; that mountain, however, is partially hidden by the intervening low hills where Mr. Tietkens's riding-horse Bluey died. In consequence I called it Bluey's Range. This depot is amongst a heavy clump of fine eucalypts, which are only thick for about a quarter of a mile. From beneath this clump a fine strong spring of the purest water flows, and just opposite our fort is a little basin

with a stony bottom, which we had to bridge over to reach the western bank. The grazing capabilities of the country are very poor, and the horses only existed here since leaving the pass. On the 20th it was a month since Gibson and I departed for the west. This morning three natives came up near the camp, but as they or their tribe had so lately attacked it, I had no very loving feelings for them, although we had a peaceable interview. The only information I could glean from them was that their word for travelling, or going, or coming, was *Peterman*. They pointed to Mount Destruction, and intimated that they were aware that we had *Petermaned* there, that we had *Petermaned* both from the east and to the west. Everything with them was *Peterman*. It is singular how identical the word is in sound with the name of the late Dr. Petermann, the geographer. In looking over Gibson's few effects, Mr. Tietkens and I found, in an old pocket-book, a drinking song and a certificate of his marriage: he had never told us anything about this.

CHAPTER XI.

FROM 21ST MAY TO 20TH JULY, 1874.

Depart for civilisation—The springs at the pass—Farewell to Sladen Water—The Schwerin Mural Crescent—The return route—Recross the boundary line—Natives and their smokes—A canine telegram—New features—The Sugar-loaf—Mount Olga once more—Ayers' Rock—Cold weather—A flat-topped hill—Abandon a horse—A desert region—A strange feature—Lake Amadeus again—A new smoke-house—Another smoked horse—The glue-pot—An invention—Friendly natives—A fair and fertile tract—The Finke—A white man—A sumptuous repast—Sale of horses and gear—The Charlotte—The Peake—In the mail—Hear of Dick's death—In Adelaide—Concluding remarks.

ON the afternoon of Thursday, 21st May, we began our retreat, and finally left Fort McKellar, where my hopes had been as high as my defeat was signal. On arriving at the pass we camped close to the beautiful fresh-water springs, where both Mr. Tietkens and Gibson, had planted a patch of splendid soil, Gibson having done the same at Fort McKellar with all kinds of seeds; but the only thing that came up well here was maize. That looked splendid, and had grown nearly three feet high. The weather was now delightful, and although in full retreat, had there been no gloom upon our feelings, had we had any good food to eat, with such fine horses as Banks, and Diaway, W. A., Trew, Blackie, &c. to ride, and a line of well-

watered country before us for hundreds of miles, we might have considered our return a pleasure trip; but gloom covered our retreat, and we travelled along almost in silence. The pass was a place I greatly liked, and it was free from ants. There was a long line of fine eucalyptus timber and an extensive piece of ground covered with rushes, which made it look very pretty; altogether it was a most desirable spot for an explorer's camp, and an excellent place for the horses, as they soon got fat here. It is impossible that I should ever forget Sladen Water or the Pass of the Abencerages: "Methinks I am as well in this valley as I have been anywhere else in all our journey; the place methinks suits with my spirit. I love to be in such places, where there is no rattling with coaches, nor rumbling with wheels. Methinks here one may, without much molestation, be thinking what he is, and whence he came; what he has done, and to what the king has called him" (Bunyan). On the Queen's birthday we bade it a last farewell, and departed for the east and civilisation, once more. We now had the route that Mr. Tietkens and I had explored in March—that is to say, passing and getting water at all the following places:—Gill's Pinnacle, the Ruined Rampart, Louisa's Creek, and the Chirnside. The country, as I have said before, was excellent and good for travelling over. The crescent-shaped and wall-like range running from the Weld Pass to Gill's Pinnacle, and beyond it, I named the Schwerin Mural Crescent; and a pass through it I named Vladimar Pass, in honour of Prince Vladimar, son of the Emperor of Russia, married to the Princess of Schwerin. When we

reached the place where we first surprised the natives hunting, in March, we made a more northerly détour, as our former line had been through and over very rough hills, and in so doing we found on the 1st of June another splendid watering-place, where several creeks joined and ran down through a rocky defile, or glen, to the north. There was plenty of both rock and sand water here, and it was a very pretty and excellent little place. I called it Winter's* Glen, and the main creek of the three in which it lies, Irving Creek. This water may easily be found by a future traveller, from its bearing from a high, long-pointed hill abruptly ending to the west, which I named Mount Phillips. This is a very conspicuous mount in this region, being, like many of the others named on this line, detached to allow watercourses to pass northwards, and yet forming a part of the long northern wall, of which the Petermann Range is formed. This mount can be distinctly seen from Mount Olga, although it is seventy miles away, and from whence it bears 4° north of west. The water gorge at Winter's Glen bears west from the highest point of Mount Phillips, and four miles away. We were now again in the territories of South Australia, having bid farewell to her sister state, and turned our backs upon that peculiar province of the sun, the last of austral lands he shines upon. We next paid a visit to Glen Robertson, of 15th March, as it was a convenient place from which to make a straight line to the Sugar-loaf. To reach it we had to make a circuitous line, under the foot of the farthest east hill, where, it will be remembered, we had been attacked during dinner-time.

We reached the glen early. There was yet another detached hill in the northern line, which is the most eastern of the Petermann Range. I named it Mount McCulloch. It can also easily be distinguished from Mount Olga. From Glen Robertson Mount McCulloch bore 3° east of north. We rested here a day, during which several natives made their appearance and lit signal fires for others. There is a great difference between signal and hunting fires; we were perfectly acquainted with both, as my reader may imagine. One aboriginal fiend, of the *Homo sapiens* genus, while we were sitting down sewing bags as usual, sneaked so close upon us, down the rocks behind the camp, that he could easily have touched or tomahawked—if he had one—either of us, before he was discovered. My little dog was sometimes too lazy to obey, when a little distance off, the command to sit, or stand up; in that case I used to send him a telegram, as I called it—that is to say, throw a little stone at him, and up he would sit immediately. This sneak of a native was having a fine game with us. Cocky was lying down near Mr. Tietkens, when a stone came quietly and roused him, causing him to sit up. Mr. Tietkens patted him, and he lay down again. Immediately after another stone came, and up sat Cocky. This aroused Mr. Tietkens's curiosity, as he didn't hear me speak to the dog, and he said, "Did you send Cocky a telegram?" I said, "No." "Well then," said he, "somebody did twice: did you, Jimmy?" "No." "Oh!" I exclaimed, "it's those blacks!" We jumped up and looked at the low rocks behind us, where we saw about half-a-dozen sidling slowly

away behind them. Jimmy ran on top, but they had all mysteriously disappeared. We kept a sharp look out after this, and fired a rifle off two or three times, when we heard some groans and yells in front of us up the creek gorge.

Having got some rock water at the Sugar-loaf or Stevenson's Peak in coming out, we went there again. On the road, at nine miles, we crossed another large wide creek running north. I called it the Armstrong;* there was no water where we crossed it. At twenty miles I found another fine little glen, with a large rock-hole, and water in the sand of the creek-bed. I called this Wyselaski's* Glen, and the creek the Hopkins. It was a very fine and pretty spot, and the grass excellent. On reaching the Peak or Sugar-loaf, without troubling the old rocky shelf, so difficult for horses to approach, and where there was very little water, we found another spot, a kind of native well, half a mile west of the gorge, and over a rise. We pushed on now for Mount Olga, and camped in casuarina and triodia sandhills without water. The night of the 5th June was very cold and windy; my only remaining thermometer is not graduated below 36°. The mercury was down in the bulb this morning. Two horses straying delayed us, and it was quite late at night when Mount Olga was reached. I was very much pleased to see the little purling brook gurgling along its rocky bed, and all the little basins full. The water, as when I last saw it, ended where the solid rock fell off. The country all around was excessively dry, and the grass withered, except in the channel of the creek, where there was some a trifle green. From here I had a

desire to penetrate straight east to the Finke, as a considerable distance upon that line was yet quite unknown. One of our horses, Formby, was unwell, and very troublesome to drive. We are nearly at the end of our stock of Tommy, and Formby is a candidate for the smoke-house that will evidently be elected, though we have yet enough Tommy for another week. While here, I rode round northward to inspect that side of this singular and utterly unclimbable mountain. Our camp was at the south face, under a mound which lay up against the highest mound of the whole. On the west side I found another running spring, with some much larger rock-basins than at our camp. Of course the water ceased running where the rock ended. Round on the north side I found a still stronger spring, in a larger channel. I rode completely round the mass of this wonderful feature; its extraordinary appearance will never be out of my remembrance. It is no doubt of volcanic origin, belched out of the bowels, and on to the surface, of the earth, by the sulphurous upheavings of subterraneous and sub-aqueous fires, and cooled and solidified into monstrous masses by the gelid currents of the deepest waves of the most ancient of former oceans. As I before remarked, it is composed of mixed and rounded stones, formed into rounded shapes, but some upon the eastern side are turreted, and some almost pillars, except that their thickness is rather out of proportion to their height. The highest point of the whole, as given before, is 1500 feet above the ground, while it is 2800 feet above the sea-level. Could I be buried at Mount Olga, I should certainly borrow Sir Christopher Wren's

epitaph, *Circumspice si monumentum requiris*. To the eastward from here, as mentioned in my first expedition, and not very far off, lay another strange and singular-looking mound, similar perhaps to this. Beyond that, and still further to the east, and a very long way off, was another mount or hill or range, but very indistinct from distance.

On the 9th we went away to the near bare-looking mountain to the east; it was twenty miles. We found a very fine deep pool of water lying in sand under the abrupt and rocky face of the mount upon its southern side. There was also a fine, deep, shady, and roomy cave here, ornamented in the usual aboriginal fashion. There were two marks upon the walls, three or four feet long, in parallel lines with spots between them.

Mr. Gosse had been here from the Gill's Range of my former expedition, and must have crossed the extremity of Lake Amadeus. He named this Ayers' Rock. Its appearance and outline is most imposing, for it is simply a mammoth monolith that rises out of the sandy desert soil around, and stands with a perpendicular and totally inaccessible face at all points, except one slope near the north-west end, and that at least is but a precarious climbing ground to a height of more than 1100 feet. Down its furrowed and corrugated sides the trickling of water for untold ages has descended in times of rain, and for long periods after, until the drainage ceased, into sandy basins at its feet. The dimensions of this vast slab are over two miles long, over one mile through, and nearly a quarter of a mile high. The great difference between it and Mount Olga is in the rock formation, for this is one solid

granite stone, and is part and parcel of the original rock, which, having been formed after its state of fusion in the beginning, has there remained, while the aged Mount Olga has been thrown up subsequently from below. Mount Olga is the more wonderful and grotesque; Mount Ayers the more ancient and sublime. There is permanent water here, but, unlike the Mount Olga springs, it lies all in standing pools. There is excellent grazing ground around this rock, though now the grass is very dry. It might almost be said of this, as of the Pyramids or the Sphinx, round the decay of that colossal rock, boundless and bare, the lone and level sands stretch far away. This certainly was a fine place for a camp. The water was icy cold; a plunge into its sunless deeps was a frigid tonic that, further west in the summer heats, would have been almost paradisiacal, while now it was almost a penalty. The hill or range further east seems farther away now than it did from Mount Olga. It is flat on the summit, and no doubt is the same high and flat-topped mount I saw from the Sentinel in August last. We are encamped in the roomy cave, for we find it much warmer than in the outer atmosphere, warmth being as great a consideration now, as shade had formerly been.

We started for the flat-topped hill on the 11th of June. The country was all extremely heavy sandhills, with casuarina and triodia; we had to encamp among them at twenty-three miles, without water. The next morning Formby knocked up, and lay down, and we had to leave him in the scrub. To-day we got over thirty miles, the hill being yet seven or eight miles off. It looks most

repulsive, so far as any likelihoods of obtaining water is concerned. The region was a perfect desert, worse for travelling, indeed, than Gibson's Desert itself. Leaving Jimmy with the horses, Mr. Tietkens and I rode over to the mount, and reached it in seven miles. At a mile and a half from it we came to an outer escarpment of rocks ; but between that and the mount more sandhills and thick scrub exist. We rode all round this strange feature ; it was many hundreds of feet high, and for half its height its sides sloped ; the crown rested upon a perpendicular wall. It was almost circular, and perfectly flat upon the top, apparently having the same kind of vegetation and timber upon its summit as that upon the ground below. I don't know that it is accessible ; it seemed not ; I saw no place, and did not attempt to ascend it.

To the north, and about fifteen miles away, the not yet ended Amadeus Lake was visible. To the east timbered ridges bounded the view. There were a few dry clay-pans here, but no water. We were sixty miles from the rock, and to all appearance we might have to go sixty, or a hundred, or more miles before we should reach water. The only water I knew on this line of latitude was at the Finke itself, nearly 200 miles away.

We must return to our Rock of Ages, for we must smoke another horse, and we have no water to push any farther here. We returned to Jimmy and the horses, and pushed back for the rock as fast as we could. When we reached the spot where we had left Formby he had wandered away. We went some distance on his tracks, but could not delay for a further search. No doubt he had lain

down and died not far off. I was sorry now I had not smoked him before we started, though he was scarcely fit even for explorers' food. We got back to the rock on the 15th, very late at night, hungry and thirsty. The next day we worked at a new smoke-house, and had to shift the camp to it, so as to be near, to keep a perpetual cloud rising, till the meat is safe. The smoke-house is formed of four main stakes stuck into the ground and coming nearly together at the top, with cross sticks all the way down, and covered over with tarpaulins, so that no smoke can escape except through the top. The meat is cut into thin strips, and becomes perfectly permeated with smoke. So soon as all was ready, down went poor Hollow Back. He was in what is called good working condition, but he had not a vestige of fat about him. The only adipose matter we could obtain from him was by boiling his bones, and the small quantity of oil thus obtained would only fry a few meals of steaks. When that was done we had to fry or parboil them in water. Our favourite method of cooking the horseflesh after the fresh meat was eaten, was by first boiling and then pounding with the axe, tomahawk head, and shoeing hammer, then cutting it into small pieces, wetting the mass, and binding it with a pannikin of flour, putting it into the coals in the frying-pan, and covering the whole with hot ashes. But the flour would not last, and those delicious horse-dampers, though now but things of the past, were by no means relegated to the limbo of forgotten things. The boiled-up bones, hoofs, shanks, skull, &c., of each horse, though they failed to produce a sufficient quantity of oil to please us,

yet in the cool of the night resolved themselves into a consistent jelly that stank like rotten glue, and at breakfast at least, when this disgusting stuff was in a measure coagulated, we would request one another with the greatest politeness to pass the glue-pot. Had it not been that I was an inventor of transcendent genius, even this last luxury would have been debarred us. We had been absent from civilisation, so long, that our tin billies, the only boiling utensils we had, got completely worn or burnt out at the bottoms, and as the boilings for glue and oil must still go on, what were we to do with billies with no bottoms? Although as an inventor I can allow no one to depreciate my genius, I will admit there was but one thing that could be done, and those muffs Tietkens and Jimmy actually advised me to do what I had invented, which was simply—all great inventions are simple—to cover the bottoms with canvas, and embed the billies half-way up their sides in cold ashes, and boil from the top instead of the bottom, which of course we did, and these were our glue- and flesh-pots. The tongue, brains, kidneys, and other tit-bits of course were eaten first.

On the 19th some natives began to yell near the camp, but three only made their appearance. They were not only the least offensive and most civil we had met on any of our travels, but they were almost endearing in their welcome to us. We gave them some of the bones and odd pieces of horse-meat, which seemed to give them great satisfaction, and they ate some pieces raw. They were in undress uniform, and “free as Nature first made man, ere the vile laws of servitude began, when, wild in the

woods, the noble savage ran." They were rather good, though extremely wild-looking young men. One of them had splendid long black curls waving in the wind, hanging down nearly to his middle; the other two had chignons. They remained with us only about three hours. The day was windy, sand-dusty, and disagreeable. One blast of wind blew my last thermometer, which was hanging on a sapling, so violently to the ground that it broke.

Mr. Tietkens had been using a small pair of bright steel plyers. When the endearing natives were gone it was discovered that the plyers had departed also; it was only Christian charity to hope that they had *not* gone together. It was evident that Mr. Gosse must have crossed an eastern part of Lake Amadeus to get here from Gill's Range, and as he had a wagon, I thought I would be so far beholden to him as to make use of his crossing-place.

We left the Rock on the 23rd, but only going four miles for a start, we let the horses go back without hobbles to feed for the night. Where the lake was crossed Mr. Gosse had laid down a broad streak of bushes and boughs, and we crossed without much difficulty, the crossing-place being very narrow. Leaving the dray track at the lower end of King's Creek of my former journey, we struck across for Penny's Creek, four miles east of it, where the splendid rocky reservoir is, and where there was delicious herbage for the horses. We had now a fair and fertile tract to the River Finke, discovered by me previously, getting water and grass at Stokes's, Bagot's, Trickett's, and Petermann's Creeks; fish and water at Middleton's and Rogers's Pass and Ponds. Thence down the Palmer by Briscoe's

Pass, and on to the junction of the Finke, where there is a fine large water-hole at the junction.

On the 10th of July travelling down the Finke near a place called Crown Point on the telegraph line, we saw a white man riding towards us. He proved to be a Mr. Alfred Frost, the owner of several fine horse-teams and a contractor to supply loading for the Government to several telegraph stations farther up the line. I had known him before; he was most kind. He was going ahead to select a camp for his large party, but upon our telling him of our having nothing but horse-flesh, he immediately returned with us, and we met the advancing teams. He called a halt, ordered the horses to be unyoked, and we were soon laughing and shaking hands with new-found friends. Food was the first order Mr. Frost gave, and while some were unyoking the horses, some were boiling the tea-billies, while old Frost was extracting a quart of rum for us from a hogshead. But we did not indulge in more than a sip or two, as bread and meat was what we cared for most. In ten minutes the tea was ready; some splendid fat corned beef, and mustard, and well-cooked damper were put before us, and oh, didn't we eat! Then pots of jams and tins of butter were put on our plates whole, and were scooped up with spoons, till human organisms could do no more. We were actually full—full to repletion. Then we had some grog. Next we had a sleep, and then at sundown another exquisite meal. It made our new friends shudder to look at our remaining stock of Hollow Back, when we emptied it out on a tarpaulin and told them that was what we had been living on. However, I made them

a present of it for their dogs. Most of the teamsters knew Gibson, and expressed their sorrow at his mishap; some of them also knew he was married.

The natives up the line had been very aggressive at the telegraph stations, while we were absent, and all our firearms, &c., were eagerly purchased, also several horses and gear. Mr. Frost fell in love with Banks at a glance, and, though I tried not to part with the horse, he was so anxious to buy him that I could not well refuse, although I had intended to keep him and West Australian. Trew, one of the best horses, had been staked early in the journey and his foot was blemished, otherwise he was a splendid horse. All the best horses were wanted—Diaway, Blackie, &c., but I kept W. A., Widge, and one or two more of the best, as we still had several hundreds of miles to go.

When we parted from our friends we only had a few horses left. We reached the Charlotte Waters about twelve o'clock on July 13th, having been nearly a year absent from civilisation. Our welcome here by my friend and namesake, Mr. Christopher Giles, was of the warmest, and he clothed and fed us like a young father. He had also recovered and kept my old horse Cocky. The whole of the establishment there, testified their pleasure at our return. On our arrival at the Peake our reception by Mr. and Mrs. Blood at the telegraph station was most gratifying. Mr. John Bagot also supplied us with many necessaries at his cattle-station. The mail contractor had a light buggy here, and I obtained a seat and was driven by him as far as the Blinman Copper Mine, viâ Beltana, where I heard that my black boy Dick

had died of influenza at a camp of the semi-civilised natives near a hill called by Eyre, Mount North-west. From the Blinman I took the regular mail coach and train nearly 300 miles to Adelaide. Mr. Tietkens and Jimmy came behind and sold the remaining horses at the Blinman, where they also took the coach and joined me in Adelaide a week later.

I have now but a few concluding remarks to make ; for my second expedition is at an end, and those of my readers who have followed my wanderings are perhaps as glad to arrive at the end as I was. I may truly say that for nearly twelve months I had been the well-wrought slave not only of the sextant, the compass, and the pen, but of the shovel, the axe, and the needle also. There had been a continual strain on brain and muscle. The leader of such an expedition as this could not stand by and simply give orders for certain work to be performed ; he must join in it, and with the good example of heart and hand assist and cheer those with whom he was associated. To my friend and second, Mr. Tietkens, I was under great obligations, for I found him, as my readers will have seen, always ready and ever willing for the most arduous and disagreeable of our many undertakings. My expedition had been unsuccessful in its main object, and my most sanguine hopes had been destroyed. I knew at starting a great deal was expected from me, and if I had not fulfilled the hopes of my friends, I could only console them by the fact that I could not even fulfil my own. But if it is conceded that I had done my devoir as an Australian explorer, then I am satisfied. Nothing succeeds like success, but it is not in the power of man—

however he may deserve—to command it. Many trials and many bitter hours must the explorer of such a region experience. The life of a man is to be held at no more than a moment's purchase. The slightest accident or want of judgment may instantly become the cause of death while engaged in such an enterprise, and it may be truly said we passed through a baptism worse indeed than that of fire—the baptism of no water. That I should ever again take the field is more than I would undertake to say,—

“ Yet the charmèd spell
Which summons man to high discovery,
Is ever vocal in the outward world ;
But those alone may hear it who have hearts,
Responsive to its tone.”

I may add that I had discovered a line of waters to Sladen Water and Fort McKellar, and that at a distance of 150 miles from there lies the Alfred and Marie Range. At what price that range was sighted I need not now repeat. It is highly probable that water exists there also.

It was, however, evident to me that it is only with camels there is much likelihood of a successful and permanently valuable issue in case of any future attempt. There was only one gentleman in the whole of Australia who could supply the means of its accomplishment ; and to him the country at large must in future be, as it is at present, indebted for ultimate discoveries. Of course that gentleman was the Honourable Sir Thomas Elder. To my kind friend Baron Mueller I am greatly indebted, and I trust, though unsuccessful, I bring no discredit upon him for his exertions on my behalf.

The map and journal of my expedition, as per agreement, was handed over to the South Australian Government, and printed as Parliamentary Papers ; some few anecdotes of things that occurred have since been added. It was not to be supposed that in a civilised community, and amongst educated people, that such a record should pass unnoticed. I received many compliments from men of standing. The truest, perhaps, was from a gentleman who patted me on the back and said, "Ah, Ernest, my boy, you should never have come back ; you should have sent your journal home by Tietkens and died out there yourself." His Excellency Sir George Bowen, the Governor of Victoria, was very kind, and not only expressed approval of my exertions, but wrote favourable despatches on my behalf to the Colonial Office.* Sir Graham Berry, the present Agent-General for the Colony of Victoria, when Premier, showed his good opinion by doing me the good turn of a temporary appointment, for which I shall ever feel grateful.

What was generally thought of my work was the cause of subsequent explorations, as Sir Thomas Elder, the only camel-owner in Australia, to whom, through Baron von Mueller, I was now introduced, desired me to take the field again ; and it was soon arranged that he would equip me with camels, and send me in command of a thoroughly efficient exploring expedition. Upon this occasion I was to traverse, as near as possible, the country lying under the 29th parallel of latitude, and I was to

* This was also the case subsequently with Sir William Robinson, K.C.M.G., the Governor of Western Australia, after my arrival at Perth.

force my way through the southern interior to the City of Perth in Western Australia, by a new and unknown route. But, previous to beginning the new expedition, Sir Thomas desired me to execute a commission for a gentleman in England, of a squatting nature, in the neighbourhood of Fowler's Bay, of Flinders, on the western coast of South Australia, and near the head of the Great Australian Bight. This work was done entirely with horses, though I had two camels, or rather dromedaries—a bull and a cow, which had a young calf. There was no pack-saddle for the bull, and the cow being very poor, I had not yet made use of them. After I had completed my surveys near Fowler's Bay, and visited the remote locality of Eucla Harbour, discovered by Flinders and mentioned by Eyre in his travels in 1841, at the boundary of the two colonies of South, and Western Australia, I had to proceed to Sir Thomas Elder's cattle and sheep station, and camel depot, at Beltana, to fit out for the new expedition for Perth. Beltana station lies about 300 miles nearly north from the city of Adelaide, while Fowler's Bay lies 450 miles about west-north-west from that city; and though Beltana is only 370 or 380 miles in a straight line across the country from Fowler's Bay, yet the intervening country being mostly unknown, and the great salt depression of Lake Torrens lying in the way, I had to travel 700 miles to reach it. As this was my first attempt with camels, I shall now give an account of my journey there with them and three horses. This undertaking was my third expedition, and will be detailed in the following book.

BOOK III.

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HERMIT HILL & FINNISS SPRINGS
(The Hon. Sir Thomas Elder's Staⁿ)

TELEGRAPH

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PARING ROCKHOLE

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Beltana Township & Telegraph Staⁿ
(The Hon. Sir Thomas Elder's Sheep and Cattle Station and Camel Dépôt)

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Port Augusta West Port Augusta

SPENCER GULF

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CHAPTER I.

FROM 13TH MARCH TO 1ST APRIL, 1875.

Leave Fowler's Bay—Camels and horses—A great plain—A black romance—An oasis—Youldeh—Old Jimmy—Cockata blacks—In concealment—Flies, ants, and heat—A line of waters to the east—Leave depot—The camels—Slow progress—Lose a horse loaded with water—Tinkle of a bell—Chimpering—Heavy sand-dunes—Astray in the wilds—Pylebung—A native dam—Inhuman mutilations—Mowling and Whitegin—The scrubs—Wynbring—A conspicuous mountain—A native family—March flies.

WHILE at Fowler's Bay I had heard of a native watering-place called Youldeh, that was known to one or two white people, and I found that it lay about 130 miles inland, in a north-north-westerly direction; my object now being to push across to Beltana to the eastwards and endeavour to find a good travelling route by which I could bring my projected large camel expedition back to the water at Youldeh, as a starting depot for the west.

Leaving the bay on Saturday, the 13th of March, 1875, I had a strong party with me as far as Youldeh. My second in command, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Thomas Richards, police trooper—who, having previously visited Youldeh, was going to show me its whereabouts—and Mr. George Murray; I had with me also another white man, Peter Nicholls, who was my cook, one old black fellow and two

young ones. The old man and one young fellow went on, one day in advance and led the two camels, the calf running loose. We all rode horses, and had several pack-horses to carry our provisions and camp necessaries. The weather was exceedingly hot, although the previous summer months had been reasonably cool, the heat having been tempered by southerly sea breezes. Nature now seemed to intend to concentrate all the usual heat of an Australian summer into the two remaining months that were left to her. The thermometer usually stood for several hours of each day at 104° , 105° , and 106° in the shade.

After leaving Colona, an out sheep station belonging to Fowler's Bay, lying some thirty-five miles north-west from it, and where Mr. Murray resided, we traversed a country alternating between belts of scrub and grassy flats or small plains, until at twenty miles from Colona we reached the edge of a plain that stretched away to the north, and was evidently of a very great extent. The soil was loose and yielding, and of a very poor quality. Although this plain was covered with vegetation, there was no grass whatever upon it; but a growth of a kind of broom, two to three feet high, waving in the heated breezes as far as the eye could reach, which gave it a billowy and extraordinary appearance. The botanical name of this plant is *Eremophila scoparia*.

At fifty miles from Colona and eighty-five from the bay, we reached a salt lagoon, which, though several miles long, and perhaps a mile wide, Mr. Murray's black boy informed us was the footmark or track of a monstrous animal or snake, that used

to haunt the neighbourhood of this big plain, and that it had been driven by the Cockata blacks out of the mountains to the north, the Musgrave Ranges of my last expedition, and which are over 400 miles from the bay. He added that the creature had crawled down to the coast, and now lived in the sea. So here was reliable authority for the existence of a sea serpent. We had often heard tales from the blacks, when sitting round our camp fires at night, about this wonderful animal, and whenever any native spoke about it, it was always in a mysterious undertone. What the name of this monster was, I cannot now remember; but there were syllables enough in it to make a word as long as the lagoon itself. The tales that were told of it, the number of natives it had devoured, how such and such a black fellow's father had encountered and speared it, and how it had occasionally created floods all over the country when it was angry, would have made an excellent novel, which might be produced under the title of a "Black Romance." When we laughed at, or joked this young black fellow who now accompanied us, on the absurdity of his notions, he became very serious, for to him and his co-religionists it was no laughing matter. Another thing was rather strange, and that was, how these coast natives should know there were any mountains to the north of them. I knew it, because I had been there and found them; but that they should know it was curious, for they have no intercourse with the tribes of natives in the country to the north of them; indeed it required a good deal of persuasion to induce the young blacks who accompanied us to go out to Youldeh; and if

it had not been that an old man called Jimmy had been induced by Mr. Richards to go with the camels in advance, I am quite sure the young ones would not have gone at all.

After crossing the salt lagoon or animals' track, and going five miles farther, about north-north-east, we arrived at some granite rocks amongst some low hills, which rose up out of the plain, where some rock water-holes existed, and here we found the two blacks that had preceded us, encamped with the camels. This pretty little place was called Pidinga; the eye was charmed with flowering shrubs about the rocks, and green grass. As the day was very hot, we erected tarpaulins with sticks, this being the only shade to sit under. There were a few hundred acres of good country round the rocks; the supply of water was limited to perhaps a couple of thousand gallons. From Pidinga our route to Youldeh lay about north-north-west, distant thirty-three miles. For about twenty-five miles we traversed an entirely open plain, similar to that just described, and mostly covered with the waving broom bushes; but now upon our right hand, to the north, and stretching also to the west, was a dark line of higher ground formed of sandhills and fringed with low scrub, and timber of various kinds, such as cypress pines (*callitris*), black oak (*casuarinas*) stunted mallee (*eucalyptus*), and a kind of acacia called myal. This new feature, of higher ground, formed the edge of the plain, and is the southern bank of a vast bed of sandhill country that lies between us and the Musgrave Ranges nearly 300 miles to the north.

Having reached the northern edge of the plain

we had been traversing, we now entered the bed of sandhills and scrub which lay before us, and, following the tracks of the two black fellows with the camels, as there was no road to Youldeh, we came in five miles to a spot where, without the slightest indication to point out such a thing, except that we descended into lower ground, there existed a shallow native well in the sandy ground of a small hollow between the red sandhills, and this spot the blacks said was Youldeh. The whole region was glowing with intense heat, and the sand was so hot, that neither the camels nor the horses could endure to remain standing in the sun, but so soon as they were unpacked and unsaddled, sought the shade of the large and numerous leguminous bushes which grew all round the place. As there were five whites and four blacks, we had plenty of hands to set about the different tasks which had to be performed. In the first place we had to dig out the old well ; this some volunteered to do, while others erected an awning with tarpaulins, got firewood, and otherwise turned the wild and bushy spot into a locality suitable for a white man's encampment. Water was easily procurable at a depth of between three and four feet, and all the animals drank as much as they desired, being watered with canvas buckets ; the camels appeared as though they never would be satisfied.

It was only their parching thirst that induced the horses to remain anywhere near the camels, and immediately they got sufficient water, they decamped, though short-hobbled, at a gallop over the high red sandhills from whence we had come ; my riding-horse, Chester, the worst of the mob, went

nearly mad at the approach of the camels. There was not a sign of a blade of grass, or anything else that horses could eat, except a few yellow immortelles of a large coarse description, and these they did not care very much for. The camels, on the contrary, could take large and evidently agreeable mouthfuls of the leaves of the great bushes of the Leguminosæ, which abounded. The conduct of the two kinds of animals was so distinctly different as to arouse the curiosity of all of us; the camels fed in peaceful content in the shade of the bushes from which they ate, and never went out of sight, seeming to take great interest in all we did, and evidently thoroughly enjoying themselves, while the horses were plunging about in hobbles over the sandhills, snorting and fretting with fright and exertion, and neither having or apparently desiring to get anything to eat. Their sole desire was to get away as far as possible from the camels. The supply of water here seemed to be unlimited, but the sandy sides of the well kept falling in; therefore we got some stakes of mallee, and saplings of the native poplar (*Codonocarpus cotinifolius*, of the order of *Phytolacceæ*), and thoroughly slabbed it, at least sufficiently for our time. This place, as I said before, was exceedingly hot, lying at the bottom of a hollow amongst the sandhills, and all we could see from the tops of any of those near us was a mass of higher, darker, and more forbidding undulations of a similar kind. These undulations existed to the east, north, and west, while to the south we could but dimly see the mirage upon the plain we had recently traversed. The water here was fresh and sweet, and if the temperature had not been quite

so hot, we might have enjoyed our encampment here ; but there was no air, and we seemed to be at the bottom of a funnel. The old black fellow, Jimmy, whom Mr. Richards had obtained as a guide to show me some waters in the country to the eastwards, informed us, through the interpretation of Mr. Murray, that he knew of only one water in any direction towards the west, and this he said was a small rock water-hole called Paring.

The following day Mr. Murray and I rode there with old Jimmy, and found it to be a wretched little hole, lying nearly west-north-west about fourteen miles away ; it contained only a few gallons of water, which was almost putrid from the number of dead and decaying birds, rats, lizards, rotten leaves, and sticks that were in it ; had it been full it would have been of no earthly use to me. Old Jimmy was not accustomed to riding, and got out of his latitude once or twice before we reached the place. He was, however, proud of finding himself in the novel position, albeit rather late in life, of riding upon horseback, and if I remember rightly did not tumble off more than three or four times during the whole day. Jimmy was a very agreeable old gentleman ; I could not keep up a conversation with him, as I knew so few words of his language, and he knew only about twenty of mine. It was evident he was a man of superior abilities to most of his race, and he looked like a thoroughbred, and had always been known to Mr. Richards as a proud and honourable old fellow. He was, moreover, the father of a large family, namely five, which is probably an unprecedented number amongst the aboriginal tribes of this part of Australia, all of

whom he had left behind, as well as his wife, to oblige me; and many a time he regretted this before he saw them again, and after; not from any unkindness on my part, for my readers will see we were the best of friends the whole time we were together. On this little excursion it was very amusing to watch old Jimmy on horseback, and to notice the look of blank amazement on his face when he found himself at fault amongst the sand-hills; the way he excused himself for not going straight to this little spot was also very ingenuous. In the first place he said, "Not mine young fellow now; not mine like em pony"—the name for all horses at Fowler's Bay—"not mine see 'em Paring long time, only when I am boy." Whereby he intended to imply that some allowance must be made for his not going perfectly straight to the place. However, we got there all right, although I found it to be useless. When asked concerning the country to the north, he declared it was Cockata; the country to the west was also Cockata, the dreaded name of Cockata appearing to carry a nameless undefined horror with it. The term of Cockata blacks is applied by the Fowler's Bay natives to all other tribes of aboriginals in the country inland from the coast, and it seems, although when Fowler's Bay country was first settled by the whites these natives attacked and killed several of the invaders, they always lived in terror of their enemies to the north, and any atrocity that was committed by themselves, either cannibalism, theft, or murder, was always put down to the account of the Cockatas. Occasionally a mob of these wilder aboriginals would make a

descent upon the quieter coast-blacks, and after a fight would carry off women and other spoils, such as opossum rugs, spears, shields, coolamins—vessels of wood or bark, like small canoes, for carrying water—and they usually killed several of the men of the conquered race. After remaining at this Paring for about an hour, we remounted our horses and returned to the camp at Youldeh. The party remained there for a few days, hoping for a change in the weather, as the heat was now very great and the country in the neighbourhood of the most forbidding and formidable nature to penetrate. It consisted of very high and scrubby red sandhills, and it was altogether so unpleasing a locality that I abandoned the idea of pushing to the north, to discover whether any other waters could be found in that direction, for the present, and postponed the attempt until I should return to this depot en route for Perth, with the whole of my new expedition—deciding to make my way now to the eastwards in order to reach Beltana by a route previously untravelled.

Upon the morning after my return from Paring, all the horses were away—indeed, as I have said before, there was nothing for them to eat at this place, and they always rambled as far as they could possibly go from the camp to get away from the camels, although those more sensible animals were, so to say, in clover. We had three young black fellows and old Jimmy, and it was the young ones' duty to look after and get the horses, while old Jimmy had the easier employment of taking care of the camels. This morning, two of the young blacks were sent out very early

for the horses, whilst the other and old Jimmy remained to do anything that might be required at the camp. The morning was hot and oppressive, we sat as comfortably as we could in the shade of our awning; by twelve o'clock no signs of black boys or horses had made their appearance. At one o'clock we had dinner, and gave old Jimmy and his mate theirs. I noticed that the younger black left the camp with a bit of a bundle under his shirt and a canvas water-bag; I and some of the others watched whither he went, and to our surprise we found that he was taking food and water to the other two boys, who should have been away after the horses, but were quietly encamped under a big bush within a quarter of a mile of us and had never been after the horses at all. Of course we were very indignant, and were going to punish them with a good thrashing, when one of them informed us that it was no use our hammering them, for they could not go for the horses because they were too much afraid of the Cockata blacks, and unless we sent old Jimmy or a white man they would not go out of sight of the camp. This showed the state of superstition and fear in which these people live. Indeed, I believe if the whole Fowler's Bay tribes were all encamped together in one mob round their own fires, in their own country, and any one ran into the camp and shouted "Cockata," it would cause a stampede among them immediately. It was very annoying to think that the horses had got so many hours' start away from the camp, and the only thing I could do was to send a white man, and Jimmy, with these boys to find the absent animals. Mr. Roberts

volunteered, and had to camp away from water, not returning until late the following day, with only about a third of the mob. The next day all were found but three—one was a police horse of Mr. Richards's, which was never seen after, and two colts of mine which found their way back to, and were eventually recovered at, Fowler's Bay by Mr. Roberts. While encamped here we found Youldeh to be a fearful place, the ants, flies, and heat being each intolerable. We were at the bottom of a sandy funnel, into which the fiery beams of the sun were poured in burning rays, and the radiation of heat from the sandy country around made it all the hotter. Not a breath of air could be had as we lay or sat panting in the shade we had erected with our tarpaulins. There was no view for more than a hundred yards anywhere, unless one climbed to the top of a sandhill, and then other sandhills all round only were to be seen. The position of this place I found to be in latitude $30^{\circ} 24' 10''$ and approximate longitude $131^{\circ} 46'$. On the 23rd of March Mr. Murray, Jimmy, and I, went to the top of a sandhill overlooking the camp and had a long confabulation with Jimmy—at least Mr. Murray had, and he interpreted the old fellow's remarks to me. It appeared that he knew the country, and some watering-places in it, for some distance to the eastward, and on making a kind of map on the sand, he put down several marks, which he called by the following names, viz., Chimpering, Pylebung, Mowling, Whitegin, and Wynbring; of these he said Pylebung and Wynbring were the best waters. By his account they all lay due east from hence, and they appeared to be the most

wonderful places in the world. He said he had not visited any of these places since he was a little boy with his mother, and it appeared his mother was a widow and that these places belonged to her country, but that she had subsequently become the wife of a Fowler's Bay native, who had taken her and her little Jimmy away out of that part of the country, therefore he had not been there since. He said that Pylebung was a water that stood up high, and that Cockata black fellows had made it with wooden shovels. This account certainly excited my curiosity, as I had never seen anything which could approximate to Jimmy's description; he also said it was mucka pickaninny, only big one, which meant that it was by no means a small water. Chimpering and Whitegin, he said, were rock-holes, but Wynbring, the farthest water he knew, according to his account was something astounding. He said it was a mountain, a water-hole, a lake, a spring, and a well, all in one, and that it was distant about six sleeps from Youldeh; this, according to our rendering, as Jimmy declared also that it was mucka close up, only long way, we considered to be about 120 miles. Beyond Wynbring Jimmy knew nothing whatever of the country, and I think he had a latent idea in his mind that there really was nothing beyond it. The result of our interview was, that I determined to send all the party back to Fowler's Bay, except one white man and old Jimmy, also all the horses except three, and to start with this small party and the camels to the eastward on the following day. I selected Peter Nicholls to accompany me. I found the boiling-point of water at the camp was 211° , making its

altitude above the sea 509 feet. The sandhills were about 100 feet high on the average.

The two camels and the calf, were sent to me by Sir Thomas Elder, from Adelaide, while I was at Fowler's Bay, by an Afghan named Saleh Mahomet, who returned to, and met me at, Beltana, by the ordinary way of travellers. There was only a riding-saddle for the cow, the bull having come bare-backed; I therefore had to invent a pack- or baggage-saddle for him, and I venture to assert that 999,999 people out of every million would rather be excused the task. In this work I was ably seconded by Mr. Richards, who did most of the sewing and pad-making, but Mr. Armstrong, one of the owners and manager of the Fowler's Bay Station, though he supplied me in profusion with every other requisite, would not let me have the size of iron I wished, and I had to take what I could get, he thinking it the right size; and unfortunately that which I got for the saddle-trees was not stout enough, and, although in other respects the saddle was a brilliant success, though made upon a totally different principle from that of an Afghan's saddle, when the animal was loaded, the weakness of the iron made it continually widen, and in consequence the iron pressed down on the much-enduring creature's body and hurt him severely.

We frequently had to stop, take his load and saddle off and bend the iron closer together again, so as to preserve some semblance of an arch or rather two arches over his back, one before and one behind his hump. Every time Nicholls and I went through this operation we were afraid the iron would give, and snap in half with our pressure, and

so it would have done but that the fiery rays of the sun kept it almost at a glowing heat. This and the nose ropes and buttons getting so often broken, together with making new buttons from pieces of stick, caused us many harassing delays.

On the 24th of March, 1875, we bade good-bye to the friends that had accompanied us to this place, and who all started to return to the bay the same day. With Peter Nicholls, old Jimmy as guide, the two camels and calf, and three horses, I turned my back upon the Youldeh camp, somewhat late in the day. Nicholls rode the old cow, Jimmy and I riding a horse each, the third horse carrying a load of water. Two of these horses were the pick of the whole mob I had; they were still terribly frightened at the camels, and it was almost impossible to sit my horse Chester when the camels came near him behind; the horse carrying the water followed the two riding-horses, but towards dusk he got frightened and bolted away into the scrubs, load of water and all. We had only come seven miles that afternoon, and it was our first practical acquaintance with camels; Jimmy and I had continually to wait till Nicholls and the camels, made their appearance, and whenever Nicholls came up he was in a fearful rage with them. The old cow that he was riding would scarcely budge for him at all. If he beat her she would lie down, yell, squall, spit, and roll over on her saddle, and behave in such a manner that, neither of us knowing anything about camels, we thought she was going to die. The sandhills were oppressively steep, and the old wretch perspired to such a degree, and altogether became such an

unmanageable nuisance, that I began to think camels could not be half the wonderful animals I had fondly imagined.

The bull, *Mustara*, behaved much better. He was a most affectionate creature, and would kiss people all day long ; but the Lord help any one who would try to kiss the old cow, for she would cover them all over with—well, we will call it spittle, but it is worse than that. The calf would kiss also when caught, but did not care to be caught too often. *Mustara* had a good heavy load—he followed the cow without being fastened ; the calf, with great cunning, not relishing the idea of leaving *Youldeh*, would persistently stay behind and try and induce his mother not to go on ; in this he partially succeeded, for by dusk, just as I found I had lost the pack-horse with the water, and was waiting till *Nicholls*, who was following our horse tracks, came up to us, we had travelled at no better speed than a mile an hour since we left the camp. The two remaining horses were so restless that I was compelled to stand and hold them while waiting, old *Jimmy* being away in the darkness to endeavour to find the missing one. By the time *Nicholls* arrived with the camels, guided now by the glare of a large fire of a *Mus conditor's* nest which old *Jimmy* ignited, the horse had been gone about two hours ; thus our first night's bivouac was not a pleasant one. There was nothing that the horses would eat, and if they had been let go, even in hobbles, in all probability we should never have seen them again. Old *Jimmy* returned after a fruitless search for the absent horse. The camels would not feed, but lay down in a sulky fit, the two horses con-

tinually snorting and endeavouring to break away ; and thus the night was passing away, when we heard the tinkle of a bell—the horse we had lost having a bell on his neck—and Jimmy and Nicholls went away through the darkness and scrubs in the direction it proceeded from. I kept up a large fire to guide them, not that old Jimmy required such artificial aid, but to save time ; in about an hour they returned with the missing horse. When this animal took it into his head to bolt off he was out of earshot in no time, but it seems he must have thought better of his proceedings, and returned of his own accord to where he had left his mates. We were glad enough to secure him again, and the water he carried.

The next morning we were under weigh very early, and, following the old guide Jimmy, we went in a south-east direction towards the first watering-place that he knew, and which he said was called Chimpering. Many times before we reached this place the old fellow seemed very uncertain of his whereabouts, but by dodging about amongst the sandhills—the country being all rolling hummocks of red sand covered with dense scrubs and the universal spinifex—he managed to drop down upon it, after we had travelled about thirty miles from Youldeh. Chimpering consisted of a small acacia, or as we say a mulga, hollow, the mulga being the *Acacia aneura* ; here a few bare red granite rocks were exposed to view. In a crevice between two of these Jimmy showed us a small orifice, which we found, upon baling out, to contain only three buckets of a filthy black fluid that old Jimmy declared was water. We annoyed him fearfully by

pretending we did not know what it was. Poor old chap, he couldn't explain how angry he was, but he managed to stammer out, "White fellow—fool; pony drink 'em." The day was excessively hot, the thermometer stood at 106° in the shade. The horses or ponies, as universally called at Fowler's Bay, drank the dirty water with avidity. It was early in the day when we arrived, and so soon as the water was taken, we pushed on towards the next place, Pylebung. At Youldeh our guide had so excited my curiosity about this place, that I was most anxious to reach it. Jimmy said it was not very far off.

On the night of the 26th March, just as it was getting dark and having left Chimpering twenty-five miles behind us, we entered a piece of bushy mulga country, the bushes being so thick that we had great difficulty in forcing our way through it in the dark. Our guide seemed very much in the dark also; his movements were exceedingly uncertain, and I could see by the stars that we were winding about to all points of the compass. At last old Jimmy stopped and said we had reached the place where Pylebung ought to be, but it was not; and here, he said, pointing to the ground, was to be our wurley, or camp, for the night. When I questioned him, and asked where the water was, he only replied, which way? This question I was altogether unable to answer, and I was not in a very amiable frame of mind, for we had been traversing frightful country of dense scrubs all day in parching thirst and broiling heat. So I told Nicholls to unpack the camels while I unsaddled the horses. All the animals seemed over-

powered with lassitude and exhaustion ; the camels immediately lay down, and the horses stood disconsolately close to them, now no longer terrified at their proximity.

Nicholls and I extended our rugs upon the ground and lay down, and then we discovered that old Jimmy had left the camp, and thought he had given us the slip in the dark. We had been lying down some time when the old fellow returned, and in the most voluble and excited language told us he had found the water ; it was, he said, "big one, watta, mucka, pickaninny ;" and in his delight at his success he began to describe it, or try to do so, in the firelight, on the ground ; he kept saying, "big one, watta—big one, watta—watta go that way, watta go this way, and watta go that way, and watta go this way," turning himself round and round, so that I thought it must be a lake or swamp he was trying to describe. However, we got the camels and horses resaddled and packed, and took them where old Jimmy led us. The moon had now risen above the high sandhills that surrounded us, and we soon emerged upon a piece of open ground where there was a large white clay-pan, or bare patch of white clay soil, glistening in the moon's rays, and upon this there appeared an astonishing object—something like the wall of an old house or a ruined chimney. On arriving, we saw that it was a circular wall or dam of clay, nearly five feet high, with a segment open to the south to admit and retain the rain-water that occasionally flows over the flat into this artificial receptacle.

In spite of old Jimmy's asseverations, there was

only sufficient water to last one or two days, and what there was, was very thick and whitish-coloured. The six animals being excessively thirsty, the volume of the fluid gradually diminished in the moonlight before our eyes; the camels and horses' legs and noses were all pushing against one another while they drank.

This wall, or dam, constructed by the aboriginals, is the first piece of work of art or usefulness that I had ever seen in all my travels in Australia; and if I had only heard of it, I should seriously have reflected upon the credibility of my informant, because no attempts of skill, or ingenuity, on the part of Australian natives, applied to building, or the storage of water, have previously been met with, and I was very much astonished at beholding one now. This piece of work was two feet thick on the top of the wall, twenty yards in the length of its sweep, and at the bottom, where the water lodged, the embankment was nearly five feet thick. The clay of which this dam was composed had been dug out of the hole in which the water lay, with small native wooden shovels, and piled up to its present dimensions.

Immediately around this singular monument of native industry, there are a few hundred acres of very pretty country, beautifully grassed and ornamented with a few mulga (acacia) trees, standing picturesquely apart. The spot lies in a basin or hollow, and is surrounded in all directions by scrubs and rolling sandhills. How we got to it I can scarcely tell, as our guide kept constantly changing his course, so that the compass was of little or no use, and it was only by the sextant I could dis-

cover our whereabouts ; by it I found we had come fifty-eight miles from Youldch on a bearing of south 68° east, we being now in latitude $30^{\circ} 43'$ and longitude $132^{\circ} 44'$. There was so little water here that I was unable to remain more than one day, during which the thermometer indicated 104° in the shade.

To the eastward of this dam there was a sand-hill with a few black oaks (casuarinas) growing upon it, about a quarter of a mile away. A number of stones of a calcareous nature were scattered about on it ; on going up this hill the day we rested the animals here, I was surprised to find a broad path had been cleared amongst the stones for some dozens of yards, an oak-tree at each end being the terminal points. At the foot of each tree at the end of the path the largest stones were heaped ; the path was indented with the tramlings of many natives' feet, and I felt sure that it was one of those places where the men of this region perform inhuman mutilations upon the youths and maidens of their tribe. I questioned old Jimmy about these matters, but he was like all others of his race, who, while admitting the facts, protest that they, individually, have never officiated at such doings.

Upon leaving Pylebung Jimmy informed me that Mowling was the next watering-place, and said it lay nearly east from here ; but I found we went nearly north-east to reach it ; this we did in seventeen miles, the country through which we passed being, as usual, all sandhills and scrub. Mowling consisted of a small acacia hollow, where there were a few boulders of granite ; in these were two small holes, both as dry as the surface of the rocks

in their vicinity. On our route from Pylebung, we had seen the tracks of a single bullock; he also had found his way to Mowling, and probably left it howling; but it must have been some time since his visit.

From hence old Jimmy led us a good deal south of east, and we arrived at another exposure of granite rocks in the dense scrubs. This place Jimmy called Whitegin. It was ten or eleven miles from Mowling. There was a small crevice between the rounded boulders of rock, which held barely sufficient water for the three horses, the camels getting none, though they persisted in bothering us all the afternoon, and appeared very thirsty. They kept coming up to the camp perpetually, pulling our canvas bucket and tin utensils about with their lips, and I found the cunning of a camel in endeavouring to get water at the camp far exceeded that of any horse.

There were a few dozen acres of pretty ground here with good grass and herbage on it. We had a great deal of trouble to-day in getting the camels along; the foal or calf belonging to the old riding-cow got itself entangled in its mother's nose-rope, and as we did not then understand the management of camels, and how their nose-ropes should be adjusted, we could not prevent the little brute from tearing the button clean through the cartilage of the poor old cow's nose; this not only caused the animal frightful pain, but made her more obstinate and stubborn and harder to get along than before. The agony the poor creature suffered from flies must have been excruciating, as after this accident they entered her nostrils in such numbers that she

often hung back, and would cough and snort until she had ejected a great quantity of blood and flies from her nose.

For the last few miles we had not been annoyed by quite so much spinifex as usual, but the vast amount of dead wood and underbrush was very detrimental to the progress of the camels, who are not usually in the habit of lifting their feet very high, though having the power, they learn it in time, but not before their toes got constantly entangled with the dead sticks, which made them very sore.

The scrub here and all the way we had come consisted mostly of mallee (*Eucalyptus dumosa*) mulga, prickly bushes (*hakea*), some grevillea-trees, and a few oaks (*casuarinas*). This place, Whitegin, was eighty-five miles straight from Youldeh ; we had, however, travelled about 100 miles to reach it, as Jimmy kept turning and twisting about in the scrubs in all directions. On leaving Whitegin we travelled several degrees to north of east, the thermometer in the shade while we rested there going up to 103°. Jimmy said the next place we should get water at was Wynbring, and from what we could make out of his jargon, he seemed to imply that Wynbring was a large watercourse descending from a mountain and having a stony bed ; he also said we were now close up, and that it was only a pickaninny way. However, the shades of night descended upon us once more in the scrubs of this desert, and we were again compelled to encamp in a place lonely, and without water, amidst the desolations of this scrub-enthroned tract. Choking with thirst and sleepless with anxiety, we pass the hours of night ; no dews descend upon this heated place, and

though towards dawn a slightly cooler temperature is felt, the reappearance of the sun is now so near, that there has been no time for either earth or man to be benefited by it. Long before the sun himself appears, those avant-couriers of his fiery might, heated glow, and feverish breeze, came rustling through the foliage of the mallee-trees, which give out the semblance of a mournful sigh, as though they too suffered from the heat and thirst of this desolate region, in which they are doomed by fate to dwell, and as though they desired to let the wanderers passing amongst them know, that they also felt, and were sorry for, our woes.

The morning of March 31st was exceedingly hot, the thermometer at dawn standing at 86°. We were up and after the camels and horses long before daylight, tracking them by the light of burning torches of great bunches and boughs of the mallee-trees—these burn almost as well green as dry, from the quantity of aromatic eucalyptic oil contained in them—and enormous plots of spinifex which we lighted as we passed.

Having secured all the animals, we started early, and were moving onwards before sunrise. From Whitegin I found we had come on a nearly north-east course, and at twenty-eight miles from thence the scrubs fell off a trifle in height and density. This morning our guide travelled much straighter than was usual with him, and it was evident he had now no doubt that he was going in the right direction. About ten o'clock, after we had travelled thirteen or fourteen miles, Jimmy uttered an exclamation, pointed out something to us, and declared that it was Wynbring. Then I could at once per-

ceive how excessively inaccurate, the old gentleman's account of Wynbring had been, for instead of its being a mountain, it was simply a round bare mass of stone, standing in the centre of an open piece of country, surrounded as usual by the scrubs. When we arrived at the rock, we found the large creek channel, promised us had microscopicated itself down to a mere rock-hole, whose dimensions were not very great. The rock itself was a bare expanse of granite, an acre or two in extent, and was perhaps fifty feet high, while the only receptacle for water about it was a crevice forty feet long, by four feet wide, with a depth of six feet in its deepest part. The hole was not full, but it held an ample supply for all our present requirements.

There were a few low sandhills near, ornamented with occasional mulga-trees, and they made the place very pretty and picturesque. There were several old and new native gunyahs, or houses, if such a term can be applied to these insignificant structures. Australian aborigines are a race who do not live in houses at all, but still the common instincts of humanity induce all men to try and secure some spot of earth which, for a time at least, they may call home ; and though the nomadic inhabitants or owners of these Australian wilds, do not remain for long in any one particular place, in consequence of the game becoming too wild or destroyed, or water being used up or evaporated, yet, wherever they are located, every man or head of a family has his home and his house, to which he returns in after seasons. The natives in this, as in most other parts of Australia, seldom hunt without making perpetual grass or spinifex fires, and the traveller in these

wilds may be always sure that the natives are in the neighbourhood when he can see the smokes, but it by no means follows that because there are smokes there must be water. An inversion of the terms would be far more correct, and you might safely declare that because there is water there are sure to be smokes, and because there are smokes there are sure to be fires, and because there are fires there are sure to be natives, the present case being no exception to the rule, as several columns of smoke appeared in various directions. Old Jimmy's native name was Nanthona; in consequence he was generally called Anthony, but he liked neither; he preferred Jimmy, and asked me always to call him so. When at Youldeh the old fellow had mentioned this spot, Wynbring, as the farthest water he knew to the eastwards, and now that we had arrived at it, he declared that beyond it there was nothing; it was the ultima thule of all his geographical ideas; he had never seen, heard, or thought of anything beyond it. It was certainly a most agreeable little oasis, and an excellent spot for an explorer to come to in such a frightful region. Here were the three requisites that constitute an explorer's happiness—that is to say, wood, water, and grass, there being splendid green feed and herbage on the few thousand acres of open ground around the rock. The old black guide had certainly brought us to this romantic and secluded little spot, with, I suppose I may say, unerring precision, albeit he wound about so much on the road, and made the distance far greater than it should have been. I was, however, struck with admiration at his having done so at all, and how he or any other human

being, not having the advantages of science at his command to teach him, by the use of the heavenly bodies, how to find the position of any locality, could possibly return to the places we had visited in such a wilderness, especially as it was done by the recollection of spots which, to a white man, have no special features and no guiding points, was really marvellous. We had travelled at least 120 miles eastward from Youldeh, and when there, this old fellow had told us that he had not visited any of the places he was going to take me to since his boyhood; this at the very least must have been, forty years ago, for he was certainly fifty, if not seventy, years old. The knowledge possessed by these children of the desert is preserved owing to the fact that their imaginations are untrammelled, the denizens of the wilderness, having their mental faculties put to but few uses, and all are concentrated on the object of obtaining food for themselves and their offspring. Whatever ideas they possess, and they are by no means dull or backward in learning new ones, are ever keen and young, and Nature has endowed them with an undying mental youth, until their career on earth is ended. As says a poet, speaking of savages or men in a state of nature—

“ There the passions may revel unfettered,
And the heart never speak but in truth ;
And the intellect, wholly unlettered,
Be bright with the freedom of youth.”

Assuredly man in a savage state, is by no means the unhappiest of mortals. Old Jimmy's faculties of memory were put to the test several times during the eight days we were travelling from

Youldeh to this rock. Sometimes when leading us through the scrubs, and having travelled for some miles nearly east, he would notice a tree or a sandhill, or something that he remembered, and would turn suddenly from that point in an entirely different direction, towards some high and severe sandhill; here he would climb a tree. After a few minutes' gazing about, he would descend, mount his horse, and go off on some new line, and in the course of a mile or so he would stop at a tree, and tell us that when a little boy he got a 'possum out of a hole which existed in it. At another place he said his mother was bitten by a wild dog, which she was digging out of a hole in the ground; and thus we came to Wynbring at last.

A conspicuous mountain—indeed the only object upon which the eye could rest above the dense scrubs that surrounded us—bore south 52° east from this rock, and I supposed it was Mount Finke. Our advent disturbed a number of natives; their fresh footprints were everywhere about the place, and our guide not being at ease in his mind as to what sort of reception he might get from the owners of this demesne, told me if I would let him have a gun, he would go and hunt them up, and try to induce some of them to come to the camp. The old chap had but limited experience of firearms, so I gave him an unloaded gun, as he might have shot himself, or any other of the natives, without intending to do any harm. Away he went, and returned with five captives, an antiquated one-eyed old gentleman, with his three wives, and one baby belonging to the second wife, who had been a woman of considerable beauty. She was now

rather past her prime. What the oldest wife could ever have been like, it was impossible to guess, as now she seemed more like an old she-monkey than anything else. The youngest was in the first flush of youth and grace. The new old man was very tall, and had been very big and powerful, but he was now shrunken and grey with age. He ordered his wives to sit down in the shade of a bush near our camp; this they did. I walked towards the old man, when he immediately threw his aged arms round me, and clasped me rapturously to his ebony breast. Then his most ancient wife followed his example, clasping me in the same manner. The second wife was rather incommoded in her embrace by the baby in her arms, and it squalled horridly the nearer its mother put it to me. The third and youngest wife, who was really very pretty, appeared enchantingly bashful, but what was her bashfulness compared to mine, when compelled for mere form's sake to enfold in my arms a beautiful and naked young woman? It was really a distressing ordeal. She showed her appreciation of our company by the glances of her black and flashing eyes, and the exposure of two rows of beautifully even and pearly teeth.

However charming woman may look in a nude or native state, with all her youthful graces about her, still the poetic line, that beauty unadorned, adorned the most, is not entirely true. Woman never appears so thoroughly charming as when her graces are enveloped in a becoming dress. These natives all seemed anxious that I should give them names, and I took upon myself the responsibility of christening them. The young beauty I called

Polly, the mother Mary, the baby Kitty, the oldest woman Judy, and to the old man I gave the name of Wynbring Tommy, as an easy one for him to remember and pronounce. There exists amongst the natives of this part of the continent, an ancient and Oriental custom which either compels or induces the wife or wives of a man who is in any way disfigured in form or feature to show their love, esteem, or obedience, by becoming similarly disfigured, on the same principle that Sindbad the Sailor was buried with his wife. In this case the two elder wives of this old man had each relinquished an eye, and no doubt the time was soon approaching when the youngest would also show her conjugal fidelity and love by similar mutilation, unless the old heathen should happen to die shortly and she become espoused to some other, rejoicing in the possession of a full complement of eyes—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

The position of this rock and watering-place I found to be in latitude $30^{\circ} 32'$, and longitude $133^{\circ} 30'$. The heat still continued very great, the thermometer at its highest reading never indicating less than 104° in the shade while we were here. The flies at this place, and indeed for weeks before we reached it, were terribly numerous, and we were troubled also with myriads of the large March flies, those horrid pests about twice the size of the blow-fly, and which bite men, horses, and camels, and all other animals indiscriminately. These wretches would not allow either us or the animals a moment's respite, from dawn to dusk; they almost ate the poor creatures alive, and kept them in a state of perpetual motion in their hobbles during daylight

all the while we were here. In the daytime it was only by continued use of our hands, in waving a handkerchief or bough, that we kept them partially off ourselves, for with all our efforts to drive them away, we were continually bitten and stung almost to madness. I have often been troubled by these flies in other parts of Australia, but I never experienced so much pain and annoyance as at this place. The hideous droning noise which a multitude of these insects make is quite enough to destroy one's peace, but when their incessant bites are added, existence becomes a burden.

Since we left Youldeh, and there also, the days had been frightfully hot, and the nights close, cloudy, and sultry. The only currents of air that ever stirred the foliage of the trees in the daytime were like the breath from a furnace, while at night there was hardly any at all. The 1st of April, the last day we remained here, was the hottest day we had felt. Life was almost insupportable, and I determined to leave the place upon the morrow. There had evidently been some rain at this rock lately, as the grass and herbage were green and luxuriant, and the flies so numerous. It was most fortunate for us, as my subsequent narrative will show, that we had some one to guide us to this spot, which I found by observation lay almost east of Youldeh, and was distant from that depot 110 miles in a straight line. Old Jimmy knew nothing whatever of the region which lay beyond, and though I endeavoured to get him to ask the old man and his wives where any other waters existed, all the information I could gather from these persons was, that there was a big mountain and no water at

it. The old man at last found enough English to say, "Big fellow Poonta (stones, hills, or mountains) and mucka carpee," which means no water. I gave these poor people a little damper and some tea each, and Polly some sugar, when they departed. Old Jimmy seemed very unwilling to go any farther eastwards, giving me to understand that it was a far better plan to return to Fowler's Bay, and that he would show me some new watering-places if I would only follow him. To this, of course, I turned a deaf ear.

The nearest water on the route I desired to travel, was at Sir Thomas Elder's cattle station, at the Fin-niss Springs, under the Hermit Hill, distant from this rock about 250 miles in a straight line; but as the mountain to the south-east looked so conspicuous and inviting, I determined to visit it, in spite of what the old black fellow had said about there being no water, though it lay considerably out of the straight road to where I wanted to go. It looked high and rugged, and I thought to find water in some rock-hole or crevice about it.

CHAPTER II.

FROM 2ND APRIL TO 6TH MAY, 1875.

Leave Wynbring—The horses—Mountains of sand—Mount Finke—One horse succumbs—Torchlight tracking—Trouble with the camels—A low mount—Dry salt lagoons—200 miles yet from water—Hope—Death of Chester—The last horse—A steede, a steede—Ships of the desert—Reflections at night—Death or water—The Hermit Hill—Black shepherds and shepherdesses—The Finnis Springs—Victims to the bush—Footprints on the sands of time—Alec Ross—Reach Beltana.

ON the 2nd April we departed from this friendly depot at Wynbring Rock, taking our three horses, the two camels and the calf. The morning was as hot as fire; at midday we watered all our animals, and having saddled and packed them, we left the place behind us. On the two camels we carried as much water as we had vessels to hold it, the quantity being nearly fifty gallons. The horses were now on more friendly terms with them, so that they could be led by a person on horseback. Old Jimmy, now no longer a guide, was not permitted to take the lead, but rode behind, to see that nothing fell off the camels' saddles. I rode in advance, on my best horse Chester, a fine, well-set chestnut cob, a horse I was very fond of, as he had proved himself so good. Nicholls rode a strong young grey horse called Formby; he also had proved himself to my

satisfaction to be a good one. Jimmy was mounted on an old black horse, that was a fine ambler, the one that bolted away with the load of water the first night we started from Youldeh. He had not stood the journey from Youldeh at all well; the other two were quite fresh and hearty when we left Wynbring.

By the evening of the 2nd we had made only twenty-two miles. We found the country terrific; the ground rose into sandhills so steep and high, that all our animals were in a perfect lather of sweat. The camels could hardly be got along at all. At night, where we were compelled by darkness to encamp, there was nothing for the horses to eat, so the poor brutes had to be tied up, lest they should ramble back to Wynbring. There was plenty of food for the camels, as they could eat the leaves of some of the bushes, but they were too sulky to eat because they were tied up. The bull continually bit his nose-rope through, and made several attempts to get away, the calf always going with him, leaving his mother: this made her frantic to get away too. The horses got frightened, and were snorting and jumping about, trying to break loose all night. The spot we were in was a hollow, between two high sandhills, and not a breath of air relieved us from the oppression of the atmosphere. Peter Nicholls and I were in a state of thirst and perspiration the whole night, running about after the camels and keeping the horses from breaking away. If the cow had got loose, we could not have prevented the camels clearing off. I was never more gratified than at the appearance of the next morning's dawn, as it enabled us to move away from this dreadful

place. It was impossible to travel through this region at night, even by moonlight ; we should have lost our eyes upon the sticks and branches of the direful scrubs if we had attempted it, besides tearing our skin and clothes to pieces also. Starting at earliest dawn, and traversing formidably steep and rolling waves of sand, we at length reached the foot of the mountain we had been striving for, in twenty-three miles, forty-five from Wynbring. I could not help thinking it was the most desolate heap on the face of the earth, having no water or places that could hold it. The elevation of this eminence was over 1000 feet above the surrounding country, and over 2000 feet above the sea. The country visible from its summit was still enveloped in dense scrubs in every direction, except on a bearing a few degrees north of east, where some low ridges appeared. I rode my horse Chester many miles over the wretched stony slopes at the foot of this mountain, and tied him up to trees while I walked to its summit, and into gullies and crevices innumerable, but no water rewarded my efforts, and it was very evident that what the old black fellow Wynbring Tommy, had said, about its being waterless was only too true. After wasting several hours in a fruitless search for water, we left the wretched mount, and steered away for the ridges I had seen from its summit. They appeared to be about forty-five miles away. As it was so late in the day when we left the mountain, we got only seven miles from it when darkness again overtook us, and we had to encamp.

On the following day, the old horse Jimmy was riding completely gave in from the heat and thirst and fearful nature of the country we were traversing,

having come only sixty-five miles from Wynbring. We could neither lead, ride, nor drive him any farther. We had given each horse some water from the supply the camels carried, when we reached the mountain, and likewise some on the previous night, as the heavy sandhills had so exhausted them, this horse having received more than the others. Now he lay down and stretched out his limbs in the agony of thirst and exhaustion. I was loth to shoot the poor old creature, and I also did not like the idea of leaving him to die slowly of thirst ; but I thought perhaps if I left him, he might recover sufficiently to travel at night at his own pace, and thus return to Wynbring, although I also knew from former sad experience in Gibson's Desert, that, like Badger and Darkie, it was more than probable he could never escape. His saddle was hung in the fork of a sandal-wood-tree, not the sandal-wood of commerce, and leaving him stretched upon the burning sand, we moved away. Of course he was never seen or heard of after.

That night we encamped only a few miles from the ridges, at a place where there was a little dry grass, and where both camels and horses were let go in hobbles. Long before daylight on the following morning, old Jimmy and I were tracking the camels by torchlight, the horse-bells indicating that those animals were not far off ; the camel-bells had gone out of hearing early in the night. Old Jimmy was a splendid tracker ; indeed, no human being in the world but an Australian aboriginal, and that a half or wholly wild one, could track a camel on some surfaces, for where there is any clayey soil, the creature leaves no more mark on the ground

than an ant—black children often amuse themselves by tracking ants—and to follow such marks as they do leave, by firelight, was marvellous. Occasionally they would leave some marks that no one could mistake, where they passed over sandy ground; but for many hundreds of yards beyond, it would appear as though they must have flown over the ground, and had never put their feet to the earth at all. By the time daylight appeared, old Jimmy had tracked them about three miles; then he went off, apparently quite regardless of any tracks at all, walking at such a pace, that I could only keep up with him by occasionally running. We came upon the camels at length at about six miles from the camp, amongst some dry clay-pans, and they were evidently looking for water. The old cow, which was the only riding camel, was so poor and bony, it was too excruciating to ride her without a saddle or a pad of some sort, which now we had not got, so we took it in turns to ride the bull, and he made many attempts to shake us off; but as he had so much hair on his hump, we could cling on by that as we sat behind it. It was necessary for whoever was walking to lead him by his nose-rope, or he would have bolted away and rubbed his encumbrance off against a tree, or else rolled on it. In consequence of the camels having strayed so far, it was late in the day when we again started, the two horses looking fearfully hollow and bad. The morning as usual was very hot. There not being now a horse a piece to ride, and the water which one camel had carried having been drank by the animals, Peter Nicholls rode the old cow again, both she and the bull being much more easy to manage

and get along than when we started from Youldeh. Our great difficulty was with the nose-ropes; the calf persisted in getting in front of its mother and twisting her nose-rope round his neck, also in placing itself right in between the fore-legs of the bull. This would make him stop, pull back and break his rope, or else the button would tear through the nose; this caused detention a dozen times a day, and I was so annoyed with the young animal, I could scarcely keep from shooting it many times. The young creature was most endearing now, when caught, and evidently suffered greatly from thirst.

We reached the ridges in seven miles from where we had camped, and had now come ninety miles from Wynbring. We could find no water at these ridges, as there were no places that could hold it. Here we may be said to have entered on a piece of open country, and as it was apparently a change for the better from the scrubs, I was very glad to see it, especially as we hoped to obtain water on it. Our horses were now in a terrible state of thirst, for the heat was great, and the region we had traversed was dreadfully severe, and though they had each been given some of the water we brought with us, yet we could not afford anything like enough to satisfy them. From the top of the ridge a low mount or hill bore 20° north of east; Mount Finke, behind us, bore 20° south of west. I pushed on now for the hill in advance, as it was nearly on the route I desired to travel. The country being open, we made good progress, and though we could not reach it that night, we were upon its summit early the next morning, it being

about thirty miles from the ridges we had left, a number of dry, salt, white lagoons intervening. This hill was as dry and waterless as the mount and ridges, we had left behind us in the scrubs. Dry salt lagoons lay scattered about in nearly all directions, glittering with their saline encrustations, as the sun's rays flashed upon them. To the southward two somewhat inviting isolated hills were seen; in all other directions the horizon appeared gloomy in the extreme. We had now come 120 miles from water, and the supply we had started with was almost exhausted; the country we were in could give us none, and we had but one, of two courses to pursue, either to advance still further into this terrible region, or endeavour to retreat to Wynbring. No doubt the camels could get back alive, but ourselves and the horses could never have re-crossed the frightful bed of rolling sand-mounds, that intervened between us and the water we had left. My poor old black companion was aghast at such a region, and also at what he considered my utter folly in penetrating into it at all. Peter Nicholls, I was glad to find, was in good spirits, and gradually changing his opinions with regard to the powers and value of the camels. They had received no water themselves, though they had laboured over the hideous sandhills, laden with the priceless fluid for the benefit of the horses, and it was quite evident the latter could not much longer live, in such a desert, whilst the former were now far more docile and obedient to us than when we started. Whenever the horses were given any water, we had to tie the camels up at some distance. The expression in these animals' eyes when they

saw the horses drinking was extraordinary ; they seemed as though they were going to speak, and had they done so, I know well they would have said, " You give those useless little pigmies the water that cannot save them, and you deny it to us, who have carried it, and will yet be your only saviours in the end." After we had fruitlessly searched here for water, having wasted several hours, we left this wretched hill, and I continued steering upon the same course we had come, viz. north 75° east, as that bearing would bring me to the north-western extremity of Lake Torrens, still distant over 120 miles. It was very probable we should get no water, as none is known to exist where we should touch upon its shores. Thus we were, after coming 120 miles from Wynbring, still nearly 200 miles from the Finness Springs, the nearest water that I knew. It was now a matter of life and death ; could we reach the Finness at all ? We could neither remain here, nor should we survive if we attempted to retreat ; to advance was our only chance of escape from the howling waste in which we were almost entombed ; we therefore moved onwards, as fast and as far as we could. On the following morning, before dawn, I had been lying wakefully listening for the different sounds of the bells on the animals' necks, and got up to brighten up the camp fire with fresh wood, when the strange sound of the quacking of a wild duck smote upon my ear. The blaze of firelight had evidently attracted the creature, which probably thought it was the flashing of water, as it flew down close to my face, and almost precipitated itself into the flames ; but discovering its error, it wheeled away

upon its unimpeded wings, and left me wondering why this denizen of the air and water, should be sojourning around the waterless encampment of such hapless travellers as we. The appearance of such a bird raised my hopes, and forced me to believe that we must be in the neighbourhood of some water, and that the coming daylight would reveal to us the element which alone could save us and our unfortunate animals from death. But, alas! how many human hopes and aspirations are continually doomed to perish unfulfilled; and were it not that "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," all faith, all energy, all life, and all success would be at an end, as then we should know that most of our efforts are futile, whereas now we hope they may attain complete fruition. Yet, on the other hand, we learn that the fruit of dreamy hoping is waking blank despair. We were again in a region of scrubs as bad and as dense as those I hoped and thought, I had left behind me.

Leaving our waterless encampment, we continued our journey, a melancholy, thirsty, silent trio. At 150 miles from Wynbring my poor horse Chester gave in, and could go no farther; for some miles I had walked, and we had the greatest difficulty in forcing him along, but now he was completely exhausted and rolled upon the ground in the death agony of thirst. It was useless to waste time over the unfortunate creature; it was quite impossible for him ever to rise again, so in mercy I fired a revolver-bullet at his forehead, as he gasped spasmodically upon the desert sand: a shiver passed through his frame, and we left him dead in the lonely spot.

We had now no object but to keep pushing on ; our supply of water was all but gone, and we were in the last stage of thirst and wretchedness. By the night of that day we had reached a place 168 miles from Wynbring, and in all that distance not a drop of water had been found. We had one unfortunate horse left, the grey called Formby, and that poor creature held out as long and on as little water as I am sure is possible in such a heated and horrid region. On the following morning the poor beast came up to Nicholls and I, old Jimmy being after the camels which were close by, and began to smell us, then stood gazing vacantly at the fire ; a thought seemed to strike him that it was water, and he put his mouth down into the flames. This idea seems to actuate all animals when in the last stage of thirst. We were choking with thirst ourselves, but we agreed to sacrifice a small billyful of our remaining stock of water for this unfortunate last victim to our enterprise. We gave him about two quarts, and bitterly we regretted it later, hoping he might still be able to stagger on to where water might be found ; but vain was the hope and vain the gift, for the creature that had held up so long and so well, swallowed up the last little draught we gave, fell down and rolled and shivered in agony, as Chester had done, and he died and was at rest. A singular thing about this horse was that his eyes had sunk into his head until they were all but hidden. For my own part, in such a region and in such a predicament as we were placed, I would not unwillingly have followed him into the future.

The celebrated Sir Thomas Mitchell, one of

Australia's early explorers, in one of his journeys, after finding a magnificent country watered by large rivers, and now the long-settled abodes of civilisation, mounted on a splendid horse, bursts into an old cavalier song, a verse of which says :

“ A steede, a steede of matchless speede,
A sworde of metal keane ;
All else to noble mindes is drosse ;
All else on earthe is meane.”

I don't know what he would have thought had he been in my case, with his matchless “steede” dead, and in the pangs of thirst himself, his “sworde of metal keane” a useless encumbrance, 168 miles from the last water, and not knowing where the next might be ; he would have to admit that the wonderful beasts which now alone remained to us were by no means to be accounted “meane,” for these patient and enduring creatures, which were still alive, had tasted no water since leaving Wynbring, and, though the horses were dead and gone, stood up with undiminished powers—appearing to be as well able now to continue on and traverse this wide-spread desert as when they left the last oasis behind. We had nothing now to depend upon but our two “ships of the desert,” which we were only just beginning to understand. I had been a firm believer in them from the first, and had many an argument with Nicholls about them ; his opinion had now entirely altered. At Youldeh he had called them ugly, useless, lazy brutes, that were not to be compared to horses for a moment ; but now that the horses were dead they seemed more agreeable and companionable than ever the horses had been.

When Jimmy brought them to the camp they looked knowingly at the prostrate form of the dead horse; they kneeled down close beside it and received their loads, now indeed light enough, and we went off again into the scrubs, riding and walking by turns, our lives entirely depending on the camels; Jimmy had told us they were calmly feeding upon some of the trees and bushes in the neighbourhood when he got them. That they felt the pangs of thirst there can be no doubt—and what animal can suffer thirst like a camel?—as whenever they were brought to the camp they endeavoured to fumble about the empty water-bags, tin pannikins, and any other vessel that ever had contained water.

The days of toil, the nights of agony and feverish unrest, that I spent upon this journey I can never forget. After struggling through the dense scrubs all day we were compelled perforce to remain in them all night. It was seldom now we spoke to one another, we were too thirsty and worn with lassitude to converse, and my reflections the night after the last horse died, when we had come nearly 200 miles without water, of a necessity assumed a gloomy tinge, although I am the least gloomy-minded of the human race, for we know that the tone of the mind is in a great measure sympathetic with the physical condition of the body. If the body is weak from exhaustion and fatigue, the brain and mind become dull and sad, and the thoughts of a wanderer in such a desolate region as this, weary with a march in heat and thirst from daylight until dark, who at last sinks upon the heated ground to watch and wait until the blazing sunlight of another

day, perhaps, may bring him to some place of rest, cannot be otherwise than of a mournful kind. The mind is forced back upon itself, and becomes filled with an endless chain of thoughts which wander through the vastness of the star-bespangled spheres; for here, the only things to see, the only things to love, and upon which the eye may gaze, and from which the beating heart may gather some feelings of repose, are the glittering bands of brilliant stars shining in the azure vault of heaven. From my heated couch of sandy earth I gazed helplessly but rapturously upon them, wondering at the enormity of occupied and unoccupied space, revolving thoughts of past, present, and future existencies, and of how all that is earthly fadeth away. But can that be the case with our world itself, with the sun from which it obtains its light and life, or with the starry splendours of the worlds beyond the sun? Will they, can they, ever fade? They are not spiritual; celestial still we call them, but they are material all, in form and nature. We are both; yet we must fade and they remain. How is the understanding to decide which of the two holds the main spring and thread of life? Certainly we know that the body decays, and even the paths of glory lead but to the grave; but we also know that the mind becomes enfeebled with the body, that the aged become almost idiotic in their second childhood; and if the body is to rise again, how is poor humanity to distinguish the germ of immortality? Philosophies and speculations upon the future have been subjects of the deepest thought for the highest minds of every generation of mankind; and although creeds have risen and sunk, and old religions and

philosophies have passed away, the dubious minds of mortal men still hang and harp upon the theme of what can be the Great Beyond. The various creeds, of the many different nations of the earth induce them to believe in as many differing notions of heaven, but all and each appear agreed upon the point that up into the stars alone their hoped-for heaven is to be found; and if all do not, in this agree, still there are some aspiring minds high soaring above sublunary things, above the petty disputes of differing creeds, and the vague promises they hold out to their votaries, who behold, in the firmament above, mighty and mysterious objects for veneration and love.

These are the gorgeous constellations set thick with starry gems, the revolving orbs of densely crowded spheres, the systems beyond systems, clusters beyond clusters, and universes beyond universes, all brilliantly glittering with various coloured light, all wheeling and swaying, floating and circling round some distant, unknown, motive, centre-point, in the pauseless measures of a perpetual dance of joy, keeping time and tune with most ecstatic harmony, and producing upon the enthralled mind the not imaginary music of the spheres.

Then comes the burning wish to know how come these mighty mysterious and material things about. We are led to suppose as our own minds and bodies progressively improve from a state of infancy to a certain-point, so it is with all things we see in nature; but the method of the original production of life and matter is beyond the powers of man to discover. Therefore, we look forward with anxiety

and suspense, hope, love, and fear to a future time, having passed through the portals of the valley of death, from this existence, we shall enjoy life after life, in new body, after new body, passing through new sphere, after new sphere, arriving nearer and nearer to the fountain-head of all perfection, the divinely great Almighty source of light and life, of hope and love.

These were some of my reflections throughout that weary night; the stars that in their constellations had occupied the zenith, now have passed the horizon's verge; other and fresh glittering bands now occupy their former places—at last the dawn begins to glimmer in the east, and just as I could have fallen into the trance of sleep, it was time for the race for life, again to wander on, so soon as our animals could be found.

This was the eighth day of continued travel from Wynbring; our water was now all gone, and we were yet more than 100 miles from the Finnis Springs. I had been compelled to enforce a most rigid and inadequate economy with our water during our whole march; when we left the camp where the last horse died very little over three pints remained; we were all very bad, old Jimmy was nearly dead. At about four o'clock in the afternoon we came to a place where there was a considerable fall into a hollow, here was some bare clay—in fact it was an enormous clay-pan, or miniature lake-bed; the surface was perfectly dry, but in a small drain or channel, down which water could descend in times of rain, by the blessing of Providence I found a supply of yellow water. Nicholls had previously got strangely excited—in fact the poor fellow was

light-headed from thirst, and at one place where there was no water he threw up his hat and yelled out "Water, water!" he walking a little in advance; we had really passed the spot where the water was, but when Nicholls gave the false information I jumped down off my camel and ran up to him, only to be grievously disappointed; but as I went along I caught sight of a whitish light through the mulga trees partially behind me, and without saying a word for fear of fresh disappointment, I walked towards what I had seen; Nicholls and Jimmy, who both seemed dazed, went on with the camels.

What I had seen, was a small sheet of very white water, and I could not resist the temptation to drink before I went after them. By the time I had drunk they had gone on several hundred yards; when I called to them and flung up my hat, they were so stupid with thirst, and disappointment, that they never moved towards me, but stood staring until I took the camels' nose-rope in my hand, and, pointing to my knees, which were covered with yellow mud, simply said "water"; then, when I led the camels to the place, down these poor fellows went on their knees, in the mud and water, and drank, and drank, and I again knelt down and drank, and drank. Oh, dear reader, if you have never suffered thirst you can form no conception what agony it is. But talk about drinking, I couldn't have believed that even thirsty camels could have swallowed such enormous quantities of fluid.

It was delightful to watch the poor creatures visibly swelling before our eyes. I am sure the big bull Mustara must have taken down fifty gallons of water, for even after the first drink, when we took

their saddles off at the camp, they all three went back to the water and kept drinking for nearly an hour.

We had made an average travelling of twenty-eight miles a day from Wynbring, until this eighth day, when we came to the water in twenty-four miles, thus making it 220 miles in all. I could not sufficiently admire and praise the wonderful powers of these extraordinary, and to me entirely new animals. During the time we had been travelling the weather had been very hot and oppressive, the thermometer usually rising to 104° in the shade when we rested for an hour in the middle of the day, but that was not the hottest time, from 2.40 to 3 P.M. being the culminating period. The country we had traversed was a most frightful desert, yet day after day our noble camels kept moving slowly but surely on, with undiminished powers, having carried water for their unfortunate companions the horses, and seeing them drop one by one exhausted and dying of thirst; still they marched contentedly on, carrying us by turns, and all the remaining gear of the dead horses, and finally brought us to water at last. We had yet over eighty miles to travel to reach the Finnis, and had we not found water I am sure the three human beings of the party could never have got there. The walking in turns over this dreadful region made us suffer all the more, and it was dangerous at any time to allow old Jimmy to put his baking lips to a water-bag, for he could have drank a couple of gallons at any time with the greatest ease. For some miles before we found the water the country had become of much better quality, the sandhills being lower and well grassed,

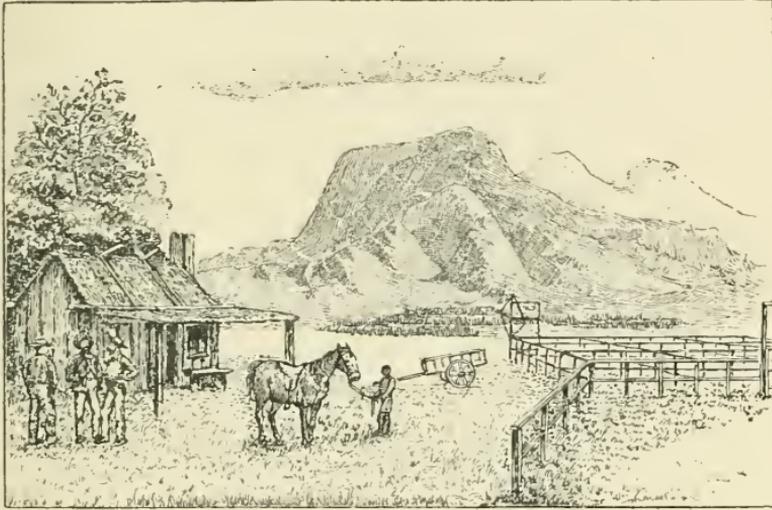
with clay flats between. We also passed a number with pine-trees growing on them. Rains had evidently visited this region, as before I found the water I noticed that many of the deeper clay channels were only recently dry; when I say deeper, I mean from one to two feet, the usual depth of a clay-pan channel being about as many inches. The grass and herbage round the channel where I found the water were beautifully green.

Our course from the last hill had been about north 75° east; the weather, which had been exceedingly oppressive for so many weeks, now culminated in a thunderstorm of dust, or rather sand and wind, while dark nimbus clouds completely eclipsed the sun, and reduced the temperature to an agreeable and bearable state. No rain fell, but from this change the heats of summer departed, though the change did not occur until after we had found the water; now all our good things came together, viz. an escape from death by thirst, a watered and better travelling country, and cooler weather. Here we very naturally took a day to recruit. Old Jimmy was always very anxious to know how the compass was working, as I had always told him the compass would bring us to water, that it knew every country and every water, and as it did bring us to water, he thought what I said about it must be true. I also told him it would find some more water for us tomorrow. We were always great friends, but now I was so advanced in his favour that he promised to give me his daughter Mary for a wife when I took him back to Fowler's Bay. Mary was a very pretty little girl. But "I to wed with Coromantees? Thoughts like these would drive me mad. And

yet I hold some (young) barbarians higher than the Christian cad." After our day's rest we again proceeded on our journey, with all our water vessels replenished, and of course now found several other places on our route where rain-water was lying, and it seemed like being translated to a brighter sphere, to be able to indulge in as much water-drinking as we pleased.

At one place where we encamped there was a cane grass flat, over a mile long, fifty to a hundred yards wide, and having about four feet of water in it, which was covered with water-fowl; amongst these a number of black swans were gracefully disporting themselves. Peter Nicholls made frantic efforts to shoot a swan and some ducks, but he only brought one wretchedly small teal into the camp. We continued on our former course until we touched upon and rounded the north-western extremity of Lake Torrens. I then changed my course for the Hermit Hill, at the foot of which the Finnis Springs and Sir Thomas Elder's cattle station lies. Our course was now nearly north. On the evening of the third day after leaving the water that had saved us, we fell in with two black fellows and their lubras or wives, shepherding two flocks of Mr. Angas's sheep belonging to his Stuart's Creek station. As they were at a water, we encamped with them. Their lubras were young and pretty; the men were very hospitable to us, and gave us some mutton, for which we gave them tobacco and matches; for their kindness I gave the pretty lubras some tea and sugar. Our old Jimmy went up to them and shook hands, and they became great friends. These blacks could not comprehend where we could

possibly have come from, Fowler's Bay being an unknown quantity to them. We had still a good day's stage before us to reach the Finnis, but at dusk we arrived, and were very kindly received and entertained by Mr. Coulthard, who was in charge.



THE HERMIT HILL AND FINNISS SPRINGS.

His father had been an unfortunate explorer, who lost his life by thirst, upon the western shores of the Lake Torrens I have mentioned, his tin pannikin or pint pot was afterwards found with his name and the date of the last day he lived, scratched upon it. Many an unrecorded grave, many a high and noble mind, many a gallant victim to temerity and thirst, to murder by relentless native tribes, or sad mischance, is hidden in the wilds of Australia, and not only in the wilds, but in places also less remote, where the whistle of the shepherd and the bark of his dog, the crack of the stockman's whip, or the gay or grumbling voice of the teamster may now be

heard, some unfortunate wanderer may have died. As the poet says :—

“ Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid,
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire ;
Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.”

If it is with a thought of pity, if it is with a sigh of lament, that we ponder over the fate of the lost, over the deaths in the long catalogue of the victims to the Australian bush, from Cunningham (lost with Mitchell) and Leichhardt, Kennedy and Gilbert, Burke, Wills, Gray, Poole, Curlewis and Conn, down to Coulthard, Panter, and Gibson, it must be remembered that they died in a noble cause, and they sleep in honourable graves. Nor must it be forgotten that they who return from confronting the dangers by which these others fell, have suffered enough to make them often wish that they, too, could escape through the grave from the horrors surrounding them. I have often been in such predicaments that I have longed for death, but having as yet returned alive, from deserts and their thirst, from hostile native tribes and deadly spears, and feeling still “the wild pulsation which in manhood’s dawn I knew, when my days were all before me, and my years were twenty-two,”—as long as there are new regions to explore, the burning charm of seeking something new, will still possess me ; and I am also actuated to aspire and endeavour if I cannot make my life sublime, at least to leave behind me some “everlasting footprints on the sands of time.”

At the Finnis Springs I met young Alec Ross, the son of another explorer, who was going to join my party for the new expedition to Perth. My destination was now Beltana, 140 miles from hence. I got a couple of horses for Nicholls and myself from Mr. Coulthard, Jimmy being stuck up on the top of the old riding cow camel, who could travel splendidly on a road. When I arrived at Beltana I had travelled 700 miles from Fowler's Bay.

BOOK IV.

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Lakes
rounded
scrub

A

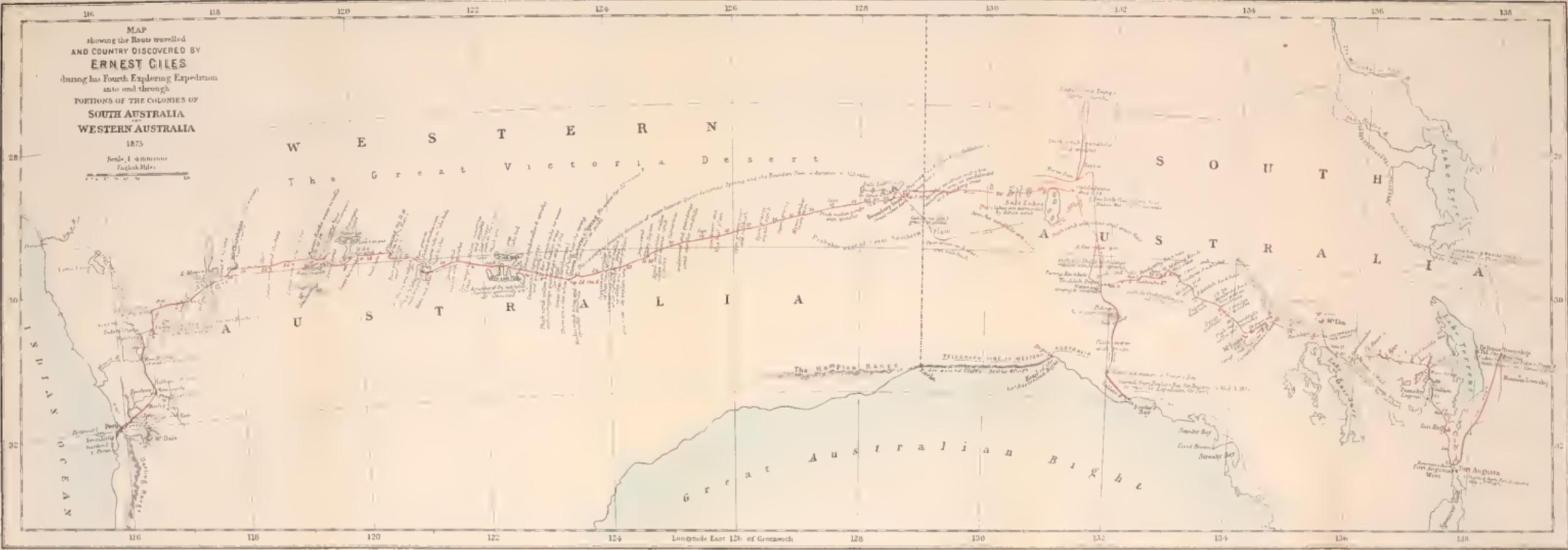
scrub

f

Diplo
ESTERN
Head of
Australian

MAP
 showing the Route travelled
 AND COUNTRY DISCOVERED BY
ERNEST GILES
 during his Fourth Exploring Expedition
 into and through
 PORTIONS OF THE COLONIES OF
SOUTH AUSTRALIA
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
 1875

Scale, 1:400,000
 English Miles



CHAPTER I.

FROM 6TH MAY TO 27TH JULY, 1875.

Fourth expedition—The members—Departure—Squabbles—Port Augusta—Coogee Mahomet—Mr. Roberts and Tommy—Westward ho!—The equipment—Dinner and a sheep—The country—A cattle ranch—Stony plateau—The Elizabeth—Mr. Moseley—Salt lakes—Coondambo—Curdling tea—An indented hill—A black boy's argument—Pale-green-foliaged tree—A lost officer—Camels poisoned—Mount Finke in the winter—Wynbring—A new route—A good Mussulman—Depart from Wynbring—New places—Antediluvian cisterns—Still westwards—Lake Bring—Rain and a bath—A line cut in the scrubs—High sandhills—Return to Youldeh—Waking dreams—In depot—Fowler's Bay once more—The officers explore to the north—Jimmy and Tommy—Jimmy's bereavement—At the bay—Richard Dorey—Return to Youldeh—Tommy's father—The officer's report—Northwards—Remarks.

SIR THOMAS ELDER was desirous that the new expedition from Perth, for which camels were to be the only animals taken, should start from Beltana by the 1st of May. I was detained a few days beyond that time, but was enabled to leave on Thursday, May the 6th. The members of the party were six in number, namely myself, Mr. William Henry Tietkens, who had been with me as second on my last expedition with horses—he had been secured from Melbourne by Sir Thomas Elder, and was again going as second; Mr. Jess Young, a young friend of Sir Thomas's lately

arrived from England ; Alexander Ross, mentioned previously ; Peter Nicholls, who had just come with me from Fowler's Bay, and who now came as cook ; and Saleh, the Afghan camel-driver as they like to be called. I also took for a short distance, until Alec Ross overtook me, another Afghan called Coogee Mahomet, and the old guide Jimmy, who was to return to the bosom of his family so soon as we arrived anywhere sufficiently near the neighbourhood of his country. Poor old Jimmy had been ill at Beltana, and suffered greatly from colds and influenza. The Beltana blacks did not treat him so well as he expected, and some of them threatened to kill him for poking his nose into their country, consequently he did not like the place at all, and was mighty glad to be taken away. Thus, as I have said, on the 6th of May, 1875, the caravan departed from Beltana, but we did not immediately leave civilisation or the settled districts, as I had to travel 150 miles down the country nearly south, to Port Augusta at the head of Spencer's Gulf, where I intended to take in my stores, and loading for the inland voyage, as most of my equipment was forwarded by Sir Thomas from Adelaide to that port.

Nothing very particular occurred on the road down, except some continual squabbles between myself, and Saleh and Coogee, on account of the extraordinary and absurd manner in which these two men wanted to load and work the camels. In the first place, we had several young camels or colts in the mob, some of these were bulls and others bullocks. The Afghans have a way when travelling of bringing the camels up to the camp and making

them lie down by their loads all night, whether they have had time to fill themselves or not. This system was so revolting to my notions of fair play that I determined to alter it at once.

Another thing that annoyed me was their absurd and stupid custom of hobbling, and unhobbling, while the camels were lying down. This may be necessary for the first few days after the creatures are handled, but if they are never accustomed to have their legs and feet touched while they are standing up, of course they may paw, or strike and kick like a young horse; and if a camel is a striker, he is rather an awkward kind of a brute, but that is only the case with one in a thousand. The Afghans not only persist in hobbling and unhobbling while the camels are lying down, but never think of taking the hobbles entirely off at all, as they unfasten the hobble from one leg and put both on the other, so that the poor brutes always have to carry them on one leg when they are travelling. I quickly put a stop to this, but Coogee Mahomet exclaimed, "Oh, master! you mustn't take off a hobble, camel he keek, he keek, you mustn't." To which I replied, "Let him kick, and I hope he will kick you to death first, so that there will be one Afghan less in the world, but every hobble shall come off every camel every day." This Coogee was a most amusing though lazy, indolent beggar. He never ceased to brag of what he could make camels do; he wished to ingratiate himself with me in the hope I would take him with me, but I had already determined to have only one of his countrymen. He said if he came with me he could make the camels go 200, 300, 400 or 500 miles with heavy

loads without water, by just talking to them in his language. He used to say, "You know, master, camel he know me, and my countrymen; camel he un'stand my language, he no like Englishman, Englishman, he no un'stand riding camel, he no un'stand loading camel, only my countryman he un'stand camel," &c., &c.; but with all his bragging about the camels going so long without water, when we had been only four days gone from Beltana, Saleh and Coogee had held a council and decided that I must be remonstrated with, in consequence of my utter ignorance, stupidity, and reckless treatment of the camels. Accordingly on the fourth morning, the weather having been delightfully cool and the camels not requiring any water, Coogee came to me and said, "Master, when you water camel?" "What?" I said with unfeigned astonishment, "Water the camels? I never heard of such a thing, they will get no water until they reach Port Augusta." This completely upset Mr. Coogee, and he replied, "What! no water till Port Gusta? camel he can't go, camel he always get water three, four time from Beltana to Port Gusta." "Well," I said, "Coogee, they will get none now with me till they walk to Port Augusta for it." Then Coogee said, "Ah! Mr. Gile, you very smart master, you very clever man, only you don't know camel, you'll see you'll kill all Sir Thomas Elder camel; you'll no get Perth, you and all you party, and all you camel die; you'll see, you'll see; you no give poor camel water, camel he die, then where you be?" I was rather annoyed and said, "You stupid ass, it was only yesterday you said you could take camels, 300, 400, 500 miles without water, with heavy

loads, and now they have no loads and we have only come about seventy miles, you say they will die if I don't give them water. How is it that all your countrymen continually brag of what camels can, do and yet, when they have been only three days without water, you begin to cry out that they want it?"

To this he only condescended to reply, "Ah! ah! you very clever, you'll see." Of course the camels went to the port just as well without water as with it. Alec Ross overtook us on the road, and brought a special little riding-camel (Reechy) for me. I got rid of Mr. Coogee before we arrived at the port. We remained a little over a week, as all the loads had to be arranged and all the camels' pack-saddles required re-arranging. Saleh and another of his countryman who happened to be there, worked hard at this, while the rest of the party arranged the loads.

While at Port Augusta, Mr. Charles Roberts, who had been with me, and with whom I left all the horses at Youldeh, arrived, by the usual road and brought me a young black boy, Master Tommy Oldham, with whom I had travelled to Eucla from Fowler's Bay with the three horses that had died on my journey to Beltana. He was very sorry to hear of the loss of Chester and Formby, the latter having been his riding-horse. Old Jimmy was immensely delighted to meet one of his own people in a strange place. Tommy was a great acquisition to the party, he was a very nice little chap, and soon became a general favourite.

Everything being at length ready, the equipment of the expedition was most excellent and capable.

Sir Thomas had sent me from Adelaide several large pairs of leather bags, one to be slung on each side of a camel; all our minor, breakable, and perishable articles were thus secure from wet or damp. In several of these large bags I had wooden boxes at the bottom, so that all books, papers, instruments, glass, &c., were safe. At starting the loads were rather heavy, the lightest-weighted camels carrying two bags of flour, cased in raw-hide covers, the two bags weighing about 450 lbs., and a large tarpaulin about 60 lbs. on top, or a couple of empty casks or other gear, which did not require to be placed inside the leather bags. The way the camels' loads are placed by the Afghan camel-men is different from, and at first surprising to persons accustomed to, pack-horse loads. For instance, the two bags of flour are carried as perpendicularly as possible. As a general rule, it struck me the way they arranged the loads was absurd, as the whole weight comes down on the unfortunate animal's loins; they use neither bags nor trunks, but tie up almost every article with pieces of rope.

My Afghan, Saleh, was horrified at the fearful innovations I made upon his method. I furnished the leather bags with broad straps to sustain them, having large rings and buckles to pass them through and fasten in the ordinary way of buckle and strap; this had the effect of making the loads in the bags and trunks lie as horizontally as possible along the sides of the pads of the pack-saddles. Saleh still wanted to encumber them with ropes, so that they could not be opened without untying about a thousand knots. I would not permit such a violation of my ideas, and told him the loads

should be carried as they stood upon the ground; his argument always was, à la Coogee Mahomet, "Camel he can't carry them that way," to which I invariably replied, "Camel he must and camel he shall," and the consequence was that camel he did.

When we left Port Augusta, I had fifteen pack- or baggage-camels and seven riding ones. The two blacks, Jimmy and Tommy, rode on one animal, while the others had a riding-camel each. The weight of the loads of the baggage-camels on leaving, averaged 550 lbs. all round. All the equipment and loads being in a proper state, and all the men and camels belonging to the new expedition for Perth being ready, we left Port Augusta on the 23rd of May, 1875, but only travelled about six miles, nearly west-north-west, to a place called Bowman's or the Chinaman's Dam, where there was plenty of surface water, and good bushes for the camels; here we encamped for the night. A few ducks which incautiously floated too near fell victims to our sportsmen. The following day we passed Mr. Bowman's station, had some dinner with him, and got a fat sheep from one of his paddocks. On the 25th we encamped close to a station in the neighbourhood of Euro Bluff, a hill that exists near the south-western extremity of Lake Torrens; we now travelled about north-north-west up Lake Torrens, upon the opposite or western side to that on which we had lately travelled down, to Port Augusta, as I wished to reach a watercourse (the Elizabeth), where I heard there was water. On the 28th of May we encamped on the banks of Pernatty Creek, where we obtained a few wild ducks; the country here was

very good, being open salt-bush country. The next morning we met and passed a Government Survey party, under the command of Mr. Brooks, who was engaged in a very extensive trigonometrical survey. In an hour or two after, we passed Mr. Bowman's Pernatty cattle-station; there was no one at home but a dog, and the appearance of the camels seemed to strike him dumb. There were some nice little sheets of water in the creek-bed, but scarcely large enough to be permanent. The country was now a sort of stony plateau, having low, flat-topped, tent-shaped table-lands occurring at intervals all over it; it was quite open, and no timber existed except upon the banks of the watercourses.

On the 30th of May we reached the Elizabeth; there was an old hut or two, but no people were now living there. The water was at a very low ebb. We got a few ducks the first day we arrived. As some work had to be done to the water-casks to enable us to carry them better, we remained here until the 2nd of June. The Elizabeth comes from the table-lands near the shores of Lake Torrens to the north-eastward and falls into the northern end of Pernatty Lagoon. Here we were almost as far north as when at Beltana, our latitude being $31^{\circ} 10' 30''$. The weather was now, and had been for several weeks—indeed ever since the thunder-storm which occurred the day we came upon the clay-channel water—very agreeable; the nights cold but dewless. When at Port Augusta, I heard that a Mr. Moseley was out somewhere to the west of the Elizabeth, well-sinking, on a piece of country he had lately taken up, and that he was camped at or near some rain-water. I was anxious to find out

where he was; on the 31st of May I sent Alec Ross on the only track that went west, to find if any water existed at a place I had heard of about twenty-five miles to the west, and towards which the only road from here led. Alec had not been gone long, when he returned with Mr. Moseley, who happened to be coming to the Elizabeth en route for Port Augusta. He camped with us that night. He informed me his men obtained water at some clay-pans, called Coondambo, near the edge of Lake Gairdner, another large salt depression similar to Lake Torrens, and that by following his horses' tracks they would lead, first to a well where he had just succeeded in obtaining water at a depth of eighty-five feet, and thence, in seven miles farther, to the Coondambo clay-pans. I was very glad to get this information, as even from Coondambo the only water to the west beyond it, that I knew of, was Wynbring, at a distance of 160 or 170 miles.

Leaving the Elizabeth on June the 2nd, we went sixteen miles nearly west, to a small clay water-hole, where we encamped. On the 3rd we travelled twenty-five miles nearly west, passing a deserted sheep-station belonging to Mr. Litchfield about the middle of the day; the country was very poor, being open, bare, stony ground, with occasional low, flat-topped table-lands, covered very sparsely with salsolaceous vegetation. We next arrived at the north-east corner of Lake Hart, and proceeded nearly west along its northern shore; thence by the southern shores of Lakes Hanson and Younghusband, all salt lakes, where one of the party must have been taken ill, for he suddenly

broke out into a doggerel rhyme, remarking that—

“We went by Lake Hart, which is laid on the chart,
And by the Lake Younghusband too ;
We next got a glance on, the little Lake Hanson,
And wished”

Goodness only knows what he wished, but the others conveyed to him their wish that he should discontinue such an infliction on them.

On June the 6th we arrived at the place where Mr. Moseley had just finished his well ; but his men had deserted the spot and gone somewhere else, to put down another shaft to the north-eastwards. The well was between eighty and ninety feet deep, the water whitish but good ; here we encamped on a bushy sort of flat. The next morning, following some horse tracks about south-west, they took us to the Coondambo clay-pans ; the water was yellow and very thick, but there was plenty of it for all our purposes, though I imagined it would not last Mr. Moseley and his men very long. Two or three of his horses were running at this water ; here were several large shallow, cane-grass clay flats which are also occasionally filled with rain-water, they and Coondambo being situated close to the northern shore of Lake Gairdner.

We left Coondambo on the 8th ; on the 9th rain pretended to fall, and we were kept in camp during the day, as a slight spitting fell, but was totally useless. On the 11th we encamped again near Lake Gairdner's shore ; this was the last we should see of it. Our latitude here was $31^{\circ} 5'$, and longi-

tude $135^{\circ} 30' 10''$. We had seen no water since leaving Coondambo, from whence we carried a quantity of the thick yellow fluid, which curdled disagreeably when made into tea, the sugar having the chemical property of precipitating the sediment. We were again in a scrubby region, and had been since leaving Coondambo. Our course was now nearly north-north-west for sixteen or seventeen miles, where we again camped in scrubs. The following day we got to a low rocky hill, or rather several hills, enveloped in the scrub; there were numerous small indentations upon the face of the rocks, and we got some water for the camels, though they had to climb all over the rocks to get it, as there was seldom more than three or four gallons in any indent. We got some pure water for ourselves, and were enabled to dispense with the yellow clayey fluid we had carried. From these hills we travelled nearly west-north-west until, on the 15th, we fell in with my former tracks in April, when travelling from Wynbring. Old Jimmy was quite pleased to find himself again in country which he knew something about. We could again see the summit of Mount Finke. The only water I knew of in this wretched country being at Wynbring, I determined to follow my old route. On the 16th we passed a place where we had formerly seen a small portion of bare rock, and now, in consequence of the late sprinkling showers on the 9th and 10th, there were a few thimblefuls of water on it. This set Jimmy into a state of excitement; he gesticulated and talked to Tommy in their language at a great rate, and Tommy said, "Ah, if you found water here, when you come before, Chester and Formby

wouldn't die." "Well," I said, "Tommy, I don't see much water here to keep anything alive, even if it had been here then." He only sapiently shook his head and said, "But if you got plenty water then that's all right." I found Tommy's arguments were exactly similar to those of all other black boys I have known, exceedingly comical, but all to their own way of thinking.

Soon after this, I was riding in advance along the old track, when old Jimmy came running up behind my camel in a most excited state, and said, "Hi, master, me find 'im, big one watta, plenty watta, mucka (not) pickaninny (little); this way, watta go this way," pointing to a place on our left. I waited until the caravan appeared through the scrub, then old Jimmy led us to the spot he had found. There was a small area of bare rock, but it was too flat to hold any quantity of water, though some of the fluid was shining on it; there was only enough for two or three camels, but I decided to camp there nevertheless. What water there was, some of the camels licked up in no time, and went off to feed. They seemed particularly partial to a low pale-green-foliaged tree with fringe-like leaves, something like fennel or asparagus. I have often gathered specimens of this in former journeys, generally in the most desert places. The botanical name of this tree is *Gyrostemon ramulosus*. After hobbling out the camels, and sitting down to dinner, we became aware of the absence of Mr. Jess Young, and I was rather anxious as to what had become of him, as a new arrival from England adrift in these scrubs would be very liable to lose himself. However, I had not much fear for Mr.

Young, as, having been a sailor, and carrying a compass, he might be able to recover us. Immediately after our meal I was going after him, but before it was finished he came, without his camel, and said he could not get her on, so had tied her up to a tree and walked back, he having gone a long way on my old tracks. I sent Tommy and another riding-camel with him, and in a couple of hours they returned with Mr. Young's animal.

The following morning, the 17th, much to my distress, one of our young bull camels was found to be poisoned, and could not move. We made him sick with hot butter and gave him a strong clyster. Both operations produced the same substance, namely, a quantity of the chewed and digested Gyrostemon; indeed, the animal apparently had nothing else in his inside. He was a trifle better by night, but the following morning, my best bull, Mustara, that had brought me through this region before, was poisoned, and couldn't move. I was now very sorry I had camped at this horrid place. We dosed Mustara with butter as an emetic, and he also threw up nothing but the chewed Gyrostemon; the clyster produced the same. It was evident that this plant has a very poisonous effect on the camels, and I was afraid some of them would die. I was compelled to remain here another day. The first camel poisoned had got a little better, and I hoped the others would escape; but as they all seemed to relish the poisonous plant so much until they felt the effects, and as there were great quantities of it growing on the sandhills, I was in great anxiety during the whole

day. On the 19th I was glad to find no fresh cases, though the two camels that had suffered were very weak and afflicted with spasmodic staggerings. We got them away, though they were scarcely able to carry their loads, which we lightened as much as possible; anything was better than remaining here, as others might get affected.

On this day's march we passed the spot where I had put the horse's pack-saddle in the sandal-wood-tree, and where my first horse had given in. The saddle was now of no use, except that the two pads, being stuffed with horsehair, made cushions for seats of camels' riding-saddles; these we took, but left the frame in the tree again. That night we camped about five miles from Mount Finke, and I was glad to find that the two poisoned bulls had greatly recovered.

The following day, Mr. Young and I ascended Mount Finke, and put up a small pile of stones upon its highest point. The weather, now cool and agreeable, was so different from that which I had previously experienced upon this dreadful mount. Upon that visit the whole region was in an intense glow of heat, but now the summer heats were past; the desolate region around was enjoying for a few weeks only, a slight respite from the usual fiery temperature of the climate of this part of the world; but even now the nature of the country was so terrible and severe, the sandhills so high, and the scrub so thick, that all the new members of the party expressed their astonishment at our ever having got out of it alive. This mountain, as before stated, is forty-five miles from Wynbring. On the 22nd

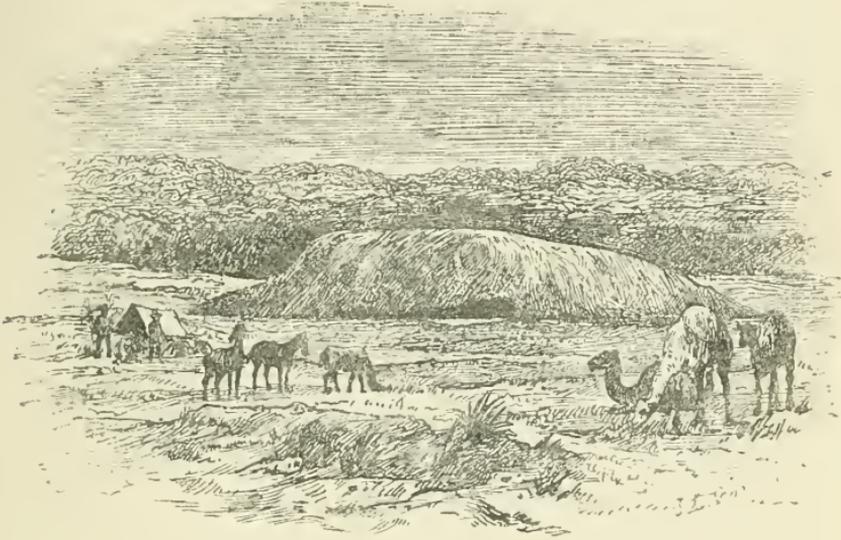
of June, just as we got in sight of the rock, some heavy showers of rain descended; it came down so fast that the camels could drink the water right at their feet, and they all got huddled up together in a mob, breaking their nose-ropes, some laying down to enable them to drink easier, as loaded camels, having a breast-rope from the saddles, cannot put their heads to the ground without hurting, and perhaps cutting, themselves. The rain ceased for a bit, and we made off to my old camp, and got everything under canvas just as another heavy shower came down. Of course the rock-hole was full to overflowing, and water was lying about in all directions. During the 23rd several smart showers fell, and we were confined to our canvas habitations for nearly the whole day.

As this spot was so excellent for all kinds of animals, I gave my friends a couple of days' rest, in the first place because they had had such poor feeding places for several nights before our arrival here, and I also wished, if possible, to meet again with the Wynbring natives, and endeavour to find out from them whether any other waters existed in this country. Old Jimmy, when he discovered, through Tommy Oldham, what I wanted the natives for, seemed surprised and annoyed that I should attempt to get information from them while he was with me in his own territories. He said he would take me to several waters between here and Youldeh, by a more northerly route than he had previously shown; he said that water existed at several places which he enumerated on his fingers; their names were Taloreh, Edoldeh,

Cudyeh, Yanderby, Mobing, Bring, Poothraba, Pondoothy, and Youldeh. I was very glad to hear of all these places, and hoped we should find they were situated in a more hospitable country than that through which we had formerly come. On the 25th Mr. Young shot an emu, and we had fried steaks, which we all relished. Saleh being a good Mussulman, was only just (if) in time to run up and cut the bird's throat before it died, otherwise his religious scruples would have prevented him from eating any of it. All the meat he did eat, which was smoked beef, had been killed in the orthodox Mohammedan style, either by himself or one of his co-religionists at Beltana. It was cured and carried on purpose. None of the natives I had formerly seen, or any others, made their appearance, and the party were disappointed by not seeing the charming young Polly, my description of whom had greatly raised their curiosity.

On the 26th of June we departed from the pretty little oasis of Wynbring, leaving its isolated and water-giving rock, in the silence and solitude of its enveloping scrubs, abandoning it once again, to the occupation of primeval man, a fertile little gem in a desolate waste, where the footsteps of the white man had never been seen until I came, where the wild emu, and the wilder black man, continually return to its life-sustaining rock, where the aboriginal inhabitants will again and again indulge in the wild revelries of the midnight corroborree dance, and where, in an existence totally distinct from ours of civilisation, men and women live and love, and eat and drink, and sleep and die. But

the passions are the same in all phases of the life of the human family, the two great master motives, of love and hunger, being the mainspring of all the actions of mankind.



WYNBRING ROCK.

Wynbring was now behind us, and Jimmy once more our guide, philosopher, and friend. He seemed much gratified at again becoming an important member of the expedition, and he and Tommy, both upon the same riding-camel, led the way for us, through the scrubs, in the direction of about west-north-west. In seven or eight miles we came to a little opening in the scrub, where Jimmy showed us some bare flat rocks, wherein was a nearly circular hole brimful of water. It was, however, nearly full also of the débris of ages, as a stick could be poked into mud or dirt for several feet below the water, and it was impossible to say what depth it really was; but at the best

it could not contain more than 200 or 300 gallons. This was Taloreh. Proceeding towards the next watering-place, which old Jimmy said was close up, in a rather more northerly direction, we found it was getting late, as we had not left Wynbring until after midday; we therefore had to encamp in the scrubs, having come about fifteen miles. It is next to impossible to make an old fool of a black fellow understand the value of the economy of time. I wanted to come on to Edoldeh, and so did old Jimmy; but he made out that Edoldeh was close to Taloreh, and every mile we went it was still close up, until it got so late I ordered the party to camp, where there was little or nothing that the camels could eat. Of course it was useless to try and make Jimmy understand that, having thousands of miles to travel with the camels, it was a great object to me to endeavour to get them bushes or other food that they could eat, so as to keep them in condition to stand the long journey that was before them. Camels, although exceedingly ravenous animals, will only eat what they like, and if they can't get that, will lie down all night and starve, if they are too short-hobbled to allow them to wander, otherwise they will ramble for miles. It was therefore annoying the next morning to find plenty of good bushes at Edoldeh, two miles and a half from our wretched camp, and whither we might have come so easily the night before. To-day, however, I determined to keep on until we actually did reach the next oasis; this Jimmy said was Cudyeh, and was of course still close up. We travelled two and a half miles to Edoldeh, continued eighteen miles beyond it,

and reached Cudyeh early in the afternoon. This place was like most of the little oases in the desert ; it was a very good place for a camp, one singular feature about it being that it consisted of a flat bare rock of some area, upon which were several circular and elliptical holes in various places. The rock lay in the lowest part of the open hollow, and whenever rain fell in the neighbourhood, the water all ran down to it. In consequence of the recent rains, the whole area of rock was two feet under water, and the extraordinary holes or wells that existed there looked like antediluvian cisterns. Getting a long stick, and wading through the water to the mouths of these cisterns, we found that, like most other reservoirs in a neglected native state, they were almost full of soil and débris, and the deepest had only about three feet of water below the surface of the rock. Some of these holes might be very deep, or they might be found to be permanent wells if cleaned out.

Next day we passed another little spot called Yanderby, with rock water, at ten miles ; thence in three more we came to Mobing, a much better place than any of the others : indeed I thought it superior to Wynbring. It lies about north 62° west from Wynbring and is fifty miles from it ; the latitude of Mobing is $30^{\circ} 10' 30''$. At this place there was a large, bare, rounded rock, very similar to Wynbring, except that no rock-holes to hold any surface water existed ; what was obtainable being in large native wells sunk at the foot of the rock, and brimful of water. I believe a good supply might be obtained here. There were plenty of good bushes in the neighbourhood for the camels, and we had an

excellent camp at Mobing. As usual, this oasis consisted merely of an open space, lightly timbered with the mulga acacia amongst the sandhills and the scrubs.

The day after, we were led by old Jimmy to a small salt lake-bed called Bring, which was dry ; it lay about south-west from Mobing. Round at the southern shore of this lake Jimmy showed us a small rock-hole, with a few dozen gallons of water in it. In consequence of Mr. Young not being well, we encamped, the distance from Mobing being nine miles. This also was a rather pretty camp, and excellent for the camels. Towards evening some light showers of rain fell, and we had to erect our tarpaulins and tents, which we only do in times of rain. More showers fell the next day, and we did not shift our quarters. A very shallow sheet of water now appeared upon the surface of the lake bed, but it was quite salt. We made some little dams with clay, where the water ran into the lake, and saved enough water to indulge in a sort of bath with the aid of buckets and waterproof sheeting. This was the last day of June. Unfortunately, though Chairman of the Company, I was unable to declare a dividend for the half-year.

The 1st of July broke with a fine and beautiful morning, and we left Lake Bring none the worse for our compulsory delay. I was anxious to reach Youldeh so soon as possible, as I had a great deal of work to do when I arrived there. To-day we travelled nearly west seventeen or eighteen miles, and encamped without an oasis. On the 2nd we passed two rocky hills, named respectively Pondoothy and Poothraba. Pondoothy was an indented

rock-crowned hill in the scrubs. Standing on its summit I descried an extraordinary line cut through the scrubs, which ran east by north, and was probably intended by the natives for a true east line. The scrub timber was all cut away, and it looked like a survey line. Upon asking old Jimmy what it was done for, and what it meant, he gave the usual reply, that Cockata black fellow make 'em. It was somewhat similar to the path I had seen cleared at Pylebung in March last, and no doubt it is used for a similar purpose. Leaving this hill and passing Poothraba, which is in sight of it, we continued our nearly west course, and camped once more in the scrubs. The country was very difficult for the loaded camels, it rose into such high ridges or hills of sand that we could only traverse it at a snail's pace. It was of course still covered with scrubs, which consisted here, as all over this region, mostly of the *Eucalyptus dumosa*, or mallee-trees, of a very stunted habit; occasionally some patches of black oaks as we call them, properly casuarinas, with clumps of mulga in the hollows, here and there a stunted cypress pine, *callitris*, some prickly hakea bushes, and an occasional so-called native poplar, *Codonocarpus cotinifolius*, a brother or sister tree to the poisonous *Gyrostemon*. The native poplar is a favourite and harmless food for camels, and as it is of the same family as the *Gyrostemon*, my friend Baron von Mueller argues that I must be mistaken in the poison plant which affected the camels. He thinks it must be a plant of the poisonous family of the *Euphorbiaceæ*, and which certainly grows in these regions, and which

I have collected specimens of, but I cannot detect it.

We were now nearly in the latitude of Youldeh, and had only to push west to reach it; but the cow camel that Jimmy and Tommy rode, being very near calving, had not travelled well for some days, and gave a good deal of trouble to find her of a morning. I wished to get her to Youldeh before she calved, as I intended to form a depot there for a few weeks, during which time I hoped the calf would become strong enough to travel. On the morning of the 5th, only about half the mob were brought up to the camp, and, as Mr. Tietkens' and my riding camels were amongst them, we rode off to Youldeh, seven or eight miles away, telling the others to come on as soon as they could. Mr. Young, Saleh, and Tommy were away after the absent animals. On arriving I found Youldeh much the same as when I left it, only now the weather was cool, and the red sandhills, that had formerly almost burnt the feet of men and animals, were slightly encrusted with a light glittering mantle of hoar-frost in the shaded places, under the big leguminous bushes, for that morning Herr Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit had fallen to 28° . My old slabbed well had got filled up with sand, and it was evident that many natives had visited the place since I left on the 24th of March, 103 days ago. We managed to water our camels, as they lay down on the top of the well, and stretched their long necks down into it. We then quietly waited till long past midday for the caravan to come up. We had nothing to do, and nothing to

eat ; we could not dig out the well, for we had no shovel. At last Mr. Tietkens got alarmed at the non-arrival of the party, and he went back to the camp, taking my riding-camel with him, as she would not remain quiet by herself. I remained there mighty hungry, and made some black smoke to endeavour to attract any natives that might be in the neighbourhood. I have before remarked that the natives can make different coloured smokes, of different form, and make them ascend in different ways, each having a separate meaning : hurried alarm, and signal fires are made to throw up black and white smokes. No signals were returned, and I sat upon a sandhill, like Patience on a monument, and thought of the line, "That sitting alone with my conscience, is judgment sufficient for me." I could not perceive any dust or sand of the approaching caravan ; darkness began to creep over this solitary place and its more solitary occupant. I thought I had better sleep, though I had no bedding, to pass the time away till morning. I coiled myself up under a bush and fell into one of those extraordinary waking dreams which occasionally descend upon imaginative mortals, when we know that we are alive, and yet we think we are dead ; when a confused jumble of ideas sets the mind "peering back into the vistas of the memories of yore," and yet also foreshadowing the images of future things upon the quivering curtains of the mental eye. At such a time the imagination can revel only in the marvellous, the mysterious, and the mythical. The forms of those we love are idealised and spiritualised into angelic shapes. The faces of those we have forgotten long, or else per-

chance have lost, once more return, seraphic from the realms of light. The lovely forms and winning graces of children gone, the witching eyes and alluring smiles of women we have loved, the beautiful countenances of beloved and admired youth, once more we seem to see ; the youthful hands we have clasped so often in love and friendship in our own, once more we seem to press, unchanged by time, unchanged by fate, beckoning to us lovingly to follow them, still trying with loving caress and youthful smiles to lead us to their shadowy world beyond. O youth, beautiful and undying, the sage's dream, the poet's song, all that is loving and lovely, is centred still in thee ! O lovely youth, with thine arrowy form, and slender hands, thy pearly teeth, and saintly smile, thy pleading eyes and radiant hair ; all, all must worship thee. And if in waking hours and daily toil we cannot always greet thee, yet in our dreams you are our own. As the poet says—

In dreams you come as things of light and lightness ;
We hear your voice in still small accents tell,
Of realms of bliss and never-fading brightness,
Where those who loved on earth together dwell."

Then, while lying asleep, engrossed by these mysterious influences and impressions, I thought I heard celestial sounds upon mine ear ; vibrating music's rapturous strain, as though an heavenly choir were near, dispensing melody and pain. As though some angels swept the strings, of harps ethereal o'er me hung, and fann'd me, as with seraph's wings, while thus the voices sweetly sung :
" Be bold of heart, be strong of will, for unto

thee by God is given, to roam the desert paths of earth, and thence explore the fields of heaven. Be bold of heart, be strong of will, and naught on earth shall lay thee low." When suddenly I awoke, and found that the party with all the camels had arrived, my fire was relit, and the whole place lately so silent was now in a bustle. I got up, and looked about me in astonishment, as I could not at first remember where I was. But I soon discovered that the musical sounds I had heard were the tinabulations of my camel-bells, tinkling in the evening air, as they came closer and closer over the sandhills to the place where I lay dreaming, and my senses returned at length to their ordinary groove.

We were safely landed at the Youldeh depot once more ; and upon the whole I may say we had had an agreeable journey from Port Augusta. Jimmy and Tommy's cow calved soon after arrival. I was glad to find she had delayed ; now the calf will be allowed to live, as she will be here for some little time. On the following morning I christened the calf Youldeh, after her birthplace ; she was not much bigger than a cat. On the 6th, 7th, and 8th, we all remained in depot, doing various kinds of work, re-digging and re-slabbing the well, making two large canvas troughs for the camels to drink out of, making some covers and alterations to some water-beds I had for carrying water, and many other things. I had some camels to deliver at Fowler's Bay, and some private business, necessary to be done before a magistrate, which compelled me personally to return thither ; otherwise I should have gone away to the north to endeavour to

discover another depot in that direction. But now I committed this piece of work to my two officers, Messrs. Tietkens and Young, while Alec Ross and I went south to the Bay. Both parties started from Youldeh on the 9th. I took old Jimmy with me to return him, with thanks, to his family. Tietkens and Young took Tommy with them, as that young gentleman had no desire whatever to return or to leave me. Between ourselves, when I first got him in February, I had caused him to commit some very serious breaches of aboriginal law, for he was then on probation and not allowed to come near women or the blacks' camp. He was also compelled to wear a great chignon, which made him look more like a girl than a boy. This I cut off and threw away, much to the horror of the elders of his tribe, who, if they could catch, would inflict condign punishment upon him. When he and old Jimmy met at Port Augusta, and Jimmy saw him without his chignon and other emblems of novicehood, that old gentleman talked to him like a father; but Tommy, knowing he had me to throw the blame on, quietly told the old man in plain English to go to blazes. The expression on old Jimmy's face at thus being flouted by a black boy, was indescribable; he thought it his duty to persecute Tommy still farther, but now Tommy only laughed at him and said I made him do it, so old Jimmy gave him up at last as a bad job. Poor old fellow, he was always talking about his wife and children; I was to have Mary, and Peter Nicholls Jinny. Alec, Jimmy, and I reached the bay on the 14th, but at Colona, on the 12th, we heard there had been a sad epidemic amongst the natives since

I left, and poor old Jimmy had lost two of his children, both Mary and Jinny. When he heard this, the poor old fellow cried, and looked at me, as much as to say if I had not taken him away he might have saved them. It was but poor consolation to tell him, what he could not understand, that those whom the gods love die young. I suffered another loss, as a bright little black boy called Fry, a great favourite of mine, with splendid eyes and teeth, whom I had intended to bring with me as a companion for Tommy, was also dead. I parted from old Jimmy the best of friends, but he was like Rachael weeping for her children, and would not be comforted. I gave him money and presents, and dresses for his wife, and anything he asked for, but this was not very much.

Our stay at Fowler's Bay was not extended longer than I could help. Mr. Armstrong, the manager, made me a present of a case of brandy, and as I wanted to take some stores to Youldeh, he allowed me to take back the camels I had brought him, and sent a man of his—Richard Dorey—to accompany me to Youldeh, and there take delivery of them.

On the 17th we left the bay, and the spindrift and the spray of the Southern Ocean, with the glorious main expanding to the skies. We stayed at Colona with Mr. Murray a couple of days, and finally left it on the 21st, arriving with Dorey and his black boy at Youldeh on the 25th.

Tommy Oldham's father had also died of the epidemic at the bay. Richard Dorey's black boy broke the news to him very gently, when Tommy came up to me and said, "Oh, Mr. Giles, my"—

adjective [not] blooming—"old father is dead too." I said, "Is that how you talk of your poor old father, Tommy, now that he is dead?" To this he replied, much in the same way as some civilised sons may often have done, "Well, I couldn't help it!"

I have stated that when I went south with Alec Ross to Fowler's Bay I despatched my two officers, Mr. Tietkens and Mr. Young, with my black boy Tommy, to endeavour to discover a new depot to the north, at or as near to the 29th parallel of latitude as possible. When I returned from the bay they had returned a day or two before, having discovered at different places two native wells, a small native dam, and some clay-pans, each containing water. This was exceedingly good news, and I wasted no time before I departed from Youldeh. I gave my letters to Richard Dorey, who had accompanied me back from Fowler's Bay. I will give my readers a condensation of Mr. Tietkens's report of his journey with Mr. Young and Tommy.

On leaving Youldeh, in latitude $30^{\circ} 24' 10''$ and longitude $131^{\circ} 46'$ —they took four camels, three to ride and one to carry water, rations, blankets, &c.—they went first to the small rock-hole I had visited with Mr. Murray and old Jimmy, when here in the summer. This lay about north 74° west, was about fourteen miles distant, and called Paring. Tommy followed our old horse-tracks, but on arrival found it dry. The following day they travelled north, and passed through a country of heavy sandhills and thick scrubs, having occasional open patches with limestone cropping out, and camped at twenty-four miles. Continuing their journey the next morning,

they went over better and more open country, and made twenty-four or five miles of northing. Some more good country was seen the following day, but no water, although they saw native tracks and native huts. The next day they sighted two small flat-topped hills and found a native well in their neighbourhood; this, however, did not promise a very good supply of water. The views obtainable from the little hills were not very inviting, as scrubs appeared to exist in nearly every direction. This spot was eighty-two miles from Youldeh, and lay nearly north 10° west. They continued north for another twenty-five miles, to latitude $28^{\circ} 52'$ and longitude about $131^{\circ} 31'$, when they turned to the south-west for eighteen miles, finding a small native dam with some water in it; then, turning slightly to the north of west, they found some clay-pans with a little more water. They now went forty-four miles nearly west from the little dam, and, although the country seemed improving, they could discover no more water. From their farthest westerly point in latitude $28^{\circ} 59'$ they turned upon a bearing of south 55° east direct for the native well found near the little flat-topped hills before mentioned. In their progress upon this line they entered, at forty-five miles and straight before them, upon a small open flat space very well grassed, and very pretty, and upon it they found another native well, and saw some natives, with whom they held a sort of running conversation. There were several wells, all containing water. Tommy managed to elicit from the natives the name of the place, which they said was Ooldabinna. This seemed a very fortunate discovery, as the first well found near the flat tops was

by no means a good one. Here they encamped, being highly pleased with their successful journey. They had now found a new depot, ninety-two miles, lying north 20° west from Youldeh. From hence they made a straight line back to the camp, where they awaited my return from the bay.

I was much pleased with their discovery, and on Tuesday, the 27th July, having nineteen camels and provisions for eight months, and a perfect equipment for carrying water, we left Youldeh. Richard Dorey, with his camels and black boy, went away to the south. My caravan departed in a long single string to the north, and Youldeh and the place thereof knew us no more.

CHAPTER II.

FROM 27TH JULY TO 6TH OCTOBER, 1875.

Ooldabinna depot—Tietkens and Young go north—I go west—A salt expanse—Dense scrubs—Deposit two casks of water—Silence and solitude—Native footmarks—A hollow—Fine vegetation—A native dam—Anxiety—A great plain—A dry march—Return to the depot—Rain—My officers' report—Depart for the west—Method of travelling—Kill a camel—Reach the dam—Death or victory—Leave the dam—The hazard of the die—Five days of scrubs—Enter a plain—A terrible journey—Saleh prays for a rock-hole—A dry basin at 242 miles—Watering camels in the desert—Seventeen days without water—Saved—Tommy finds a supply—The Great Victoria Desert—The Queen's Spring—Farther still west.

ON leaving Youldeh I had the choice of first visiting the native well my two officers had found at the flat tops, eighty-two miles, or the further one at Ooldabinna, which was ninety-two. I decided to go straight for the latter. The weather was cool, and the camels could easily go that distance without water. Their loads were heavy, averaging now 550 lbs. all round. The country all the way consisted first, of very high and heavy sandhills, with mallee scrubs and thick spinifex, with occasional grassy flats between, but at one place we actually crossed a space of nearly ten miles of open, good grassy limestone country. We travelled very slowly over this region. There was a little plant,

something like mignonette, which the camels were extremely fond of; we met it first on the grassy ground just mentioned, and when we had travelled from fifteen to eighteen miles and found some of it we camped. It took us five days and a half to reach Ooldabinna, and by the time we arrived there I had travelled 1010 miles from Beltana on all courses. I found Ooldabinna to consist of a small, pretty, open space amongst the scrubs; it was just dotted over with mulga-trees, and was no doubt a very favourite resort of the native owners.

On the flat there was a place where for untold ages the natives have obtained their water supplies. There were several wells, but my experience immediately informed me that they were simply rock-holes filled with soil from the periodical rain-waters over the little flat, the holes lying in the lowest ground, and I perceived that the water supply was very limited; fortunately, however, there was sufficient for our immediate requirements. The camels were not apparently thirsty when we arrived, but drank more the following day; this completely emptied all the wells, and our supply then depended upon the soakage, which was of such a small volume that I became greatly disenchanted with my new home. There was plenty of the mignonette plant, and the camels did very well; I wanted water here only for a month, but it seemed probable it would not last a week. We deepened all the wells, and were most anxious watchers of the fluid as it slowly percolated through the soil into the bottom of each. After I had been here two days, and the water supply was getting gradually but surely less, I naturally became most anxious to discover more,

either in a west or northerly direction ; and I again sent my two officers, Messrs. Tietkens and Young, to the north, to endeavour to discover a supply in that direction, while I determined to go myself to the west on a similar errand. I was desirous, as were they, that my two officers should share the honour of completing a line of discovery from Youldeh, northwards to the Everard and Musgrave Ranges, and thus connect those considerable geographical features with the coast-line at Fowler's Bay ; and I promised them if they were fortunate and discovered more water for a depot to the north, that they should finish their line, whether I was successful to the west or not. This, ending at the Musgrave Ranges would form in itself a very interesting expedition. Those ranges lay nearly 200 miles to the north. As the Musgrave Range is probably the highest in South Australia and a continuous chain with the Everard Range, seventy or eighty miles this side of it, I had every reason to expect that my officers would be successful in discovering a fresh depot up in a northerly direction. Their present journey, however, was only to find a new place to which we might remove, as the water supply might cease at any moment, as at each succeeding day it became so considerably less. Otherwise this was a most pleasant little oasis, with such excellent herbage for the camels that it enabled them to do with very little water, after their first good skinful.

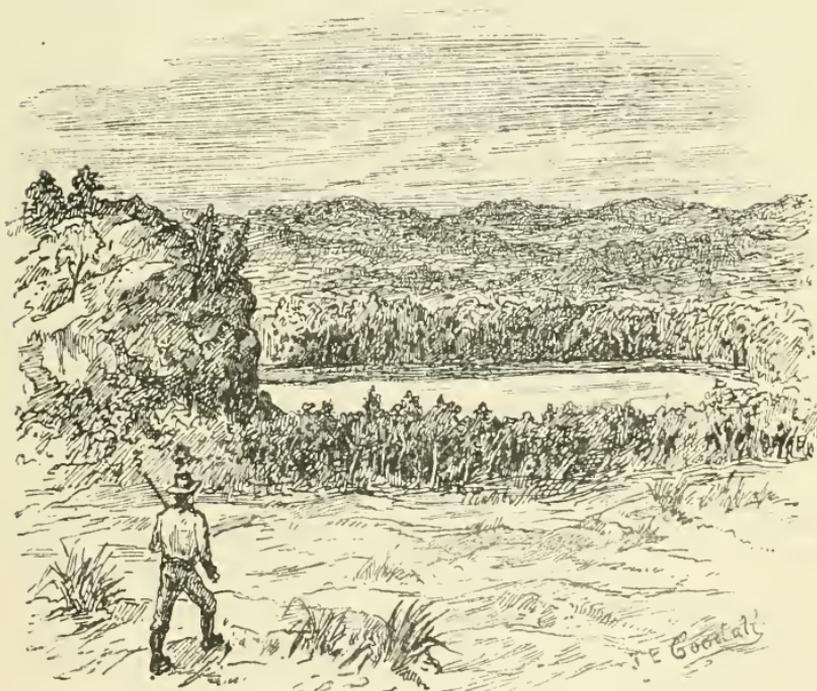
We arrived here on Sunday, the 1st of August, and both parties left again on the 4th. Mr. Tietkens and Mr. Young took only their own riding and one baggage camel to carry water and other

things ; they had thirty gallons of water and ten days' provisions, as I expected they would easily discover water within less than 100 miles, when they would immediately return, as it might be necessary for them to remove the whole camp from this place. I trusted all this to them, requesting them, however, to hold out here as long as possible, as, if I returned unsuccessful from the west, my camels might be unable to go any farther.

I was sure that the region to the west was not likely to prove a Garden of Eden, and I thought it was not improbable that I might have to go 200 miles before I found any water. If unsuccessful in that way I should have precisely the same distance to come back again ; therefore, with the probabilities of such a journey before me, I determined to carry out two casks of water to ninety or a hundred miles, send some of the camels back from that point and push on with the remainder. I took six excellent camels, three for riding and three for carrying loads—two carrying thirty gallons of water each, and the third provisions, rugs, gear, &c. I took Saleh, my only Afghan camel-man—usually they are called camel-drivers, but that is a misnomer, as all camels except riding ones must be led—and young Alec Ross ; Saleh was to return with the camels from the place at which I should plant the casks, and Alec and I were to go on. The northern party left on the same day, leaving Peter Nicholls, my cook, and Tommy the black boy, to look after the camels and camp.

I will first give an outline of my journey to the west. The country, except in the immediate neighbourhood of the wells, was, as usual in this region,

all sandhills and scrub, although at eighteen miles, steering west, I came upon the shores of a large salt depression, or lake-bed, which had numerous sandhill islands scattered about it. It appeared to extend to a considerable distance southerly. By digging we easily obtained a quantity of water, but it was all pure brine and utterly useless. After this we met lake-bed after lake-bed, all in a region of dense scrubs and sandhills for sixty miles, some were small, some large, though none of the size of



LITTLE SALT LAKE.

the first one. At seventy-eight miles from Ooldabinna, having come as near west as it is possible to steer in such a country on a camel—of course I had a Gregory's compass—we had met no signs of water fit for man or animal to drink, though brine and

bog existed in most of the lake-beds. The scrubs were very thick, and were chiefly mallee, the *Eucalyptus dumosa*, of course attended by its satellite spinifex. So dense indeed was the growth of the scrubs, that Alec Ross declared, figuratively speaking, "you could not see your hand before you." We could seldom get a view a hundred yards in extent, and we wandered on farther and farther from the only place where we knew that water existed. At this distance, on the shores of a salt-lake, there was really a very pretty scene, though in such a frightful desert. A high, red earthy bank fringed with feathery mulga and bushes to the brink, overlooking the milk-white expanse of the lake, and all surrounded by a strip of open ground with the scrubs standing sullenly back. The open ground looked green, but not with fertility, for it was mostly composed of bushes of the dull-green, salty samphire. It was the weird, hideous, and demoniacal beauty of absolute sterility that reigned here. From this place I decided to send Saleh back with two camels, as this was the middle of the fourth day. Saleh would have to camp by himself for at least two nights before he could reach the depot, and the thought of such a thing almost drove him distracted; I do not suppose he had ever camped out by himself in his life previously. He devoutly desired to continue on with us, but go he must, and go he did. We, however, carried the two casks that one of his camels had brought until we encamped for the fourth night, being now ninety miles from Ooldabinna.

After Saleh left us we passed only one more salt lake, and then the country became entirely be-

decked with unbroken scrub, while spinifex covered the whole ground. The scrubs consisted mostly of mallee, with patches of thick mulga, casuarinas, sandal-wood, not the sweet-scented sandal-wood of commerce, which inhabits the coast country of Western Australia, and quandong trees, another species of the sandal-wood family. Although this was in a cool time of the year—namely, near the end of the winter—the heat in the day-time was considerable, as the thermometer usually stood as high as 96° in the shade, it was necessary to completely shelter the casks from the sun; we therefore cut and fixed over them a thick covering of boughs and leaves, which was quite impervious to the solar ray, and if nothing disturbed them while we were absent, I had no fear of injury to the casks or of much loss from evaporation. No traces of any human inhabitants were seen, nor were the usually ever-present, tracks of native game, or their canine enemy the wild dingo, distinguishable upon the sands of this previously untrodden wilderness. The silence and the solitude of this mighty waste were appalling to the mind, and I almost regretted that I had sworn to conquer it. The only sound the ear could catch, as hour after hour we slowly glided on, was the passage of our noiseless treading and spongy-footed “ships” as they forced their way through the live and dead timber of the hideous scrubs. Thus we wandered on, farther from our camp, farther from our casks, and farther from everything we wished or required. A day and a half after Saleh left us, at our sixth night’s encampment, we had left Ooldabinna 140 miles behind. I did not urge the camels to perform

quick or extraordinary daily journeys, for upon the continuance of their powers and strength our own lives depended. When the camels got good bushes at night, they would fill themselves well, then lie down for a sleep, and towards morning chew their cud. When we found them contentedly doing so we knew they had had good food. I asked Alec one morning, when he brought them to the camp, if he had found them feeding; he replied, "Oh, no, they were all lying down chewing their *kid*." Whenever the camels looked well after this we said, "Oh, they are all right, they've been chewing their 'kid.'"

No water had yet been discovered, nor had any place where it could lodge been seen, even if the latter rain itself descended upon us, except indeed in the beds of the salt-lakes, where it would immediately have been converted into brine. On the seventh day of our march we had accomplished fifteen miles, when our attention was drawn to a plot of burnt spinifex, surrounded by the recent foot-prints of natives. This set us to scan the country in every direction where any view could be obtained. Alec Ross climbed a tree, and by the aid of field-glasses discovered the existence of a fall of country into a kind of hollow, with an apparently broken piece of open grassy ground some distance to the south-west. I determined to go to this spot, whatever might be the result, and proceeded towards it; after travelling five miles, and closely approaching it, I was disgusted to find that it was simply the bed of a salt-lake, but as we saw numerous native foot-prints and the tracks of emus, wild dogs, and other creatures, both going to and

coming from it, we went on until we reached its lonely shore. There was an open space all round it, with here and there a few trees belonging to the surrounding scrubs that had either advanced on to, or had not receded from the open ground. The bed of the lake was white, salty-looking, and dry; There was, however, very fine herbage round the shores and on the open ground. There was plenty of the little purple pea-vetch, the mignonette plant, and *Clianthus Damperii*, or Sturt's desert-pea, and we turned our four fine camels out to graze, or rather browse, upon whatever they chose to select, while we looked about in search of the water we felt sure must exist here.

The day was warm for this time of year, the thermometer standing at 95° in the shade. But before we went exploring for water we thought it well to have some dinner. The most inviting-looking spot was at the opposite or southern end of the lake, which was oval-shaped; we had first touched upon it at its northern end. Alec Ross walked over to inspect that, and any other likely places, while I dug wells in the bed of the lake. The soil was reasonably good and moist, and on tasting it I could discover no taint of salt, nor had the surface the same sparkling incrustation of saline particles that I had noticed upon all the other lake-beds. At ten or eleven inches I reached the bed-rock, and found the soil rested upon a rotten kind of bluish-green slate, but no water in the numerous holes I dug rewarded me, so I gave it up in despair and returned to the camp to await Alec's report of his wanderings. On the way I passed by some black oak-trees near the margin, and saw where the

natives had tapped the roots of most of them for water. This I took to be a very poor sign of any other water existing here. I could see all round the lake, and if Alec was unsuccessful there was no other place to search. Alec was a long time away, and it was already late when he returned, but on his arrival he rejoiced me with the intelligence that, having fallen in with a lot of fresh native tracks, all trending round to the spot that looked so well from this side, he had followed them, and they led him to a small native clay-dam on a clay-pan containing a supply of yellow water. This information was, however, qualified by the remark that there was not enough water there for the whole of our mob of camels, although there was plenty for our present number. We immediately packed up and went over to our new-found treasure.

This spot is 156 miles straight from our last watering-place at Ooldabinna. I was very much pleased with our discovery, though the quantity of water was very small, but having found some, we thought we might find more in the neighbourhood. At that moment I believe if we had had all our camels here they could all have had a good drink, but the evaporation being so terribly rapid in this country, by the time I could return to Ooldabinna and then get back here, the water would be gone and the dam dry. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" is, however, a maxim that explorers must very often be contented to abide by. Our camels got as much water as they chose to drink; they were not very big animals, but I am sure 150 gallons was consumed amongst the four. They were hobbled out in the excellent herbage, which

was better here than where we first outspanned them. There was splendid grass as well as herbage, but camels seldom, if ever, touch it. The *clianthus* pea and the vetch pea they ate ravenously, and when they can get those they require very little water.

No natives appeared to be now in the immediate neighbourhood. This was a very pretty and charming little oasis-camp. We got a few bronze-winged pigeons that came by mistake to water that night. The following morning we found the camels had decamped, in consequence of their having had long hobbles allowed them, as we did not suppose they would ramble away from such splendid herbage and water. Alec went after them very early, but had not returned by midday. During his absence I was extremely anxious, for, if he should be unable to track, and should return without them, our case would be almost hopeless. If camels are determined to stampede and can get a good start, there is frequently no overtaking them on foot. They are not like horses, which will return of their own accord to water. Camels know their own powers and their own independence of man, and I believe that a camel, if not in subjection, might live for months without water, provided it could get succulent food. How anxiously I listened as hour after hour I maundered about this spot for the tinkling sound of the camels' bells! How often fancy will deceive even the strongest minds! Twenty times during that morning I could have sworn I heard the bells, and yet they were miles out of earshot. When Alec and I and the camels were all here together I thought this a very pretty place, but oh,

how hideous did it appear while I was here alone, with the harrowing thought of the camels being lost and Alec returning without them. Death itself in any terrors clad would have been a more welcome sight to me then and there, than Alec Ross without the camels. But Alec Ross was a right smart chance of a young bushman, and I knew that nothing would prevent him from getting the animals so long as their hobbles held. If, however, they succeeded in breaking them, it would be good-bye for ever. As they can go in their hobbles, unless very short, if they have a mind to stampede, as fast as a man can walk in this region, and with a whole night's start with loose legs, pursuit would be hopeless. But surely at last I hear the bells! Yes; but, strange to say, I did not hear them until Alec and the camels actually appeared through the edge of scrub. Alec said they had gone miles, and were still pushing on in single file when he got up to them.

Now that I had found this water I was undecided what to do. It would be gone before I could return to it, and where I should find any more to the west it was impossible to say; it might be 100, it might be 200, it might even be 300 miles. God only knows where the waters are in such a region as this. I hesitated for the rest of the day—whether to go still farther west in search of water, or to return at once and risk the bringing of the whole party here. Tietkens and Young, I reflected, have found a new depot, and perhaps removed the whole party to it. Then, again, they might not, but have had to retreat to Youldeh. Eventually I decided to go on a few miles more to the west, in order to see whether the

character of the country was in any way altered before I returned to the depot.

We went about forty miles beyond the dam; the only alteration in the country consisted of a return to the salt-lake system that had ceased for so many miles prior to our reaching our little dam. At the furthest point we reached, 195 miles from the depot; it was upon the shore of another salt lake, no water of any kind was to be procured. The only horizon to be seen was about fifteen miles away, and was simply the rim of an undulation in the dreary scrubs covered with the usual timber—that is to say, a mixture of the *Eucalyptus dumosa* or mallee, casuarinas or black oaks, a few *Grevilleas*, hakea bushes, with leguminous trees and shrubs, such as mulga, and a kind of harsh-, silver wattle, looking bush. On the latter order of these trees and plants the camels find their sustenance. Two stunted specimens of the native orange-tree or cappariss were seen where I had left the two casks. From my furthest point west, in latitude $29^{\circ} 15'$ and longitude $128^{\circ} 3' 30''$, I returned to the dam and found that even during my short absence of only three and a half days the diminution of the volume of water in it was amazing, and I was perfectly staggered at the decrease, which was at the rate of more than an inch per day. The dimensions of this singular little dam were very small: the depth was its most satisfactory feature. It was, as all native watering places are, funnel-shaped, and to the bottom of the funnel I could poke a stick about three feet, but a good deal of that depth was mud; the surface was not more than eight feet long, by three feet wide, its shape was elliptical; it was not

full when we first saw it, having shrunk at least three feet from its highest water-mark. I now decided to return by a new and more southerly route to the depot, hoping to find some other waters on the way. At this dam we were 160 miles from Eucla Harbour, which I visited last February with my black boy Tommy and the three horses lost in pushing from Wynbring to the Finniss. North from Eucla, running inland, is a great plain. I now wished to determine how far north this plain actually extended. I was here in scrubs to the north of it. The last night we camped at the dam, was exceedingly cold, the thermometer falling to 26° on the morning of the 16th of August, the day we left. I steered south-east, and we came out of the scrubs, which had been thinning, on to the great plain, in forty-nine or fifty miles. Changing my course here to east, we skirted along the edge of the plain for twenty-five miles. It was beautifully grassed, and had cotton and salt-bush on it: also some little clover hollows, in which rain-water lodges after a fall, but I saw none of any great capacity, and none that held any water. It was splendid country for the camels to travel over; no spinifex, no impediments for their feet, and no timber. A bicycle could be ridden, I believe, over the whole extent of this plain, which must be 500 or 600 miles long by nearly 200 miles broad, it being known as the Hampton plains in Western Australia, and ending, so to say, near Youldeh. Having determined where the plain extends at this part of it, I now changed my course to east-north-east for 106 miles, through the usual sandhill scrubs and spinifex region, until we reached the track of

the caravan from Youldeh, having been turned out of our straight course by a large salt lake, which most probably is the southern end of the one we met first, at eighteen miles west from Ooldabinna. By the tracks I could see that the party had not retreated to Youldeh, which was so far re-assuring. On the 22nd of August we camped on the main line of tracks, fifteen miles from home, when, soon after we started, it became very cloudy, and threatened to rain. The weather for the last six days has been very oppressive, the thermometer standing at 92° to 94° , every day when we outspanned, usually from eleven to half-past twelve, the hottest time of the day not having then been reached. As we approached the depot, some slight sprinklings of rain fell, and as we drew nearer and nearer, our anxiety to ascertain whether our comrades were yet there increased; also whether our camels, which had now come 196 miles from the dam, could get any water, for we had found none whatever on our return route. On mounting the last sandhill which shut out the view, we were pleased to see the flutterings of the canvas habitations in the hollow below, and soon after we were welcomed by our friends. Saleh had returned by himself all right, and I think much to his surprise had not been either killed, eaten, or lost in the bush. I was indeed glad to find the party still there, as I had great doubts whether they could hold out until my return. They were there, and that was about all, for the water in all the wells was barely sufficient to give our four camels a drink; there remained only a bucket or two of slush rather than water in the whole camp. It appeared, however, as though

fortune were about to favour us, for the light droppings of rain continued, and before night we were compelled to seek the shelter of our tents. I was indeed thankful to Heaven for paying even a part of so longstanding a debt, although it owes me a good many showers yet ; but being a patient creditor, I will wait. We were so anxious about the water that we were continually stirring out of the tents to see how the wells looked, and whether any water had yet ran into them. A slight trickling at length began to run into the best-catching of our wells, and although the rain did not continue long or fall heavily, yet a sufficiency drained into the receptacle to enable us to fill up all our water-holding vessels the next morning, and give a thorough good drink to all our camels. I will now give an account of how my two officers fared on their journey in search of a depot to the north.

Their first point was to the little native dam they had seen prior to the discovery of this place, and there they encamped the first night, ten miles from hence on a bearing of north 9° east. Leaving the dam, they went north for twenty-five miles over high sandhills and through scrubs, when they saw some fresh native tracks, and found a small and poor native well, in which there was only a bucketful or two of water. They continued their northern course for twenty-five miles farther, when they reached a hollow with natives' foot-marks all over it, and some diamond sparrows, *Amadina* of Gould. Again they were unsuccessful in all their searches for water. Going farther north for fifteen miles, they observed some smoke to the north-east, and reached the place in six or seven miles. Here they

found and surprised a large family of natives, who had apparently only recently arrived. A wide and deep hollow or valley existed among high sandhill country, timbered mostly with a eucalyptus, which is simply a gigantic species of mallee, but as it grows singly, it resembles gum-trees. Having descended into this hollow, a mile and a half wide, they saw the natives, and were in hopes of obtaining some information from them, but unfortunately the whole mob decamped, uttering loud and prolonged cries. Following this valley still northwards they reached its head in about six miles, but could discover no place where the natives obtained their supplies of water. At this point they were travelling over burnt scrubby sandhill country still north, when the natives who had appeared so shy came running after them in a threatening manner, howling at them, and annoying them in every possible way. These people, who had now arrayed themselves in their war-paint, and had all their fighting weapons in hand, evidently meant mischief; but my officers managed to get away from them without coming to a hostile encounter. They endeavoured to parley with the natives and stopped for that purpose, but could gain no information whatever as to the waters in their territories. Four miles north were then travelled, over burnt country, and having failed in discovering any places or even signs, otherwise than the presence of black men, of places where water could be obtained, and being anxious about the state of the water supply at the depot, as I had advised them not to remain too long away from this point, whose position is in latitude $27^{\circ} 48'$ and longitude $131^{\circ} 19'$, they returned. The Musgrave

Range, they said, was not more than 100 miles to the north of them, but they had not sighted it. They were greatly disappointed at their want of success, and returned by a slightly different route, searching in every likely-looking place for water, but finding none, though they are both of opinion that the country is watered by native wells, and had they had sufficient time to have more thoroughly investigated it, they would doubtless have been more successful. The Everard Range being about sixty miles south from the Musgrave chain, and they not having sighted it, I can scarcely think they could have been within 100 miles of the Musgrave, as from high sandhills that high feature should be visible at that distance.

When Alec Ross and I returned from the west the others had been back some days, and were most anxious to hear how we had got on out west.

The usual anxiety at the camp was the question of water supply; I had found so little where I had been, and the water here was failing rapidly every day. Had it not been for last night's rain, we should be in a great difficulty this morning. Now, however, we had got our supply replenished by the light rain, and for the moment all was well; but it did not follow that because it rained here it must also rain at the little dam 160 miles away. Yet I decided to take the whole party to it, and as, by the blessing of Providence, we now had sufficient water for the purpose, to carry as much as we possibly could, so that if no rain had fallen at the dam when we arrived there, we should give the camels what water they carried and keep pushing on west, and trust to fate, or fortune, or chance, or

Providence, or whatever it might be, that would bring us to water beyond. On the 24th August, having filled up everything that could hold a drop of water, we departed from this little isolated spot, having certainly 160 miles of desert without water to traverse, and perhaps none to be found at the end. Now, having everything ready, and watered our camels, we folded our tents like the Arabs, and as silently stole away. In consequence of having to carry so much water, our loads upon leaving Ooldabinna were enormously heavy, and the weather became annoyingly hot just as we began our journey. The four camels which Alec Ross and I had out with us looked wretched objects beside their more fortunate companions that had been resting at Ooldabinna, and were now in excellent condition; our unfortunates, on the contrary, had been travelling for seventeen days at the rate of twenty-three miles per day, with only one drink of water in the interval. These four were certainly excellent animals. Alec rode my little riding cow Reechy. I had a splendid gelding, which I named the Pearl Beyond all Price, though he was only called the Pearl. He was a beautiful white camel. Another cow I called the Wild Gazelle, and we had a young bull that afterwards became Mr. Tietkens's riding camel. It is unnecessary to record each day's proceedings through these wretched scrubs, as the record of "each dreary to-morrow but repeats the dull tale of to-day." But I may here remark that camels have a great advantage over horses in these dense wildernesses, for the former are so tall that their loads are mostly raised into the less resisting upper branches of the low trees of which

these scrubs are usually composed, whereas the horses' loads being so much nearer the ground have to be dragged through the stouter and stronger lower limbs of the trees. Again, camels travel in one long single file, and where the leading camel forces his way the others all follow. It is of great importance to have some good leading camels. My arrangement for traversing these scrubs was as follows:—Saleh on his riding gelding, the most lion-hearted creature in the whole mob, although Saleh was always beating or swearing at him in Hindostanee, led the whole caravan, which was divided into three separate lots; at every sixth there was a break, and one of the party rode ahead of the next six, and so on. The method of leading was, when the scrubs permitted, the steersman would ride; if they were too thick for correct steering, he would walk; then a man riding or leading a riding-camel to guide Saleh, who led the baggage mob. Four of us used to steer. I had taught Alec Ross, and we took an hour about, at a time. Immediately behind Saleh came three bull camels loaded with casks of water, each cask holding twenty gallons. These used to crash and smash down and through the branches, so that the passage was much clearer after them. All the rest of the equipment, including water-beds, boxes, &c., was encased in huge leather bags, except one cow's load; this, with the bags of flour on two other camels, was enveloped in green hide. The fortunate rider at the extreme end had a somewhat open groove to ride in. This last place was the privilege of the steersman when his hour of agony was up. After the caravan had forced its way through this forest primeval, there was generally

left an open serpentine line about six feet above the ground, through the trees, and when a person was on this line they could see that something unusual must have passed through. On the ground was a narrower line about two feet wide, and sometimes as much as a foot deep, where one animal after another had stepped. In my former journals I mentioned that the spinifex wounded the horses' feet, and disfigured their coronets, it also used to take a good deal of hair off some of the horses' legs; but in the case of the camels, although it did not seem to excoriate them, it took every hair off their legs up to three feet from the ground, and their limbs turned black, and were as bright and shiny as a newly-polished boot. The camels' hair was much finer than that of the horses', but their skin was much thicker, and while the horses' legs were punctured and suppurating, the camels' were all as hard as steel and bright as bayonets.

What breakfast we had was always taken very early, before it was light enough to track the camels; then, while some of the party went after them, the others' duty was to have all the saddles and packs ready for instant loading. Our shortest record of leaving a camp* was half an hour from the instant the first camel was caught, but it usually took the best part of an hour before a clearance could be effected. Upon leaving Ooldabinna we had our westerly tracks to follow; this made the road easier. At the ninety-mile place, where I left the two water-casks, we were glad to find them all safe, and in consequence of the shade we had put over them, there had been no loss of water from evaporation. On the

* On a piece of open ground.

sixth night from Ooldabinna we were well on our way towards the little dam, having come 120 miles. The heat had been very oppressive. At dusk of that day some clouds obscured the sky, and light rain fell, continuing nearly all night. On the seventh day, the 30th of August, there was every appearance of wet setting in. I was very thankful, for now I felt sure we should find more water in the little dam than when I left it. We quietly ensconced ourselves under our tents in the midst of the scrubs, and might be said to have enjoyed a holiday as a respite and repose, in contrast to our usual perpetual motion. The ground was far too porous to hold any surface water, and had our camels wanted it never so much, it could only be caught upon some outspread tarpaulins; but what with the descending moisture, the water we carried and the rain we caught, we could now give them as much as they liked to drink, and I now felt sure of getting more when we arrived at the little dam. During the night of the 29th one of our best cow-camels calved. Unfortunately the animal strained herself so severely in one of her hips, or other part of her hind legs, that she could not rise from the ground. She seemed also paralysed with cold. Her little mite of a calf had to be killed. We milked the mother as well as we could while she was lying down, and we fed and watered her—at least we offered her food and water, but she was in too great pain to eat. Camel calves are, in proportion to their mothers, the most diminutive but pretty little objects imaginable. I delayed here an additional day on the poor creature's account, but all our efforts to raise her proved unsuccessful. I

could not leave the poor dumb brute on the ground to die by inches slowly, by famine, and alone, so I in mercy shot her just before we left the place, and left her dead alongside the progeny that she had brought to life in such a wilderness, only at the expense of her own. She had been Mr. Tietkens's hack, and one of our best riding camels. We had now little over forty miles to go to reach the dam, and as all our water had been consumed, and the vessels were empty, the loads now were light enough. On the 3rd of September we arrived, and were delighted to find that not only had the dam been replenished, but it was full to overflowing. A little water was actually visible in the lake-bed alongside of it, at the southern end, but it was unfit for drinking.

The little reservoir had now six feet of water in it; there was sufficient for all my expected requirements. The camels could drink at their ease and pleasure. The herbage and grass was more green and luxuriant than ever, and to my eyes it now appeared a far more pretty scene. There were the magenta-coloured vetch, the scarlet desert-pea, and numerous other leguminous plants, bushes, and trees, of which the camels are so fond. Mr. Young informed me that he had seen two or three natives from the spot at which we pitched our tents, but I saw none, and they never returned while we were in occupation of their property. This would be considered a pretty spot anywhere, but coming suddenly on it from the dull and sombre scrubs, the contrast makes it additionally striking. In the background to the south were some high red sandhills, on which grew some scattered casua-

rina of the black oak kind, which is a different variety from, and not so elegant or shady a tree as, the finer desert oak, which usually grows in more open regions. I have not as yet seen any of them on this expedition. All round the lake is a green and open space with scrubs standing back, and the white lake-bed in the centre. The little dam was situated on a piece of clay ground where rain-water from the foot of some of the sandhills could run into the lake; and here the natives had made a clumsy and (ab)original attempt at storing the water, having dug out the tank in the wrong place, at least not in the best position for catching the rain-water. I felt sure there was to be a waterless track beyond, so I stayed at this agreeable place for a week, in order to recruit the camels, and more particularly to enable another cow to calve. During this interval of repose we had continued oppressive weather, the thermometer standing from 92° and 94° to 96° every afternoon, but the nights were agreeably cool, if not cold. We had generally very cloudy mornings; the flies were particularly numerous and troublesome, and I became convinced that any further travel to the west would have to be carried on under very unfavourable circumstances. This little dam was situated in latitude $29^{\circ} 19' 4''$, and longitude $128^{\circ} 38' 16''$, showing that we had crossed the boundary line between the two colonies of South and Western Australia, the 129th meridian. I therefore called this the Boundary Dam. It must be recollected that we are and have been for $7\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ of longitude—that is to say, for 450 miles of westing, and 130 miles of northing—occupying the intervening period between the 9th of

June, to the 3rd of September, entirely enveloped in dense scrubs, and I may say that very few if any explorers have ever before had such a region to traverse. I had managed to penetrate this country up to the present point, and it was not to be wondered at if we all ardently longed for a change. Even a bare, boundless expanse of desert sand would be welcomed as an alternative to the dark and dreary scrubs that surrounded us. However, it appeared evident to me, as I had traversed nothing but scrubs for hundreds of miles from the east, and had found no water of any size whatever in all the distance I had yet come, that no waters really existed in this country, except an occasional native well or native dam, and those only at considerable distances apart. Concluding this to be the case, and my object being that the expedition should reach the city of Perth, I decided there was only one way to accomplish this—viz. to go thither, at any risk, and trust to Providence for an occasional supply of water here and there in the intermediate distance. I desired to make for a hill or mountain called Mount Churchman by Augustus Churchman Gregory in 1846. I had no written record of water existing there, but my chart showed that Mount Churchman had been visited by two or three other travellers since that date, and it was presumable that water did permanently exist there. The hill was, however, distant from this dam considerably over 600 miles in a straight line, and too far away for it to be possible we could reach it unless we should discover some new watering places between. I was able to carry a good supply of water in casks, water-beds and bags; and

to enable me to carry this I had done away with various articles, and made the loads as light as possible; but it was merely lightening them of one commodity to load them with a corresponding weight of water. At the end of a week I was tired of the listless life at the camp. The cow camel had not calved, and showed no greater disposition to do so now than when we arrived, so I determined to delay no longer on her account. The animals had done remarkably well here, as the feed was so excellent. The water that had been lying in the bed of the lake when we arrived had now dried up, and the quantity taken by ourselves and the camels from the little dam was telling very considerably upon its store—a plain intimation to us that it would soon become exhausted, and that for the sustenance of life more must be procured. Where the next favoured spot would be found, who could tell? The last water we had met was over 150 miles away; the next might be double that distance. Having considered all these matters, I informed my officers and men that I had determined to push westward, without a thought of retreat, no matter what the result might be; that it was a matter of life or death for us; we must push through or die in the scrubs. I added that if any more than one of the party desired to retreat, I would provide them with rations and camels, when they could either return to Fowler's Bay by the way we had come, or descend to Eucla Station on the coast, which lay south nearly 170 miles distant.

I represented that we were probably in the worst desert upon the face of the earth, but that fact should give us all the more pleasure in conquer-

ing it. We were surrounded on all sides by dense scrubs, and the sooner we forced our way out of them the better. It was of course a desperate thing to do, and I believe very few people would or could rush madly into a totally unknown wilderness, where the nearest known water was 650 miles away. But I had sworn to go to Perth or die in the attempt, and I inspired the whole of my party with my own enthusiasm. One and all declared that they would live or die with me. The natives belonging to this place had never come near us, therefore we could get no information concerning any other waters in this region. Owing to the difficulty of holding conversation with wild tribes, it is highly probable that if we had met them we should have got no information of value from them. When wild natives can be induced to approach and speak to the first travellers who trespass on their domains, they simply repeat, as well as they can, every word and action of the whites; this becomes so annoying that it is better to be without them. When they get to be more intimate and less nervous they also generally become more familiar, and want to see if white people are white all over, and to satisfy their curiosity in many ways. This region evidently does not support a very numerous tribe, and there is not much game in it. I have never visited any part of Australia so devoid of animal life.

On the 10th of September everything was ready, and I departed, declaring that—

“Though the scrubs may range around me,
My camel shall bear me on;
Though the desert may surround me,
It hath springs that shall be won.”

Mounting my little fairy camel Reechy, I "whispered to her westward, westward, and with speed she darted onward." The morning was cloudy and cool, and I anticipated a change from the quite sufficiently hot weather we had lately had, although I did not expect rain. We had no notion of how far we might have to go, or how many days might elapse before we came to any other water, but we left our friendly little dam in high hopes and excellent spirits, hoping to discover not only water, but some more agreeable geographical features than we had as yet encountered. I had set my own and all my companions' lives upon a cast, and will stand the hazard of the die, and I may add that each one displayed at starting into the new unknown, the greatest desire and eagerness for our attempt. On leaving the depot I had determined to travel on a course that would enable me to reach the 30th parallel of latitude at about its intersection with the 125th meridian of longitude; for I thought it probable the scrubs might terminate sooner in that direction than in one more northerly. Our course was therefore on a bearing of south 76° west; this left the line of salt lakes Alec Ross and I had formerly visited, and which lay west, on our right or northwards of us. Immediately after the start we entered thick scrubs as usual; they were mostly composed of the black oak, casuarina, with mulga and sandal-wood, not of commerce. We passed by the edge of two small salt depressions at six and nine miles; at ten miles we were overtaken by a shower of rain, and at eleven miles, as it was still raining slightly, we encamped on the edge of another lake. During the evening we saved suffi-

cient water by means of our tarpaulins for all our own requirements. During the night it also rained at intervals, and we collected a lot of water and put it into a large canvas trough used for watering the camels when they cannot reach the water themselves. I carried two of these troughs, which held sufficient water for them all when at a watered camp, but not immediately after a dry stage ; then they required to be filled three or four times. On the following morning, however, as we had but just left the depot, the camels would not drink, and as all our vessels were full, the water in the trough had to be poured out upon the ground as a libation to the Fates. In consequence of having to dry a number of things, we did not get away until past midday, and at eleven miles upon our course, after passing two small salt lagoons, we came upon a much larger one, where there was good herbage. This we took advantage of, and encamped there. Camels will not eat anything from which they cannot extract moisture, by which process they are enabled to go so long without water. The recent rain had left some sheets of water in the lake-bed at various places, but they were all as salt as brine—in fact brine itself.

The country we passed through to-day was entirely scrubs, except where the salt basins intervened, and nothing but scrubs could be seen ahead, or indeed in any other direction. The latitude of the camp on this lake was $29^{\circ} 24' 8''$, and it was twenty-two miles from the dam. We continued our march and proceeded still upon the same course, still under our usual routine of steering. By the fifth night of our travels we had met no water or

any places that could hold it, and apparently we had left all the salt basins behind. Up to this point we had been continually in dense scrubs, but here the country became a little more open; myal timber, acacia, generally took the places of the mallee and the casuarinas; the spinifex disappeared, and real grass grew in its place. I was in hopes of finding water if we should debouch upon a plain, or perhaps discover some ranges or hills which the scrubs might have hidden from us. On the sixth day of our march we entered fairly on a plain, the country being very well grassed. It also had several kinds of salsolaceous bushes upon it; these furnish excellent fodder plants for all herbivorous animals. Although the soil was not very good, being sand mixed with clay, it was a very hard and good travelling country; the camels' feet left scarcely any impression on it, and only by the flattened grass and crushed plants trodden to earth by our heavy-weighting ships, could our trail now be followed. The plain appeared to extend a great distance all around us. A solemn stillness pervaded the atmosphere; nobody spoke much above a whisper. Once we saw some wild turkey bustards, and Mr. Young managed to wing one of them on the seventh day from the dam. On the seventh night the cow, for which we had delayed there, calved, but her bull-calf had to be destroyed, as we could not delay for it on the march. The old cow was in very good condition, went off her milk in a day or two, and continued on the journey as though nothing had occurred. On the eighth we had cold fowl for breakfast, with a modicum of water. On the ninth and tenth days of our march the plains

continued, and I began to think we were more liable to die for want of water on them than in the dense and hideous scrubs we had been so anxious to leave behind. Although the region now was all a plain, no views of any extent could be obtained, as the country still rolled on in endless undulations at various distances apart, just as in the scrubs. It was evident that the regions we were traversing were utterly waterless, and in all the distance we had come in ten days, no spot had been found where water could lodge. It was totally uninhabited by either man or animal, not a track of a single marsupial, emu, or wild dog was to be seen, and we seemed to have penetrated into a region utterly unknown to man, and as utterly forsaken by God. We had now come 190 miles from water, and our prospects of obtaining any appeared more and more hopeless. Vainly indeed it seemed that I might say—with the mariner on the ocean—"Full many a green spot needs must be in this wide waste of misery, Or the traveller worn and wan never thus could voyage on." But where was the oasis for us? Where the bright region of rest? And now, when days had many of them passed away, and no places had been met where water was, the party presented a sad and solemn procession, as though each and all of us was stalking slowly onward to his tomb. Some murmurs of regret reached my ears; but I was prepared for more than that. Whenever we camped, Saleh would stand before me, gaze fixedly into my face and generally say: "Mister Gile, when you get water?" I pretended to laugh at the idea, and say: "Water? pooh! there's no water in this country, Saleh. I

didn't come here to find water, I came here to die, and you said you'd come and die too." Then he would ponder awhile, and say: "I think some camel he die to-morrow, Mr. Gile." I would say: "No, Saleh, they can't possibly live till to-morrow, I think they will all die to-night." Then he: "Oh, Mr. Gile, I think we all die soon now." Then I: "Oh yes, Saleh, we'll all be dead in a day or two." When he found he couldn't get any satisfaction out of me he would begin to pray, and ask me which was the east. I would point south: down he would go on his knees, and abase himself in the sand, keeping his head in it for some time. Afterwards he would have a smoke, and I would ask: "What's the matter, Saleh? what have you been doing?" "Ah, Mr. Gile," was his answer, "I been pray to my God to give you a rock-hole to-morrow." I said, "Why, Saleh, if the rock-hole isn't there already there won't be time for your God to make it; besides, if you can get what you want by praying for it, let me have a fresh-water lake, or a running river, that will take us right away to Perth. What's the use of a paltry rock-hole?" Then he said solemnly, "Ah, Mr. Gile, you not religious."

On the eleventh day the plains died off, and we re-entered a new bed of scrubs—again consisting of mallee, casuarinas, desert sandal-wood, and quandong-trees of the same family; the ground was overgrown with spinifex. By the night of the twelfth day from the dam, having daily increased our rate of progress, we had traversed scrubs more undulating than previously, consisting of the usual kinds of trees. At sundown we descended into a hollow; I thought this would prove the bed of

another salt lake, but I found it to be a rain-water basin or very large clay-pan, and although there were signs of the former presence of natives, the whole basin, grass, and herbage about it, were as dry as the desert around. Having found a place where water could lodge, I was certainly disappointed at finding none in it, as this showed that no rain whatever had fallen here, where it might have remained, when we had good but useless showers immediately upon leaving the dam. From the appearance of the vegetation no rains could possibly have visited this spot for many months, if not years. The grass was white and dry, and ready to blow away with any wind.

We had now travelled 242 miles from the little dam, and I thought it advisable here to give our lion-hearted camels a day's respite, and to apportion out to them the water that some of them had carried for that purpose. By the time we reached this distance from the last water, although no one had openly uttered the word retreat, all knowing it would be useless, still I was not unassailed by croakings of some of the ravens of the party, who advised me, for the sake of saving our own and some of the camels' lives, to sacrifice a certain number of the worst, and not give these unfortunates any water at all. But I represented that it would be cruel, wrong, and unjust to pursue such a course, and yet expect these neglected ones still to travel on with us; for even in their dejected state some, or even all, might actually go as far without water as the others would go with; and as for turning them adrift, or shooting them in a mob—which was also mooted—so long as they could travel, that was out

of the question. So I declined all counsel, and declared it should be a case of all sink or all swim. In the middle of the thirteenth day, during which we rested for the purpose, the water was fairly divided among the camels; the quantity given to each was only a little over four gallons—about equivalent to four thimblesful to a man. There were eighteen grown camels and one calf, Youldeh, the quantity given was about eighty gallons. To give away this quantity of water in such a region was like parting with our blood; but it was the creatures' right, and carried expressly for them; and with the renewed vigour which even that small quantity imparted to them, our own lives seemed to obtain a new lease. Unfortunately, the old cow which calved at Youldeh, and whose she-calf is the prettiest and nicest little pet in the world, has begun to fail in her milk, and I am afraid the young animal will be unable to hold out to the end of this desert, if indeed it has an end this side of Perth. The position of this dry basin is in latitude $30^{\circ} 7' 3''$, and longitude $124^{\circ} 41' 2''$. Since reaching the 125th meridian, my course had been 5° more southerly, and on departing from this wretched basin on the 22nd of September, with animals greatly refreshed and carrying much lighter loads, we immediately entered dense scrubs, composed as usual of mallee, with its friend the spinifex, black oaks, and numerous gigantic mallee-like gum-trees. It seemed that distance, which lends enchantment to the view, was the only chance for our lives; distance, distance, unknown distance seemed to be our only goal. The country rose immediately from this depression into high and rolling hills of sand,

and here I was surprised to find that a number of the melancholy cypress pines ornamented both the sandy hills and the spinifex depressions through and over which we went. Here, indeed, some few occasional signs and traces of the former presence of natives existed. The only water they can possibly get in this region must be from the roots of the trees. A great number of the so-called native poplar-trees, of two varieties, *Codonocarpus*, were now met, and the camels took huge bites at them as they passed by. The smaller vegetation assumed the familiar similitude to that around the Mount Olga of my two first horse expeditions. Two wild dog puppies were seen and caught by my black boy Tommy and Nicholls, in the scrubs to-day, the fourteenth from the dam. Tommy and others had also found a few lowans', *Leipoa Ocellata*, nests, and we secured a few of the pink-tinted eggs; this was the laying season. These, with the turkey Mr. Young had shot on the plain, were the only adjuncts to our supplies that we had obtained from this region. After to-day's stage there was nothing but the native poplar for the camels to eat, and they devoured the leaves with great apparent relish, though to my human taste it is about the most disgusting of vegetables. The following day, fifteenth from water, we accomplished twenty-six miles of scrubs. Our latitude here was $30^{\circ} 17'$. The country continued to rise into sandhills, from which the only views obtainable presented spaces precisely similar to those already traversed and left behind to the eastwards, and if it were only from our experience of what we had passed, that we were to gather intelligence of what was before us

in the future, then would our future be gloomy indeed.

At twelve o'clock on the sixteenth day some natives' smoke was seen straight on our course, and also some of their footmarks. The days throughout this march had been warm; the thermometer at twelve o'clock, when we let the camels lie down, with their loads on, for an hour, usually stood at 94° , 95° , or 96° , while in the afternoon it was some degrees hotter. On Saturday, the 25th of September, being the sixteenth day from the water at the Boundary Dam, we travelled twenty-seven miles, still on our course, through mallee and spinifex, pines, casuarinas, and quandong-trees, and noticed for the first time upon this expedition some very fine specimens of the Australian grass-tree, *Xanthorrhœa*; the giant mallee were also numerous. The latter give a most extraordinary appearance to the scenes they adorn, for they cheat the eye of the traveller into the belief that he is passing through tracts of alluvial soil, and gazing upon the water-indicating gum-trees. This night we reached a most abominable encampment; there was nothing that the camels could eat, and the ground was entirely covered with great bunches of spinifex. Before us, and all along the western horizon, we had a black-looking and scrubby rise of very high sandhills; each of us noticed its resemblance to those sandhills which had confronted us to the north and east when at Youldeh. By observation we found that we were upon the same latitude, but had reached a point in longitude 500 miles to the west of it. It is highly probable that no water exists in a straight line between the two places

Shortly before evening, Mr. Young was in advance steering, but he kept so close under the sun—it being now so near the equinox, the sun set nearly west, and our course being 21° south of west—I had to go forward and tell him that he was not steering rightly. Of course he became indignant, and saying, “Perhaps you’ll steer, then, if you don’t think I can!” he handed me the compass. I took it in silence and steered more southerly, in the proper direction of our course; this led us over a long white ridge of sand, and brought us to the hollow where, as I said before, we had such a wretched encampment. I mention this as a circumstance attaches to it. The fate of empires at times has hung upon a thread, and our fate now hung upon my action. We had come 323 miles without having seen a drop of water. There was silence and melancholy in the camp; and was it to be wondered at if, in such a region and under such circumstances, there was—

“A load on each spirit, a cloud o’er each soul,
With eyes that could scan not, our destiny’s scroll.”

Every man seemed to turn his eyes on me. I was the great centre of attraction; every action of mine was held to have some peculiar meaning. I was continually asked night after night if we should get water the following day? the reply, “How can I tell?” was insufficient; I was supposed to know to an inch where water was and exactly when we could reach it. I believe all except the officers thought I was making for a known water, for although I had explained the situation before leaving the dam, it was only now that they were

beginning to comprehend its full meaning. Towards the line of dark sandhills, which formed the western horizon, was a great fall of country into a kind of hollow, and on the following morning, the seventeenth day from the dam, Mr. Tietkens appeared greatly impressed with the belief that we were in the neighbourhood of water. I said nothing of my own impressions, for I thought something of the kind also, although I said I would not believe it. It was Mr. Tietkens's turn to steer, and he started on foot ahead of the string of camels for that purpose. He gave Tommy his little riding-bull, the best leading camel we have, and told him to go on top of a white sandhill to our left, a little south of us, and try if he could find any fresh blacks' tracks, or other indications of water. I did not know that Tommy had gone, nor could I see that Tietkens was walking—it was an extraordinary event when the whole string of camels could be seen at once in a line in this country—and we had been travelling some two miles and a half when Alec Ross and Peter Nicholls declared that they heard Tommy calling out "water!" I never will believe these things until they are proved, so I kept the party still going on. However, even I, soon ceased to doubt, for Tommy came rushing through the scrubs full gallop, and, between a scream and a howl, yelled out quite loud enough now even for me to hear, "Water! water! plenty water here! come on! come on! this way! this way! come on, Mr. Giles! mine been find 'em plenty water!" I checked his excitement a moment and asked whether it was a native well he had found, and should we have to work at it with the shovel?

Tommy said, "No fear shovel, that fellow water sit down meself (i.e. itself) along a ground, camel he drink 'em meself." Of course we turned the long string after him. Soon after he left us he had ascended the white sandhill whither Mr. Tietkens had sent him, and what sight was presented to his view! A little open oval space of grass land, half a mile away, surrounded entirely by pine-trees, and falling into a small funnel-shaped hollow, looked at from above. He said that before he ascended the sandhill he had seen the tracks of an emu, and on descending he found the bird's track went for the little open circle. He then followed it to the spot, and saw a miniature lake lying in the sand, with plenty of that inestimable fluid which he had not beheld for more than 300 miles. He watered his camel, and then rushed after us, as we were slowly passing on ignorantly by this life-sustaining prize, to death and doom. Had Mr. Young steered rightly the day before—whenever it was his turn during that day I had had to tell him to make farther south—we should have had this treasure right upon our course; and had I not checked his incorrect steering in the evening, we should have passed under the northern face of a long, white sandhill more than two miles north of this water. Neither Tommy nor anybody else would have seen the place on which it lies, as it is completely hidden in the scrubs; as it was, we should have passed within a mile of it if Mr. Tietkens had not sent Tommy to look out, though I had made up my mind not to enter the high sandhills beyond without a search in this hollow, for my experience told me if there was no water in it, none could exist in this terrible

region at all, and we must have found the tracks of natives, or wild dogs or emus leading to the water. Such characters in the book of Nature the explorer cannot fail to read, as we afterwards saw numerous native foot-marks all about. When we arrived with the camels at this newly-discovered liquid gem, I found it answered to Tommy's description. It is the most singularly-placed water I have ever seen, lying in a small hollow in the centre of a little grassy flat, and surrounded by clumps of the funereal pines, "in a desert inaccessible, under the shade of melancholy boughs." While watering my little camel at its welcome waters, I might well exclaim, "In the desert a fountain is springing"—though in this wide waste there's too many a tree. The water is no doubt permanent, for it is supplied by the drainage of the sandhills that surround it, and it rests on a substratum of impervious clay. It lies exposed to view in a small open basin, the water being only about 150 yards in circumference and from two to three feet deep. Farther up the slopes, at much higher levels, native wells had been sunk in all directions—in each and all of these there was water. One large well, apparently a natural one, lay twelve or thirteen feet higher up than the largest basin, and contained a plentiful supply of pure water. Beyond the immediate precincts of this open space the scrubs abound.

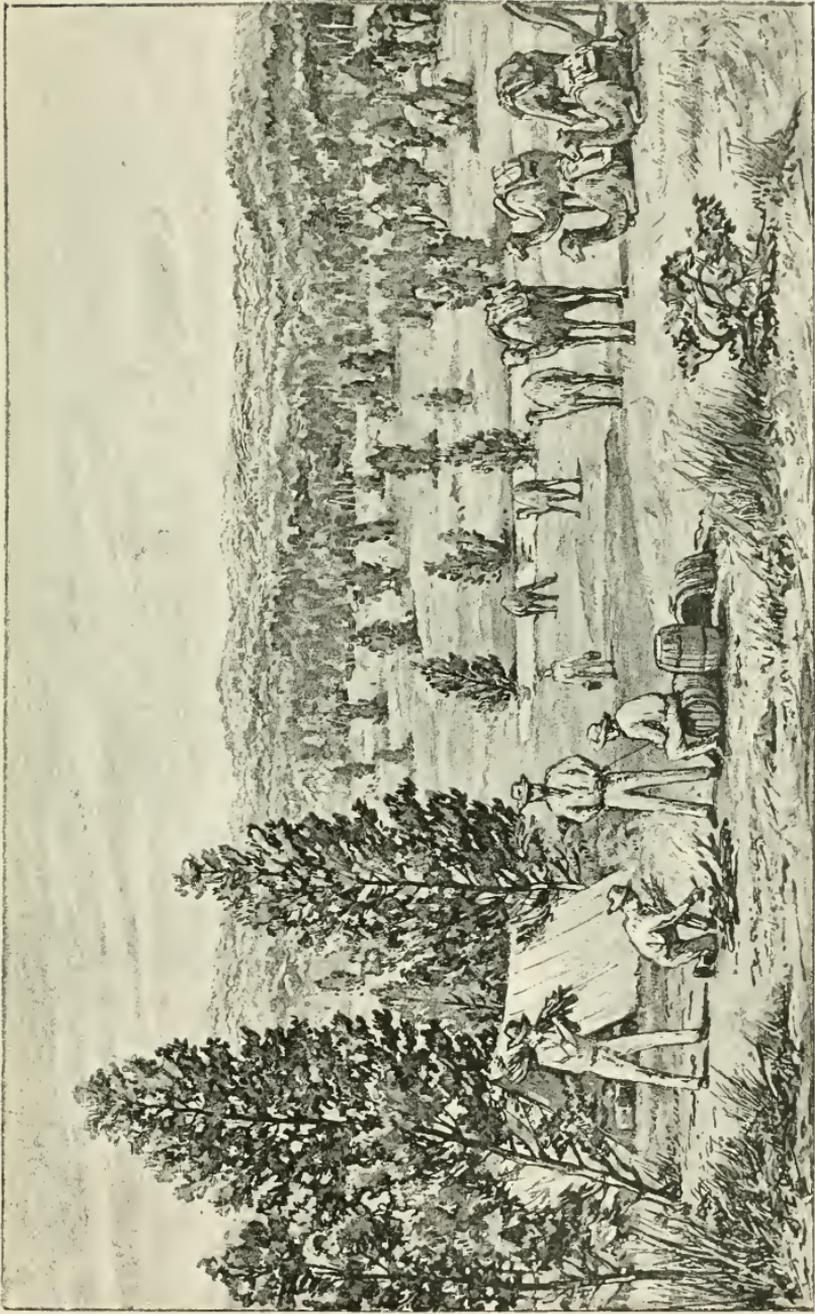
It may be imagined how thankful we were for the discovery of this only and lonely watered spot, after traversing such a desert. How much longer and farther the expedition could have gone on without water we were now saved the necessity of guessing, but this I may truly say, that Sir Thomas Elder's South

Australian camels are second to none in the world for strength and endurance. From both a human and humane point of view, it was most fortunate to have found this spring, and with it a respite, not only from our unceasing march, but from the terrible pressure on our minds of our perilous situation ; for the painful fact was ever before us, that even after struggling bravely through hundreds of miles of frightful scrubs, we might die like dogs in the desert at last, unheard of and unknown. On me the most severe was the strain ; for myself I cared not, I had so often died in spirit in my direful journeys that actual death was nothing to me. But for vanity, or fame, or honour, or greed, and to seek the bubble reputation, I had brought six other human beings into a dreadful strait, and the hollow eyes and gaunt, appealing glances that were always fixed on me were terrible to bear ; but I gathered some support from a proverb of Solomon : “ If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.” Mount Churchman, the place I was endeavouring to reach, was yet some 350 miles distant ; this discovery, it was therefore evident, was the entire salvation of the whole party.

During our march for these sixteen or seventeen days from the little dam, I had not put the members of my party upon an actual short allowance of water. Before we watered the camels we had over 100 gallons of water, yet the implied restraint was so great that we were all in a continual state of thirst during the whole time, and the small quantity of water consumed—of course we never had any tea or coffee—showed how all had restrained themselves.

Geographical features have been terribly scarce upon this expedition, and this peculiar spring is the first permanent water I have found. I have ventured to dedicate it to our most gracious Queen. The great desert in which I found it, and which will most probably extend to the west as far as it does to the east, I have also honoured with Her Majesty's mighty name, calling it the Great Victoria Desert, and the spring, Queen Victoria's Spring. In future times these may be celebrated localities in the British Monarch's dominions. I have no Victoria or Albert Nyanzas, no Tanganyikas, Lualabas, or Zambezes, like the great African travellers, to honour with Her Majesty's name, but the humble offering of a little spring in a hideous desert, which, had it surrounded the great geographical features I have enumerated, might well have kept them concealed for ever, will not, I trust, be deemed unacceptable in Her Majesty's eyes, when offered by a loyal and most faithful subject.

On our arrival here our camels drank as only thirsty camels can, and great was our own delight to find ourselves again enabled to drink at will and indulge in the luxury of a bath. Added to both these pleasures was a more generous diet, so that we became quite enamoured of our new home. At this spring the thorny vegetation of the desert grew alongside the more agreeable water-plants at the water's edge, so that fertility and sterility stood side by side. Mr. Young planted some seeds of numerous vegetables, plants, and trees, and among others some of the giant bamboo, *Dendrocalamus striatus*, also Tasmanian blue gum and wattles. I am afraid these products of Nature will never reach



QUEEN VICTORIA'S SPRING.

maturity, for the natives are continually burning the rough grass and spinifex, and on a favourably windy occasion these will consume everything green or dry, down to the water's edge. There seems to be very little native game here, though a number of bronze-winged pigeons came to water at night and morning. There are, however, so many small native wells besides the larger sheet, for them to drink at, and also such a quantity of a thorny vegetation to screen them, that we have not been very successful in getting any. Our best shot, Mr. Young, succeeded in bagging only four or five. It was necessary, now that we had found this spring, to give our noble camels a fair respite, the more so as the food they will eat is very scarce about here, as we have yet over 300 miles to travel to reach Mount Churchman, with every probability of getting no water between. There are many curious flying and creeping insects here, but we have not been fortunate in catching many. Last night, however, I managed to secure and methyrate a good-sized scorpion. After resting under the umbrageous foliage of the cypress-pines, among which our encampment was fixed for a week, the party and camels had all recovered from the thirst and fatigue of our late march, and it really seemed impossible to believe that such a stretch of country as 325 miles could actually have been traversed between this and the last water. The weather during our halt had been very warm, the thermometer had tried to go over 100° in the shade, but fell short by one degree. Yesterday was an abominable day; a heated tornado blew from the west from morning until night and continued until

this morning, when, without apparent change otherwise, and no clouds, the temperature of the wind entirely altered and we had an exceedingly cool and delightful day. We found the position of this spring to be in latitude $30^{\circ} 25' 30''$ and longitude $123^{\circ} 21' 13''$. On leaving a depot and making a start early in the morning, camels, like horses, may not be particularly inclined to fill themselves with water, while they might do so in the middle of the day, and thus may leave a depot on a long dry march not half filled. The Arabs in Egypt and other camel countries, when starting for a desert march, force the animals, as I have seen—that is, read of—to fill themselves up by using bullocks' horns for funnels and pouring the water down their throats till the creatures are ready to burst. The camels, knowing by experience, so soon as the horns are stuck into their mouths, that they are bound for a desert march, fill up accordingly.

Strange to say, though I had brought from Port Augusta almost every article that could be mentioned for the journey, yet I did not bring any bullocks' horns, and it was too late now to send Tommy back to procure some; we consequently could not fill up our camels at starting, after the Arab fashion. In order to obviate any disadvantage on this account, to-day I sent, with Mr. Tietkens and Alec Ross, three camels, loaded with water, to be deposited about twenty-five miles on our next line of route, so that the camels could top up en passant. The water was to be poured into two canvas troughs and covered over with a tarpaulin. This took two days going and coming, but we remained yet another two, at the Queen's Spring.

Before I leave that spot I had perhaps better remark that it might prove a very difficult, perhaps dangerous place, to any other traveller to attempt to find, because, although there are many white sandhills in the neighbourhood, the open space on which the water lies is so small in area and so closely surrounded by scrubs, that it cannot be seen from any conspicuous one, nor can any conspicuous sandhill, distinguishable at any distance, be seen from it. It lies at or near the south-west end of a mass of white-faced sandhills; there are none to the south or west of it. While we remained here a few aboriginals prowled about the camp, but they never showed themselves. On the top of the bank, above all the wells, was a beaten corroborree path, where these denizens of the desert have often held their feasts and dances. Tommy found a number of long, flat, sword-like weapons close by, and brought four or five of them into the camp. They were ornamented after the usual Australian aboriginal fashion, some with slanting cuts or grooves along the blade, others with square, elliptical, or rounded figures; several of these two-handed swords were seven feet long, and four or five inches wide; wielded with good force, they were formidable enough to cut a man in half at a blow.

This spring could not be the only water in this region; I believe there was plenty more in the immediate neighbourhood, as the natives never came to water here. It was singular how we should have dropped upon such a scene, and penetrated thus the desert's vastness, to the scrub-secluded fastness of these Austral-Indians' home. Mr. Young and I collected a great many specimens of

plants, flowers, insects, and reptiles. Among the flowers was the marvellous red, white, blue, and yellow wax-like flower of a hideous little gnarled and stunted mallee-tree; it is impossible to keep these flowers unless they could be hermetically preserved in glass; all I collected and most carefully put away in separate tin boxes fell to pieces, and lost their colours. The collection of specimens of all kinds got mislaid in Adelaide. Some grass-trees grew in the vicinity of this spring to a height of over twenty feet. On the evening of the 5th of October a small snake and several very large scorpions came crawling about us as we sat round the fire; we managed to bottle the scorpions, but though we wounded the snake it escaped; I was very anxious to methyrate him also, but it appeared he had other ideas, and I should not be at all surprised if a pressing interview with his undertaker was one of them.

One evening a discussion arose about the moon, and Saleh was trying to teach Tommy something, God knows what, about it. Amongst other assertions he informed Tommy that the moon travelled from east to west, "because, you see, Tommy," he said, "he like the sun—sun travel west too." Tommy shook his head very sapiently, and said, "No, I don't think that, I think moon go the other way." "No fear," said Saleh, "how could it?" Then Peter Nicholls was asked, and he couldn't tell; he thought Saleh was right, because the moon did set in the west. So Tommy said, "Oh, well, I'll ask Mr. Giles," and they came to where Mr. T, Mr. Y., and I were seated, and told us the argument. I said, "No, Saleh, the moon travels just

the other way." Then Tommy said, "I tole you so, I know," but of course he couldn't explain himself. Saleh was scandalised, and all his religious ideas seemed upset. So I said, "Well, now, Saleh, you say the moon travels to the west; now do you see where she is to-night, between those two stars?" "Oh, yes," he said, "I see." I said, "If to-morrow night she is on the east side of that one," pointing to one, "she must have travelled east to get there, mustn't she?" "Oh, no," said Saleh, "she can't go there, she must come down west like the sun," &c. In vain we showed him the next night how she had moved still farther east among the stars; that was nothing to him. It would have been far easier to have converted him to Christianity than to make him alter his original opinion. With regard to Tommy's ideas, I may say that nearly all Australian natives are familiar with the motions of the heavenly bodies, knowing the difference between a star and a planet, and all tribes that I have been acquainted with have proper names for each, the moon also being a very particular object of their attention.

While at this water we occasionally saw hawks, crows, corellas, a pink-feathered kind of cockatoo, and black magpies, which in some parts of the country are also called mutton birds, and pigeons. One day Peter Nicholls shot a queer kind of carrion bird, not so large as a crow, although its wings were as long. It had the peculiar dancing hop of the crow, its plumage was of a dark slate colour, with whitish tips to the wings, its beak was similar to a crow's.

We had now been at this depot for nine days,

and on the 6th of October we left it behind to the eastward, as we had done all the other resting-places we had found. I desired to go as straight as possible for Mount Churchman. Its position by the chart is in latitude $29^{\circ} 58'$, and longitude 118° . Straight lines on a map and straight lines through dense scrubs are, however, totally different, and, go as straight as we could, we must make it many miles farther than its distance showed by the chart.

CHAPTER III.

FROM 6TH TO 18TH OCTOBER, 1875.

Depart for Mount Churchman—Yellow-barked trees—Wallaby traps—Sight a low hill—Several salt lakes—Another hill—Camels bogged—Natives' smoke—Bare rocks—Grass-trees—Clayey and grassy ground—Dryness of the region—Another mass of bare rocks—A pretty place—Crows and native foot-tracks—Tommy finds a well—Then another—Alone on the rocks—Voices of the angels—Women coming for water—First natives seen—Arrival of the party—Camels very thirsty but soon watered—Two hundred miles of desert—Natives come to the camp—Splendid herbage—A romantic spot—More natives arrive—Native ornaments—A mouth-piece—Cold night—Thermometer 32° —Animals' tracks—Natives arrive for breakfast—Inspection of native encampment—Old implements of white men in the camp—A lame camel—Ularring—A little girl—Dislikes a looking-glass—A quiet and peaceful camp—A delightful oasis—Death and danger lurking near—Scouts and spies—A furious attack—Personal foe—Dispersion of the enemy—A child's warning—Keep a watch—Silence at night—Howls and screams in the morning—The Temple of Nature—Reflections—Natives seen no more.

ON the 6th October, as I have said, we departed, and at once entered into the second division of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's great Australian desert. That night we camped at the place where Mr. Tietkens and Alec Ross, albeit a short measure for twenty-five miles, had left the two troughs full of water. I had instructed them to travel west-north-

west. The country of course was all scrubs and sandhills. We saw a few currajong-trees during our day's stage, and where we camped there were a number of well-grown eucalyptus-trees with yellow bark. These seemed to me very like the yellow jacket timber that grows on watercourses in parts of New South Wales and Queensland. The water I had sent out to this place was just sufficient to fill up the camels. The following day, at three miles from the camp, we came to some large granite boulders in the scrubs; but there were no receptacles for holding water at any time. At sixteen miles we reached a dry salt lake on our left hand; this continued near our line for four miles. Both yesterday and to-day we saw some native wallaby traps in the dense scrubs; these are simply long lines of sticks, boughs, bushes, &c., which, when first laid down, may be over a foot high; they are sometimes over a quarter of a mile long. These lines meet each other at nearly right angles, and form a corner. For a few yards on each side of the corner the fence is raised to between four and five feet, made somewhat substantial and laid with boughs. Over this is thrown either a large net or a roofing of boughs. I saw no signs of nets in this region. The wallaby are hunted until they get alongside the fences; if they are not flurried they will hop along it until they get to a part which is too high, or they think it is; then they go up into the trap, where there is a small opening, and get knocked on the head for their pains by a black man inside. At twenty miles we actually sighted a low hill. Here was a change. At four miles farther we reached its foot; there were salt lake depressions

nearly all round us. Here we found a small quantity of the little pea-vetch, which is such excellent food for the camels.

From the summit of this little hill, the first I had met for nearly 800 miles—Mount Finke was the last—another low scrubby ridge lay to the westward, and nearly across our course, with salt lakes intervening, and others lying nearly all round the horizon. At the foot of the little hill we encamped. A few hundred acres of ground were open, and there were clay-pans upon it, but no rain could have fallen here for ages I should imagine. The hill was only 200 feet high, and it was composed of granite stones. I was glad, however, to see some granite crop out, as we were now approaching the western coast-line formation; this I have always understood to be all granite, and it was about time that something like a change of country should occur. The following day, in making for the low range, we found ourselves caught in the ramifications of some of the saline depressions, and had to go a long way round to avoid them. Just before we reached the low range we passed the shore of another salt lake, which had a hard, firm, and quartz-pebbly bed, and we were enabled to travel across it to the hills; these we reached in sixteen miles from our last camp. The view from the summit was as discouraging as ever. To the west appeared densely scrubby rises, and to the south many salt channels existed, while in every other direction scrubs and scrubby rises bounded the view. This low range was about 300 feet high; the ridges beyond continued on our course, a little north of west for two or three miles, when we again entered the sandy scrubs, and

camped, after travelling twenty-eight miles. Our position here was in latitude $30^{\circ} 10' 5''$, and longitude $122^{\circ} 7' 6''$. The next day we had scrubs undulating as usual, and made a day's stage of twenty-four miles, sighting at twelve miles three low ranges, northerly, north-easterly, and east-north-easterly, the most easterly appearing to be the highest. They were from twenty to thirty miles away from our line.

On the 9th and 10th October we had all scrubs ; on the 11th, towards evening, we had some scrubby ridges in front of us, and were again hemmed in by salt lakes. To save several miles of roundabout travelling, we attempted to cross one of these, which, though not very broad, was exceedingly long to the north and south, and lay right across our track. Unfortunately a number of the leading camels became apparently hopelessly embedded in a fearful bog, and we had great difficulty in getting them safely out. It was only by the strenuous exertions of all hands, and by pulling up the camels' legs with ropes, and poking tarpaulins into the vacated holes, that we finally rescued them without loss. We then had to carry out all their loads ourselves, and also the huge and weighty pack-saddles. We found it no easy matter to carry 200 lbs., half a load—some of the water-casks weighed more—on our backs, when nearly up to our necks in the briny mud, on to the firm ground. However, we were most fortunate in having no loss with the camels, for a camel in a bog is the most helpless creature imaginable. Leaving the bog, we started up the shore of the lake, northerly, where we found some more of the little pea-vetch, and encamped,

making only twenty-four miles straight from last camp. The camels have had nothing to eat for three nights previously. We saw some natives' smoke three or four miles away from where we camped, and as there were ridges near it, I intend to send some one there in the morning to look for water.

We had still some miles to go, to get round the northern end of the boggy lake. Alec Ross and Tommy walked across, to hunt up any traces of natives, &c., and to look for water. On clearing this boggy feature, we ascended into some densely scrubby granite rises; these had some bare rocks exposed here and there, but no indentations for holding water could be seen. At fifteen or sixteen miles, having passed all the ridges, and entered scrubs and mallee again, Alec and Tommy overtook us, Mr. Young having remained behind with their camels, and reported that they had found one small rock-hole. Alec said it had twenty or thirty gallons of water in it, but Tommy said there was only a little drop, so I did not think it worth while to delay by sending any camels back so far for so little reward. We saw two or three dozen grass-trees to-day, also some quandong and currajong-trees, and camped again in scrubs where there was only a few leguminous bushes for the camels to eat. We had travelled twenty-eight miles, which only made twenty-four straight. The last three days had been warm, the thermometer going up to 98° in the shade each day at about twelve o'clock; the camels were very thirsty, and would not feed as the provender was so very poor.

During the last few days we had met with occa-

sional patches of grassy and clayey ground, generally where the yellow-barked eucalypts grew, and we passed numerous small clay-channels and pans, in which rain-water might lodge for some time after a shower, but it was evident from the appearance of the grass and vegetation that no rains could have visited the region for a year, or it might be for a hundred years; every vegetable thing seemed dry, sere, or dead. On the 13th of October, at twelve miles from camp, we passed over some more scrubby granite ridges, where some extent of bare rock lay exposed. I searched about it, but the indents were so small and shallow that water could not remain in them for more than a week after rains had filled them. While I was searching on foot, Mr. Young and Tommy, from their camels' backs, saw another mass of bare rocks further away to the north-west. I took Tommy with me, on Reechy, and we went over to the spot, while the party continued marching on; on arriving we found a very pretty piece of scenery. Several hundred acres of bare rocks, with grassy flats sloping down from them to the west, and forming little water-courses or flat water-channels; there were great numbers of crows, many fresh natives' tracks, and the smoke of several fires in the surrounding scrub. Tommy took the lower ground, while I searched the rocks. He soon found a small native well in a grassy water-channel, and called out to me. On joining him I found that there was very little water in sight, but I thought a supply might be got with a shovel, and I decided to send him on my camel to bring the party back, for we had come over 200 miles from Queen Victoria's Spring, and this was

the first water I had seen since leaving there. We gave little Reechy, or as I usually called her Screechy, all the water we could get out of the well, with one of Tommy's boots; she drank it out of his hat, and they started away. I fully believed there was more water about somewhere, and I intended having a good hunt until either I found it or the party came. I watched Tommy start, of course at full speed, for when he got a chance of riding Screechy he was in his glory, and as she was behind the mob, and anxious to overtake them, she would go at the rate of twenty miles an hour, if allowed to gallop; but much to my surprise, when they had gone about 200 yards along the grassy water-channel, apparently in an instant, down went Reechy on her knees, and Tommy, still in the saddle, yelled out to me, "Plenty water here! plenty water here!" Reechy, who had not had half enough at the first place, would not go past this one.

I walked down and saw a large well with a good body of water in it, evidently permanently supplied by the drainage of the mass of bare rocks in its vicinity. I was greatly pleased at Tommy's discovery, and after giving Reechy a thorough good drink, off he went like a rocket after the party. I wandered about, but found no other water-place; and then, thinking of the days that were long enough ago, I sat in the shade of an umbrageous acacia bush. Soon I heard the voices of the angels, native black and fallen angels, and their smokes came gradually nearer. I thought they must have seen me on the top of the rocks, and desired to

make my further acquaintance. The advancing party, however, turned out to be only two women coming for water to the well. They had vessels, usually called coolamins—these are small wooden troughs, though sometimes made of bark, and are shaped like miniature canoes—for carrying water to their encampment. When they came near enough to see what I was, they ran away a short distance, then stopped, turned round, and looked at me. Of course I gave a gentle bow, as to something quite uncommon ; a man may bend his lowest in a desert to a woman. I also made signs for them to come to the well, but they dropped their bark coolamins and walked smartly off. I picked up these things, and found them to be of a most original, or rather aboriginal, construction. They were made of small sheets of the yellow-tree bark, tied up at the ends with bark-string, thus forming small troughs. When filled, some grass or leaves are put on top of the water to prevent it slopping over. The women carry these troughs on their heads. I was not near enough to distinguish whether the women were beautiful or not ; all I could make out was that one was young and fatter than the other. Amongst aborigines of every clime fatness goes a great way towards beauty. The youngest and fattest was the last to decamp.

These were the first natives I had seen upon this expedition ; no others appeared while I was by myself. In about four hours the party arrived ; they had travelled six miles past the place when Tommy overtook them. We soon watered all the camels ; they were extremely thirsty, for they had

travelled 202 miles from Queen Victoria's Spring, although, in a straight line, we were only 180 miles from it. Almost immediately upon the arrival of the caravan, a number of native men and one young boy made their appearance. They were apparently quiet and inoffensive, and some of them may have seen white people before, for one or two spoke a few English words, such as "white fellow," "what name," "boy," &c. They seemed pleased, but astonished to see the camels drink such an enormous quantity of water; they completely emptied the well, and the natives have probably never seen it empty before. The water drained in pretty fast: in an hour the well was as full as ever, and with much purer water than formerly. There was plenty of splendid herbage and leguminous bushes here for the camels. It is altogether a most romantic and pretty place; the little grassy channels were green and fresh-looking, and the whole space for a mile around open, and dotted with shady acacia trees and bushes. Between two fine acacias, nearly under the edge of a huge, bare expanse of rounded rock, our camp was fixed. The slope of the whole area is to the west.

It reminded me of Wynbring more than any other place I have seen. At first only eight natives made their appearance, and Mr. Young cut up a red handkerchief into as many strips. These we tied around their regal brows, and they seemed exceedingly proud of themselves. Towards evening three or four more came to the camp; one had a large piece of pearl oyster-shell depending from a string round his neck, another had a queer ornament made

of short feathers also depending from the neck ; it looked like the mouth of a porte-monnaie. When I wished to examine it, the wearer popped it over his mouth, and opened that extensive feature to its fullest dimensions, laughing most heartily. He had a very theatrical air, and the extraordinary mouth-piece made him look like a demon in, or out of, a pantomime. In taking this ornament off his neck he broke the string, and I supplied him with a piece of elastic band, so that he could put it on and off without undoing it, whenever he pleased ; but the extraordinary phenomenon to him of the extension of a solid was more than he was prepared for, and he scarcely liked to allow it to touch his person again. I put it over my head first, and this reassured him, so that he wore it again as usual. They seemed a very good-natured lot of fellows, and we gave them a trifle of damper and sugar each. During the morning, before we arrived here, Tommy had been most successful in obtaining lowans' eggs, and we had eleven or twelve with us. When the natives saw these, which no doubt they looked upon as their own peculiar and lawful property, they eyed them with great anxiety, and, pointing to them, they spoke to one another, probably expecting that we should hand the eggs over to them ; but we didn't do it. At night they went away ; their camp could not be far off, as we continually heard the sounds of voices and could see their camp fires. Before sunrise the following morning the mercury fell to 32° ; although there was no dew to freeze, to us it appeared to be 100° below zero. The only animals' tracks seen round

our well were emus, wild dogs, and *Homo sapiens*. Lowans and other desert birds and marsupials appear never to approach the watering-places.

Our sable friends came very early to breakfast, and brought a few more whom we had not previously seen; also two somewhat old and faded frail, if not fair, ones; soon after a little boy came by himself. This young imp of Satan was just like a toad—all mouth and stomach. It appeared these natives practise the same rites of incision, excision, and semi-circumcision as the Fowler's Bay tribes; and Tommy, who comes from thence, said he could understand a few words these people spoke, but not all; he was too shy to attempt a conversation with them, but he listened to all they said, and occasionally interpreted a few of their remarks to us. These principally referred to where we could have come from and what for. To-day Alec Ross and Peter Nicholls walked over to the natives' encampment, and reported that most of the men who had been to our camp were sitting there with nothing to eat in the camp; the women being probably out on a hunting excursion, whilst they, as lords of creation, waited quietly at their club till dinner should be announced. They got very little from me, as I had no surplus food to spare. Nicholls told me they had some tin billies and shear-blades in the camp, and I noticed that one of the first batch we saw had a small piece of coarse cloth on; another had a piece of horse's girth-webbing. On questioning the most civilised, and inquiring about some places, whose native names were given on my chart, I found they knew two or three of these, and generally pointed in the proper directions. It was

evident they had often seen white people before, if they had never eaten any.

One of our cow camels had been very lame for two or three days, and now we found she had a long mulga stake stuck up through the thick sole of her spongy foot. I got a long piece out with knife and plyers, but its removal did not appear to improve her case, for the whole lower part of her leg was more swollen after than before the extraction of the wood, but I hoped a day or two would put her right. Yesterday, the 15th of October, Mr. Young managed to get the name of this place from the natives. They call it Ularring, with the accent on the second syllable. It is a great relief to my mind to get it, as it saves me the invidious task of selecting only one name by which to call the place from the list of my numerous friends. This morning, 16th, our usual visitors arrived; two are most desirous to go westward with us when we start. A little later a very pretty little girl came by herself. She was about nine or ten years old, and immediately became the pet of the camp. All the people of this tribe are excessively thin, and so was this little creature. She had splendid eyes and beautiful teeth, and we soon dressed her up, and gave her a good breakfast. In an hour after her arrival she was as much at home in my camp as though I were her father. She is a merry little thing, but we can't understand a word she says. She evidently takes a great interest in everything she sees at the camp, but she didn't seem to care to look at herself in a glass, though the men always did.

While we were at dinner to-day a sudden whirl-

wind sprang up and sent a lot of my loose papers, from where I had been writing, careering so wildly into the air, that I was in great consternation lest I should lose several sheets of my journal, and find my imagination put to the test of inventing a new one. We all ran about after the papers, and so did some of the blacks, and finally they were all recovered. Mr. Young cut my initials and date

thus

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 upon a Grevillea or beef-wood-tree, which

grew close to the well. While here we have enjoyed delightful weather; gentle breezes and shady tree(es), quiet and inoffensive aboriginals, with pretty children in the midst of a peaceful and happy camp, situated in charming scenery amidst fantastic rocks, with beautiful herbage and pure water for our almighty beasts. What a delightful oasis in the desert to the weary traveller! The elder aboriginals, though the words of their mouths were smoother than butter, yet war was in their hearts. They appeared to enjoy our company very well. "Each in his place allotted, had silent sat or squatted, while round their children trotted, in pretty youthful play. One can't but smile who traces the lines on their dark faces, to the pretty prattling graces of these small heathens gay."

The 16th October, 1875, was drawing to a close, as all its predecessors from time's remotest infancy have done; the cheery voice of the expedition cook had called us to our evening meal; as usual we sat down in peaceful contentment, not dreaming that death or danger was lurking near, but nevertheless, outside this peaceful scene a mighty pre-

paration for our destruction was being made by an army of unseen and unsuspected foes.

“The hunting tribes of air and earth
Respect the brethren of their birth ;
Man only mars kind Nature’s plan,
And turns the fierce pursuit on man.”

Our supper was spread, by chance or Providential interference, a little earlier than usual. Mr. Young, having finished his meal first, had risen from his seat. I happened to be the last at the festive board. In walking towards the place where his bedding was spread upon the rocks, he saw close to him, but above on the main rock, and at about the level of his eyes, two unarmed natives making signs to the two quiet and inoffensive ones that were in the camp, and instantaneously after he saw the front rank of a grand and imposing army approaching, guided by the two scouts in advance. I had not much time to notice them in detail, but I could see that these warriors were painted, feathered, and armed to the teeth with spears, clubs, and other weapons, and that they were ready for instant action. Mr. Young gave the alarm, and we had only just time to seize our firearms when the whole army was upon us. At a first glance this force was most imposing ; the coup d’œil was really magnificent ; they looked like what I should imagine a body of Comanche Indians would appear when ranged in battle line. The men were closely packed in serried ranks, and it was evident they formed a drilled and perfectly organised force. Immediate action became imminent, and as most fortunately they had thought to find us seated at supper, and to spear us as we sat in a body together, we had just



ATTACK AT ULARRING.

time, before fifty, sixty, or a hundred spears could be thrown at us, as I immediately gave the command to fire, to have the first discharge at them. Had it been otherwise not one of us could possibly have escaped their spears—all would certainly have been killed, for there were over a hundred of the enemy, and they approached us in a solid phalanx of five or six rows, each row consisting of eighteen or twenty warriors. Their project no doubt was, that so soon as any of us was speared by the warriors, the inoffensive spies in the camp were to tomahawk us at their leisure, as we rolled about in agony from our wounds; but, taken by surprise, their otherwise exceedingly well-organised attack, owing to a slight change in our supper-hour, was a little too late, and our fire caused a great commotion and wavering in their legion's ordered line. One of the quiet and inoffensive spies in the camp, as soon as he saw me jump up and prepare for action, ran and jumped on me, put his arms round my neck to prevent my firing, and though we could not get a word of English out of him previously, when he did this, he called out, clinging on to me, with his hand on my throat, "Don't, don't!" I don't know if I swore, but I suppose I must, as I was turned away from the thick array with most extreme disgust. I couldn't disengage myself; I couldn't attend to the main army, for I had to turn my attention entirely to this infernal encumbrance; all I could do was to yell out "Fire! fire for your lives." I intended to give the spy a taste of my rifle first, but in consequence of his being in such close quarters to me, and my holding my rifle with one hand, while I endeavoured to free myself with the other, I could not point the

muzzle at my assailant, and my only way of clearing myself from his hold was by battering his head with the butt end of the weapon with my right hand, while he still clung round my left side. At last I disengaged myself, and he let go suddenly, and slipped instantly behind one of the thick acacia bushes, and got away, just as the army in front was wavering. All this did not occupy many seconds of time, and I believe my final shot decided the battle. The routed army, carrying their wounded, disappeared behind the trees and bushes beyond the bare rock where the battle was fought, and from whence not many minutes before they had so gallantly emerged. This was the best organised and most disciplined aboriginal force I ever saw. They must have thoroughly digested their plan of attack, and sent not only quiet and inoffensive spies into the camp, but a pretty little girl also, to lull any suspicions of their evil intentions we might have entertained. Once during the day the little girl sat down by me and began a most serious discourse in her own language, and as she warmed with her subject she got up, gesticulated and imitated the action of natives throwing spears, pointed towards the natives' camp, stamped her foot on the ground close to me, and was no doubt informing me of the intended onslaught of the tribe. As, however, I did not understand a word she said, I did not catch her meaning either; besides, I was writing, and she nearly covered me with dust, so that I thought her a bit of a juvenile bore.

After the engagement we picked up a great number of spears and other weapons, where the hostile army had stood. The spears were long, light, and barbed, and I could not help thinking

how much more I liked them on my outside than my in. I destroyed all the weapons I could lay hold of, much to the disgust of the remaining spy, who had kept quiet all through the fray. He seems to be some relative of the little girl, for they always go about together; she may probably be his intended wife. During the conflict, this little creature became almost frantic with excitement, and ran off to each man who was about to fire, especially Nicholls, the cook, with whom she seemed quite in love, patting him on the back, clapping her small hands, squeaking out her delight, and jumping about like a crow with a shirt on. While the fight was in progress, in the forgetfulness of his excitement, my black boy Tommy began to speak apparently quite fluently in their language to the two spies, keeping up a running conversation with them nearly all the time. It seemed that the celebrated saying of Talleyrand, "Language was only given to man to conceal his thought," was thoroughly understood by my seemingly innocent and youthful Fowler's Bay native. When I taxed him with his extraordinary conduct, he told me the natives had tried to induce him to go with them to their camp, but his natural timidity had deterred him and saved his life; for they would certainly have killed him if he had gone. After the attack, Tommy said, "I tole you black fellow coming," though we did not recollect that he had done so. The spy who had fastened on to me got away in an opposite direction to that taken by the defeated army. The other spy and the girl remained some little time after the action, and no one saw them depart, although we became at last aware of their absence. We kept

watch during the night, as a precaution after such an attack, although I had not instituted watching previously. There was a dead silence in the direction of the enemy's encampment, and no sounds but those of our camel-bells disturbed the stillness of the luminous and lunar night.

On the following morning, at earliest dawn, the screams and howls of a number of the aborigines grated harshly upon our ears, and we expected and prepared for a fresh attack. The cries continued for some time, but did not approach any nearer. After breakfast, the little girl and her protector, the quietest of the two spies, made their appearance at the camp as composedly as though nothing disagreeable had occurred to mar our friendship, but my personal antagonist did not reappear—he probably had a headache which kept him indoors. I had given the girl a shirt when she first came to the camp, and Peter Nicholls had given her protector an old coat, which was rather an elongated affair; on their arrival this morning, these graceful garments had been exchanged, and the girl appeared in the coat, trailing two feet on the ground, and the man wore the shirt, which scarcely adorned him enough. I gave them some breakfast and they went away, but returned very punctually to dinner. Then I determined not to allow them to remain any longer near us, so ordered them off, and they departed, apparently very reluctantly. I felt very much inclined to keep the little girl. Although no doubt they still continued watching us, we saw them no more.

I got Mr. Young to plant various seeds round this well. No doubt there must be other waters in

this neighbourhood, as none of the natives have used our well since we came, but we could not find any other.

The following day was Sunday. What a scene our camp would have presented to-day had these reptiles murdered us! It does not strike the traveller in the wilderness, amongst desert scenes and hostile Indians, as necessary that he should desire the neighbourhood of a temple, or even be in a continual state of prayer, yet we worship Nature, or the God of Nature, in our own way; and although we have no chapel or church to go to, yet we are always in a temple, which a Scottish poet has so beautifully described as "The Temple of Nature." He says:—

"Talk not of temples; there is one,
 Built without hands, to mankind given;
 Its lamps are the meridian sun,
 And the bright stars of heaven.
 Its walls are the cerulean sky,
 Its floor the earth so green and fair;
 Its dome is vast immensity:
 All nature worships there."

We, of a surety, have none of the grander features of Nature to admire; but the same Almighty Power which smote out the vast Andean Ranges yet untrod, has left traces of its handywork here. Even the great desert in which we have so long been buried must suggest to the reflecting mind either God's perfectly effected purpose, or His purposely effected neglect; and, though I have here and there found places where scanty supplies of the element of water were to be found, yet they are at such enormous distances apart, and the regions in which they exist are of so utterly worthless a kind, that

it seems to be intended by the great Creator that civilised beings should never re-enter here. And then our thoughts must naturally wander to the formation and creation of those mighty ships of the desert, that alone could have brought us here, and by whose strength and incomprehensible powers of endurance, only are we enabled to leave this desert behind. In our admiration of the creature, our thoughts are uplifted in reverence and worship to the Designer and Creator of such things, adapted, no doubt, by a wise selection from an infinite variety of living forms, for myriads of creative periods, and with a foreknowledge that such instruments would be requisite for the intelligent beings of a future time, to traverse those areas of the desert earth that it had pleased Him in wisdom to permit to remain secluded from the more lovely places of the world and the familiar haunts of civilised man. Here, too, we find in this fearful waste, this howling wilderness, this antre vast and desert idle, places scooped out of the solid rock, and the mighty foundations of the round world laid bare, that the lower organism of God's human family may find their proper sustenance; but truly the curse must have gone forth more fearfully against them, and with a vengeance must it have been proclaimed, by the sweat of their brows must they obtain their bread. No doubt it was with the intention of obtaining ours, thus reaping the harvest of unfurrowed fields, that these natives were induced to make so murderous an attack upon us. We neither saw nor heard anything more of our sable enemies, and on the 18th we departed out of their coasts. This watering-place, Ularring, is situated in latitude $29^{\circ} 35'$, and longitude $120^{\circ} 31' 4''$.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM 18TH OCTOBER TO 18TH NOVEMBER, 1875.

Depart from Ularring—Re-enter scrubs—Scrubs more dense—A known point—Magnetic rocks—Lowans' eggs—Numbers of the birds—Crows, hawks—Natives and water—Induce natives to decamp—Unusually vigorous growth of scrubs—Alec sights Mount Churchman—Bronze-winged pigeons—Pigeon Rocks—Depart—Edge of a cliff—Mount Churchman in view—Some natives arrive—A wandering pet—Lake Moore—Rock-holes—Strike old dray tracks—An outlying sheep-station—The first white man seen—Dinner of mutton—Exploring at an end—Civilisation once more—Tootra—All sorts and conditions come to interview us—A monastery—A feu-de-joie—The first telegraph station—Congratulatory messages—Intimations of receptions—A triumphal march—Messrs. Clunes Brothers—An address—Culham—White ladies—Newcastle—A triumphal arch—A fine tonic—Tommy's speech—Unscientific profanity—Guildford on the Swan—Arrival at Perth—Reception by the Mayor—The city decorated—Arrival at the Town Hall—A shower of garlands—A beautiful address—A public reception at Fremantle—Return to Perth—And festivities—Remarks.

ON the 18th we departed. Mount Churchman was now not much more than 150 miles away. I felt sure we should reach it at last. It was late in the day when we left the camp, and immediately re-entered the dense and odious scrubs, which were more than usually thick. We passed a small salt-lake bed on our right, and made good twenty miles by night, which fell with cold and wind and

threatened rain. At three or four miles the next morning, we saw some bare granite rocks to the south, and noticed the tops of some low ranges to the north, but these were partially hidden by some



FORCING A PASSAGE THROUGH THE SCRUBS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

nearer ridges. The summit of one of these was a mass of exposed rock, similar in appearance to Ularring and remarkably high, but as it was five or six miles away from our line, which was now

nearly west, we did not visit it. At fifteen miles from camp we sighted from the top of an undulation in the scrub, a pointed hill a little south of west, also another higher and longer, and lying more southerly. We could not reach the pointed hill by night. The country is now more densely scrubby than ever, and although we toiled the whole day, we only made good twenty-four miles. Upon nearing the hill the following morning we saw some grass-trees and passed between two salt-lakes. At ten miles Mr. Young and I were upon the top of the hill ; the scrubs surrounding it were so terribly thick that I thought we should have to chop our way through them, and we had the greatest difficulty in getting the caravan to move along at all. I was much surprised at the view I obtained here ; in the first place as we were now gradually approaching Mount Churchman, the hill to the south was, or should have been, Mount Jackson, but according to my chart there were no hills visible in any easterly or north-easterly direction from Mount Jackson, whereas from the range to the south, not only the hill I was upon, but all the others in various directions, must also have been seen from it. This was rather puzzling, and the only way I could account for the anomaly was that either Gregory had never ascended Mount Jackson at all, though according to his map he calls the whole eastern country beyond it sand-plains, or these hills have been thrown up since 1846. The latter I cannot believe. The composition of this hill was almost iron itself, and there were some fused stones like volcanic slag upon it. It was too magnetic for working angles with a

compass ; it was between 500 and 600 feet above the surrounding regions. The horizon from east, north-east, round by north, thence to the west and south, was bounded by low ranges, detached into seven groups ; the white beds of small lakes were visible running up to the northern, or north-eastern group, the intervening country being, as usual, all scrubs, which grew even to the summits of the hills. The view from this hill was enough to terrify the spectator ; my only consolation in gazing at so desolate a scene, was that my task was nearly accomplished, and nothing should stop me now. A second pointed hill lay nearly west, and we pushed on to this, but could not reach it by night.

To-day we managed to get † thirty-four lowans' eggs, yesterday we had secured twenty-seven. These birds swarm in these scrubs, and their eggs form a principal item in the daily fare of the natives during the laying season. We seldom see the birds, but so long as we get the eggs I suppose we have no great cause of complaint. In the morning we reached and ascended the second hill. Some other hills a few miles away ended nearly west, and bare granite rocks appeared a few miles beyond them, which I determined to visit. This hill was of similar formation to the last-described. The far horizon to the west being all scrub, Mount Churchman should have been visible, but it was not. The sight of the country from any of these hills is truly frightful ; it seemed as though the scrubs were to end only with our journey. On descending, we pushed on for the rocks, and reached them in twelve miles from the last camp. As we neared them, we could distinguish a large extent of bare

rock, and it seemed likely that we should find water, as we saw a number of crows and hawks, and we soon became aware of the presence of natives also, for they began to yell so soon as they perceived our approach. A well was soon found, and our camp fixed beside it. The natives were numerous here, but whether they were our old enemies or not I could not say; yet I fancied I recognised one or two among them, and to let them see that our ammunition was not yet exhausted, I fired my rifle in the air. This had the effect of inducing them, whether friends or foes, to decamp, and we were not troubled with them while we were here. I did not wish for a repetition of the Ularring affair. The well was shallow, with a good supply of water, and there were a few scores of acres of open ground around the rocks, though the scrubs came as close as possible. This spot was seventy-seven miles from Ularring; our well was situated at what may be called the north-east corner of these rocks; at the south-west end there is another and larger valley, where I saw two wells. On Sunday, the 22nd of October, we rested here. The old lame cow is still very bad, I am afraid she cannot travel much farther. Yesterday and to-day were rather warm, the thermometer indicating 94° and 96° in the shade. The upheaval of the few hills we have lately passed seems to have induced an unusually vigorous growth of scrubs, for they are now denser and more hideous than ever.

Alec Ross stated that he had seen, from the last hill, another, far away, due west, but nobody else saw it. If such a hill exists it is over eighty miles away from where seen, and it must be Mount

Churchman. No views to any distance could be had from these rocks, as the undulations of the scrubs occur continuously throughout the desert, at almost regular intervals of a few miles, from seven to twenty.

After dinner on the 23rd I had intended to leave this place, but upon mustering the camels I found that not only was the lame cow worse, but another of the cows had calved, and our family was increased by the advent of a little cow-calf about the size of a rabbit. This prevented our departure. The calf was killed, and the mother remained with her dead offspring, whereby she comprehended her loss, and this will prevent her endeavouring to return to it after we leave. We obtained a good many bronze-winged pigeons here, and I called the place the Pigeon Rocks. Their position is in latitude $29^{\circ} 58' 4''$ and longitude $119^{\circ} 15' 3''$. To-day the thermometer rose to 100° in the shade, and at night a very squally thunderstorm, coming from the west, agreeably cooled the atmosphere, although no rain fell. On the 24th we left the Pigeon Rocks, still steering west, and travelled twenty-five miles through the dense scrubs, with an occasional break, on which a few of the yellow-bark gum-trees grew. They are generally of a vigorous and well-grown habit. The poor old lame cow followed as usual, but arrived at the camp a long while after us. The next day we progressed twenty-five miles to the westward, and at evening we tore through a piece of horrible scrub, or thickets, and arrived at the edge of a cliff which stood, perpendicularly, 200 feet over the surrounding country. This we had to circumnavigate in order to descend.

Right on our course, being in the proper latitude, and twenty-seven or twenty-eight miles away, was



FIRST VIEW OF MOUNT CHURCHMAN.

a small hill, the object I had traversed so many hundreds of miles of desert to reach, and which I was delighted to know, was Mount Churchman.

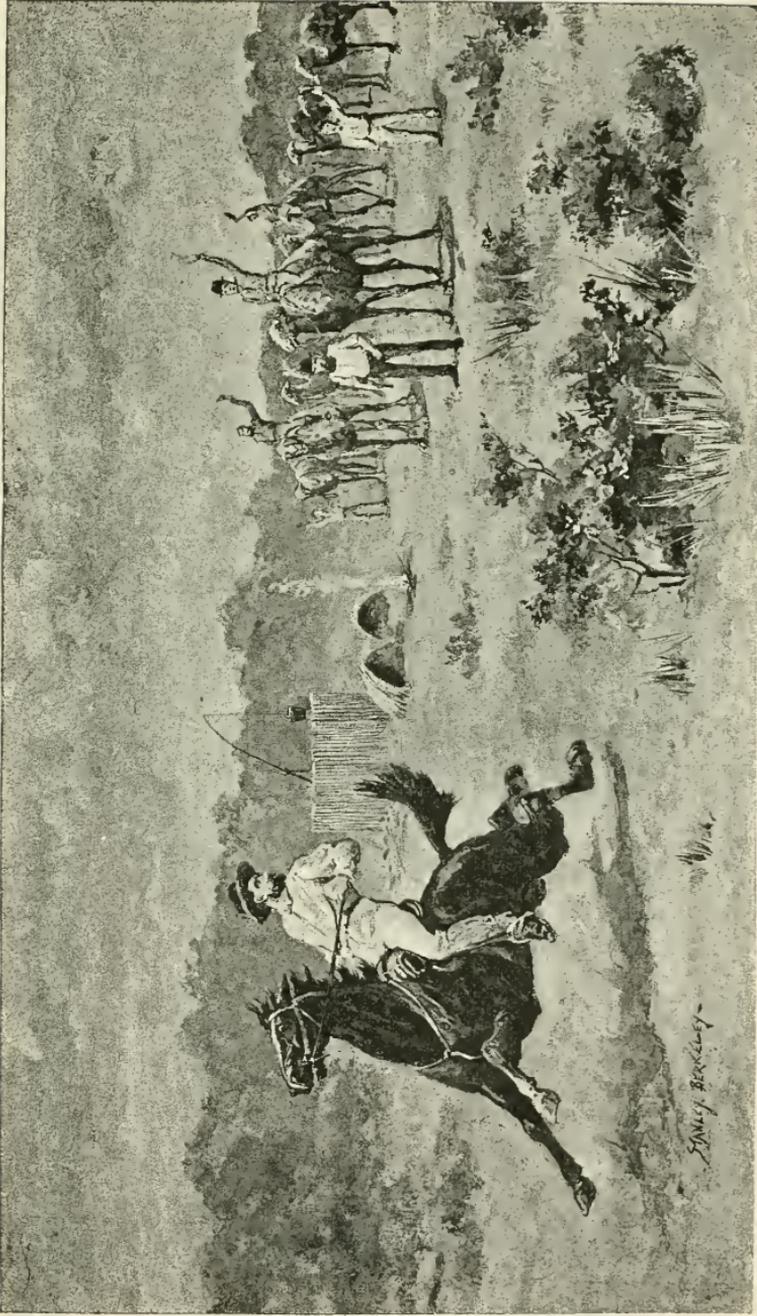
The country between the cliff and Mount Churchman was filled to overflowing with the densest of scrubs; Nature seemed to have tried how much of it she could possibly jam into this region. We encamped at the foot of the cliff. We got several lowans'—or, as the West Australians call them, Gnows'—eggs, thirty yesterday, and forty-five to-day. At night the old lame cow did not arrive at the camp, nor was she with the mob the next morning; I wished her to remain at the Pigeon Rocks, but of course she persisted in following her kindred so long as she could, but now she has remained behind of her own accord, she will no doubt return there, and if she recovers will most probably go back to Beltana by herself, perhaps exploring a new line of country on the way.

The following day we hoped to reach Mount Churchman, but the scrubs were so frightful we could not get there by night, though we travelled without stopping for twelve hours. To-day we got only twenty eggs. To-night and last night a slight dew fell, the first for a long time. Early on the morning of the 27th of October I stood upon the summit of Mount Churchman; and, though no mention whatever is made upon the chart of the existence of water there, we found a native well which supplied all our wants. In the afternoon some natives made their appearance; they were partly clothed. The party consisted of an oldish man, a very smart and good-looking young fellow, and a handsome little boy. The young fellow said his own name was Charlie, the boy's Albert, and the older one's Billy. It is said a good face is the best letter of introduction, but Charlie had a better

one, as I had lost a little ivory-handled penknife on the road yesterday, and they had come across, and followed our tracks, and picked it up. Charlie, without a moment's questioning, brought it to me ; he was too polite, too agreeable altogether, and evidently knew too much ; he knew the country all the way to Perth, and also to Champion Bay. It occurred to me that he had been somebody's pet black boy, that had done something, and had bolted away. He told me the nearest station to us was called Nyngham, Mount Singleton on the chart, in a north-west direction. The station belonged, he said, to a Mr. Cook, and that we could reach it in four days, but as I wished to make south-westerly for Perth, I did not go that way. The day was very warm, thermometer 99° in shade.

This mount is called Geelabing on the chart, but Charlie did not know it by that name. He and the other two came on and camped with us that night. Our course was nearly south-west ; we only travelled eleven miles. The following day our three friends departed, as they said, to visit Nyngham, while we pursued our own course, and reached the shores of the dry salt-lake Moore. In about thirty miles we found some rock water-holes, and encamped on the edge of the lake, where we saw old horse and cattle tracks. We next crossed the lake-bed, which was seven miles wide. No doubt there is brine in some parts of it, but where I crossed it was firm and dry. We left it on the 30th of October, and travelling upon a course nearly west-south-west, we struck some old dray tracks, at a dried-up spring, on the 3rd of November, which I did not follow, as they ran eastwards. From there I turned south, and

early on the 4th we came upon an outlying sheep-station; its buildings consisting simply of a few bark-gunyahs. There was not even a single, rude hut in the dingle; blacks' and whites' gunyahs being all alike. Had I not seen some clothes, cooking utensils, &c., at one of them, I should have thought that only black shepherds lived there. A shallow well, and whip for raising the water into a trough, was enclosed by a fence, and we watered our camels there. The sheep and shepherd were away, and although we were desperately hungry for meat, not having had any for a month, we prepared to wait until the shepherd should come home in the evening. While we were thinking over these matters, a white man came riding up. He apparently did not see us, nor did his horse either, until they were quite close; then his horse suddenly stopped and snorted, and he shouted out, "Holy sailor, what's that?" He was so extraordinarily surprised at the appearance of the caravan that he turned to gallop away. However, I walked to, and reassured him, and told him who I was and where I had come from. Of course he was an Irishman, and he said, "Is it South Austrhalia yez come from? Shure I came from there meself. Did yez crass any say? I don't know, sure I came by Albany; I never came the way you've come at all. Shure, I wilcome yez, in the name of the whole colony. I saw something about yez in the paper not long ago. Can I do anything for yez? This is not my place, but the shepherd is not far; will I go and find him?" "Faith, you may," I said, "and get him to bring the flock back, so that we can get a sheep for dinner." And away he went, and soon returned with the shepherd,



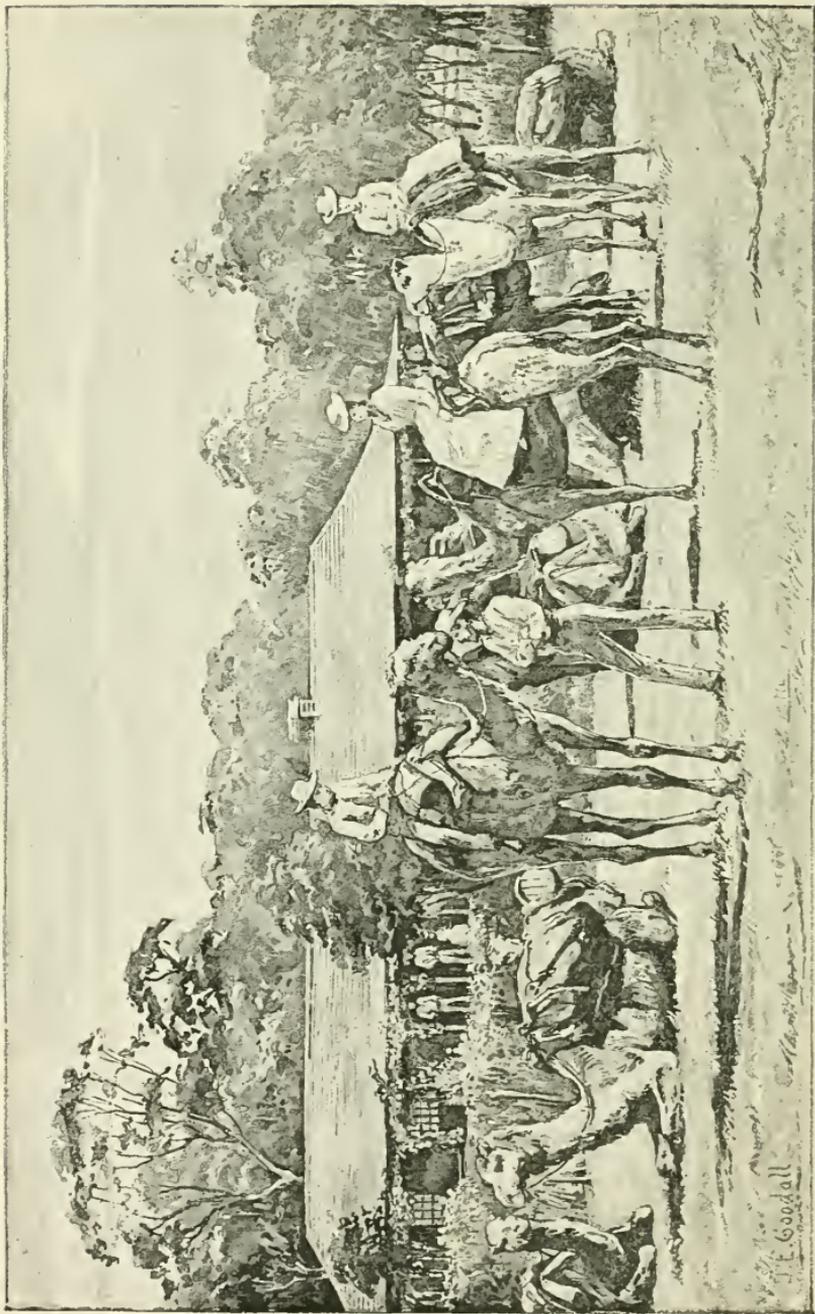
THE FIRST WHITE MAN MET IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

sheep, black assistants and their wives; and we very soon had a capital meal of excellent mutton. While it was in process of cooking the shepherd despatched a black boy to the nearest farm, or settlement, for coffee, butter, sugar, eggs, &c. The messenger returned at night with everything. Exploring had now come to an end; roads led to, and from, all the other settled districts of the colony, and we were in the neighbourhood of civilisation once more. This out-station was the farthest attempt at settlement towards the east, in this part of the colony. It was called Tootra, and belonged to the Messrs. Clunes Brothers, who live lower down the country.

On the 6th of November we passed by the farm where the black boy had got the coffee, sugar, &c.; it belonged to a Mr. Joyce. We did not stay there very long, the people did not seem to know what to make of, and never said anything to, us. That evening we reached Mr. Clarke's homestead, called Inderu, where we were treated with the greatest kindness by every member of the family. They gave us eggs, butter, jam, and spirits, and despatched a messenger with a letter to Sir Thomas Elder's agent at Fremantle. Here we were also met by young Mr. Lefroy, son of the Hon. O'Grady Lefroy, Treasurer and Acting Colonial Secretary for the Colony, who took us off to his station, Walebing, where we remained some days, thoroughly enjoying a recruiting at so agreeable a place. We had to depart at last, and were next entertained by Mr. and Mrs. McPherson, as we passed by their station called Glentromie. So soon as the news spread amongst the settlers that a caravan of camels

had arrived, bushmen and girls, boys and children, came galloping from all parts, while their elders drove whatever vehicles they could lay their hands on, to come and see the new arrivals. The camels were quite frightened at the people galloping about them. Our next reception was at a Spanish Benedictine Monastery and Home for natives, called New Norcia. This Monastery was presided over by the Right Reverend Lord Bishop Salvado, the kindest and most urbane of holy fathers. We were saluted on our arrival, by a regular feu-de-joie, fired off by the natives and half-castes belonging to the mission. The land and property of this establishment is some of the best in the Colony. Here was the first telegraph station we had reached, and I received a number of congratulatory telegrams from most of the leading gentlemen in Perth; from His Excellency the Governor's private secretary, the Press, and my brother-explorer Mr. John Forrest.

Intimations of intended receptions, by corporations, and addresses to be presented, with invitations to banquets and balls, poured in, in overwhelming numbers; so that on leaving the Monastery I knew the series of ordeals that were in store for me. His Excellency the Governor, Sir William Robinson, K.C.M.G., most kindly despatched Mr. John Forrest with a carriage to meet us. From the Monastery our triumphal march began. The appearance of a camel caravan in any English community, away from camel countries, is likely to awaken the curiosity of every one; but it is quite a matter of doubt whether we, or the camels caused the greater sensation as we advanced. A few miles



ARRIVAL AT CULHAM (SAMUEL PHILLIPS'S).

from the monastery we passed the station of Messrs. Clunes Brothers, at whose farthest out-station we had first come upon a settlement. These gentlemen were most kind and hospitable, and would not accept any payment for two fine wether sheep which we had eaten. A short distance from their residence we passed a district country school-house, presided over by Mr. J. M. Butler, and that gentleman, on behalf of Messrs. Clunes, the residents of the locality, his scholars, and himself, presented us with a congratulatory address. Pushing onwards towards the metropolis we arrived, on Saturday, November 13th, at Mr. Samuel Phillips's station, Culham, where that gentleman invited us to remain during Sunday. Here, for the first time, we had the pleasure of enjoying the society of ladies, being introduced to Mrs. Phillips, her sister-in-law Mrs. Fane, and their several daughters. The whole family combined to make us welcome, and as much at home as possible. Here also Mr. Forrest joined us, and welcomed us to his own native land. The camels were put into an excellent paddock, and enjoyed themselves almost as much as their masters. Culham is nine or ten miles from Newcastle, the first town site we should reach. We were invited thither by the Mayor and Council, or rather the Chairman and Council of the Municipality.

At Newcastle we were received under a triumphal arch, and the Chairman presented us with an address. We were then conducted to a sumptuous banquet. Near the conclusion, the Chairman rose to propose our healths, &c. ; he then gratified us by speaking disparagingly of us and our journey ; he said he didn't see what we wanted to come over

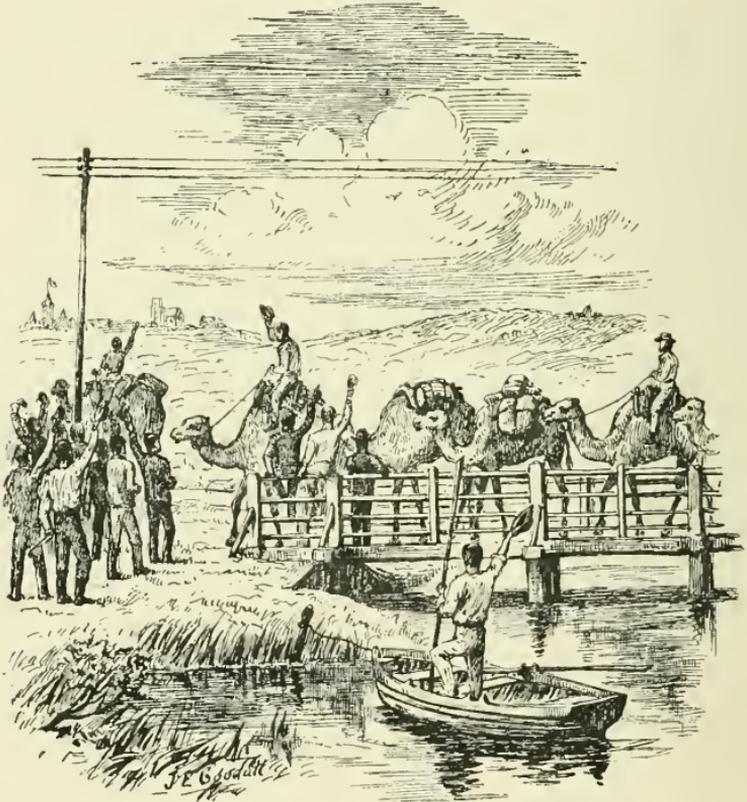
here for, that they had plenty of explorers of their own, &c. This was something like getting a hostile native's spear stuck into one's body, and certainly a fine tonic after the champagne. Several gentlemen in the hall protested against these remarks. I made a short reply; Mr. Tietkens put a little humour into his, and all coolness wore away, especially when Tommy made a speech. He was a great favourite with the "General," and was well looked after during the repast. When we had all said our say, Tommy was urged to speak; he was very bashful, and said, "I don't know what to say;" the people near him said, "Never mind, Tommy, say anything;" so he rose in his seat and simply said "Anything," whereupon everybody laughed, and joviality was restored. In the evening a ball took place in our honour; the old Chairman went to bed, and we all danced till morning. Never after did we hear anything but compliments and commendations, as what was then said was against the sense of the whole Colony. The next town we arrived at was Guildford; on the road the caravan passed by a splitters' camp, the men there came round the camels, and as usual stared wide-eyed with amazement. One of them begged Alec Ross, who was conducting the camels, to wait till a mate of theirs who was away returned, so that he might see them; but as we were bound to time and had our stages arranged so that we should reach Perth by a certain time, this could not be done, and the camels went on. By-and-by a man came galloping up as near as his horse would come to the camels, and called out: "Hi there, hold on, you —— wretches; do you think I'd a galloped after yer ter see such little

—— things as them? why, they ain't no bigger nor a —— horse [there were camels seven feet high in the mob]; why, I thought they was as big as —— clouds, or else I'd never a come all this —— way to see them," &c. He interspersed this address with many adjectives, but as nobody took the slightest notice of him, he started away, banning and blaspheming as he went, and for an uneducated, unscientific West Australian, his, was not a bad effort at profanity.

At Guildford, a town-site on the Swan, we were publicly received by the Mayor, Mr. Spurling, the Town Council, various bodies and lodges, and a detachment of volunteers. We were presented with addresses from the Town Council, and Mr. Spurling made a most handsome speech, which removed any remains of the taste of the Newcastle tonic. The Lodges of Oddfellows and Good Templars also presented us with addresses. The Chairman of the latter made a little Good Templar capital out of the fact of our having achieved such a great feat entirely on water. To this I replied, that it was true we had accomplished our journey on water, and very little of it, but that if we had had anything stronger we should certainly have drunk it, if only to make our water supply last the longer. Then a banquet was spread, which was attended also by ladies, and was a most agreeable entertainment, and the evening wound up with a ball. Guildford being only ten or eleven miles from Perth, at about three P.M. of the next day we approached the city, riding our camels, and having the whole of the caravan in regular desert-marching order. A great number of people came out, both riding and driving, to meet us, and escorted us into

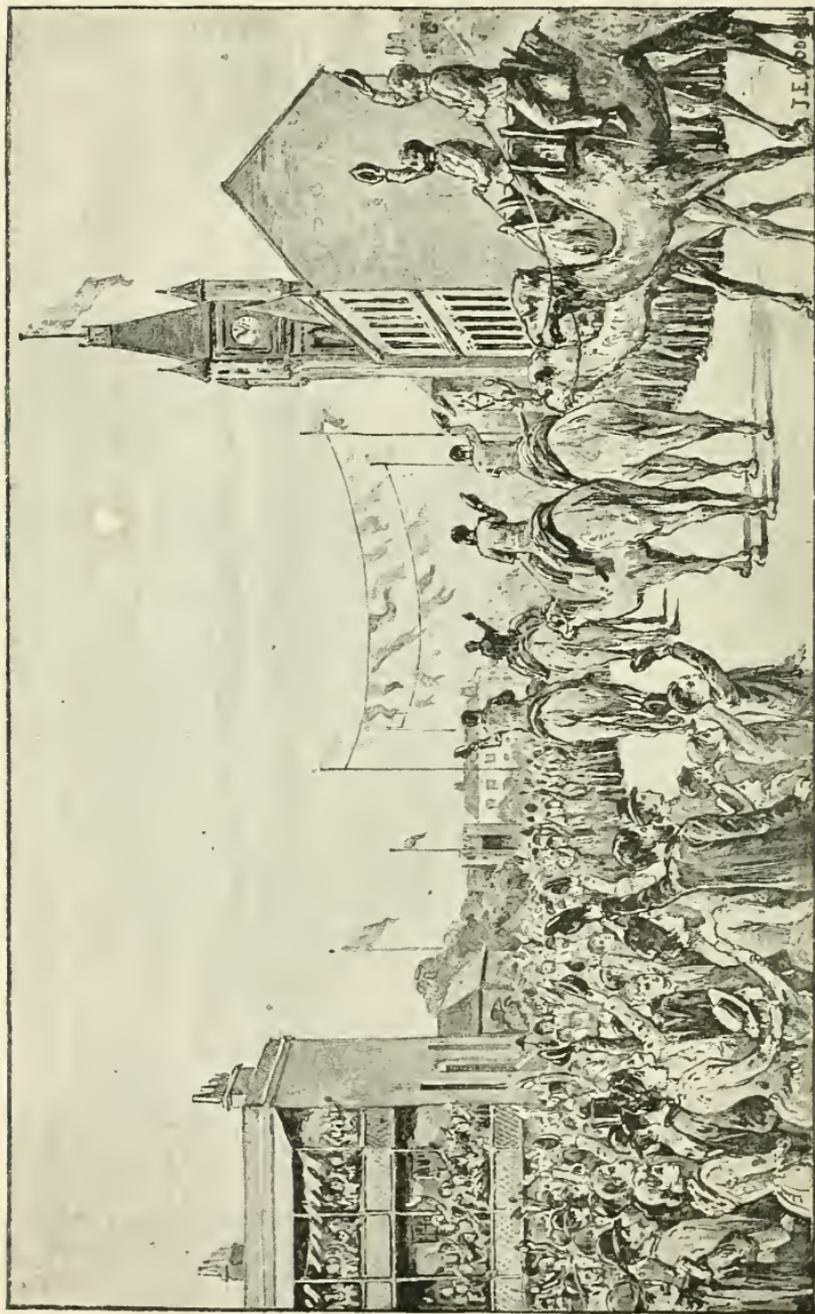
the city ; Mr. Forrest was now on horseback and riding alongside of me.

After traversing the long wooden causeway that bridges the Swan, we soon reached the city bounds, and were met by the Mayor, Mr. George Shenton,



ARRIVAL AT PERTH.

and the other members of the City Council, companies of volunteers lined the streets on either side, and the various bodies of Freemasons, Oddfellows, and Good Templars, accompanied by the brass band of the latter, took a part in the procession. A great crowd of citizens assembled, and the balconies of the houses on both sides were thronged



ARRIVAL AT THE TOWN HALL, PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

with the fair sex, and garlands of flowers were showered down upon us. The streets of the city were decorated with flags and streamers, and scrolls of welcome were stretched across. The procession moved along to the Town Hall amidst general cheering. We were ushered into the spacious hall, and placed on a raised platform, then we were introduced to most of the gentlemen present. The Mayor then addressed me in most eulogistic terms, and presented me with an address on vellum, beautifully illuminated and engrossed, on behalf of the corporation and citizens of Perth, congratulating myself, and party on our successful exploration across the unknown interior from South Australia, and warmly expressing the good feelings of welcome entertained by the citizens towards us.

After this a round of festivities set in ; among these were a public banquet and ball in our honour by the Mayor and Corporation of the city of Perth and a dinner and ball at Government House. A public reception also awaited us at Fremantle, on the coast. On our arrival at the long, high, wooden structure that spans the broad mouth of the river at Fremantle, we were again met by eager crowds. Mr. Forrest rode near me on this occasion also. When entering Perth, I had a great deal of trouble to induce my riding-camel, Reechy, to lead, but when entering Fremantle she fairly jibbed, and I had to walk and lead her, so that I was hidden in the crowd, and Mr. Tietkens, coming next to me, appeared to be the leader, as his camel went all right. The balconies and verandahs here were also thronged with ladies, who showered down heaps of garlands while they cheered. I was completely

hidden, and they threw all the flowers down on Tietkens, so that he got all the honour from the ladies. Here another beautiful address was presented to me by Mr. John Thomas, the Chairman of the Town Council, and a public banquet was given us. On returning to Perth, we had invitations from private individuals to balls, dinners, pic-nics, boating and riding parties, and the wife of the Hon. O'Grady Lefroy started the ball giving immediately after that at Government House. Mr. Forrest gave us a dinner at the Weld Club.

Since our arrival in the settled parts of Western Australia, we have had every reason to believe that our welcome was a genuine one, everybody having treated us with the greatest kindness and courtesy. His Excellency the Governor ordered that all our expenses down the country, from where Mr. Forrest met us, should be defrayed by the Government; and having been so welcomed by the settlers on our arrival at each place, I had no occasion to expend a penny on our march through the settled districts of the Colony.

In concluding the tale of a long exploration, a few remarks are necessary. In the first place I travelled during the expedition, in covering the ground, 2500 miles; but unfortunately found no areas of country suitable for settlement. This was a great disappointment to me, as I had expected far otherwise; but the explorer does not make the country, he must take it as he finds it. His duty is to penetrate it, and although the greatest honour is awarded and the greatest recompense given to the discoverer of the finest regions, yet it must be borne in mind, that the difficulties of

traversing those regions cannot be nearly so great as those encountered by the less fortunate traveller who finds himself surrounded by heartless deserts. The successful penetration of such a region must, nevertheless, have its value, both in a commercial and a geographical sense, as it points out to the future emigrant or settler, those portions of our continent which he should rigorously avoid. It never could have entered into any one's calculations that I should have to force my way through a region that rolls its scrub enthroned, and fearful distance out, for hundreds of leagues in billowy undulations, like the waves of a timbered sea, and that the expedition would have to bore its way, like moles in the earth, for so long, through these interminable scrubs, with nothing to view, and less to cheer. Our success has traced a long and a dreary road through this unpeopled waste, like that to a lion's abode, from whence no steps are retraced. The caravan for months was slowly but surely plodding on, under those trees with which it has pleased Providence to bedeck this desolate waste. But this expedition, as organised, equipped, and intended by Sir Thomas Elder, was a thing of such excellence and precision, it moved along apparently by mechanical action; and it seemed to me, as we conquered these frightful deserts by its power, like playing upon some new fine instrument, as we wandered, like rumour, "from the Orient to the Drooping West,"—

“ From where the Torrens wanders,
 'Midst corn and vines and flowers,
To where fair Perth still lifts to heaven
 Her diadem of towers.”

The labours of the expedition ended only at the sea at Fremantle, the seaport of the west; and after travelling under those trees for months, from eastern lands through a region accurst, we were greeted at last by old Ocean's roar; Ocean, the strongest of creation's sons, "that rolls the wild, profound, eternal bass in Nature's anthem." The officers, Mr. Tietkens and Mr. Young, except for occasional outbursts of temper, and all the other members of the expedition, acted in every way so as to give me satisfaction; and when I say that the personnel of the expedition behaved as well as the camels, I cannot formulate greater praise.

It will readily be believed that I did not undertake a fourth expedition in Australia without a motive. Sir Thomas Elder had ever been kind to me since I had known him, and my best thanks were due to him for enabling me to accomplish so difficult an undertaking; but there were others also I wished to please; and I have done my best endeavours upon this arduous expedition, with the hope that I might "win the wise, who frowned before to smile at last."

BOOK V.



MAP
 showing the Route travelled
 AND COUNTRY DISCOVERED BY
ERNEST GILES
 during his Fifth Exploring Expedition in
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA
 SETTLEMENTS OF THE COLONY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
 OF THE
 SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TRANSCONTINENTAL TELEGRAPH LINE
 1874
 Scale 1:50,000
 Statute Miles
 English Miles

CHAPTER I.

FROM 18TH NOVEMBER, 1875, TO 10TH APRIL, 1876.

Remarks on the last expedition—Departure of my two officers—Expedition leaves Perth—Invited to York—Curiosity to see the caravan—Saleh and Tommy's yarns—Tipperary—Northam—Newcastle again—A pair of watch(ful) guards—St. Joseph's—Messrs. Clunes—The Benedictine monastery—Amusing incident—A new road—Berkshire Valley—Triumphal arch—Sandal-wood—Sheep poison—Cornamah—A survey party—Irwin House—Dongarra—An address presented—A French gentleman—Greenough Flats—Another address—Tommy's tricks—Champion Bay—Palmer's camp—A bull-camel poisoned—The Bowes—Yuin—A native desperado captured—His escape—Cheangwa—Native girls and boys—Depart for the interior—Natives follow us—Cooerminga—The Sandford—Moodilah—Barloweerie Peak—Pia Spring—Mount Murchison—Good pastoral country—Farewell to the last white man.

AFTER having crossed the unknown central interior, and having traversed such a terrible region to accomplish that feat, it might be reasonably supposed that my labours as an explorer would cease, and that I might disband the expedition and send the members, camels, and equipment back to Adelaide by ship, especially as in my closing remarks on my last journey I said that I had accomplished the task I had undertaken, and effected the object of my expedition. This was certainly the case, but I regarded what had been done as

only the half of my mission ; and I was as anxious now to complete my work as I had been to commence it, when Sir Thomas Elder started me out. The remaining portion was no less than the completion of the line I had been compelled to leave unfinished by the untimely loss of Gibson, during my horse expedition of 1874. My readers will remember that, having pushed out west from my depot at Fort McKellar, in the Rawlinson Range, I had sighted another line of hills, which I had called the Alfred and Marie Range, and which I had been unable to reach. It was therefore my present wish and intention to traverse that particular region, and to connect my present explorations with my former ones with horses. By travelling northwards until I reached the proper latitude, I might make an eastern line to the Rawlinson Range. That Gibson's Desert existed, well I knew ; but how far west from the Rawlinson it actually extended, was the problem I now wished to solve. As Sir Thomas Elder allowed me *carte blanche*, I began a fresh journey with this object. The incidents of that journey this last book will record.

My readers may imagine us enjoying all the gaieties and pleasures such a city as Perth, in Western Australia, could supply. Myself and two officers were quartered at the Weld Club ; Alec Ross and the others had quarters at the United Service Club Hotel nearly opposite ; and taking it altogether, we had very good times indeed. The fountains of champagne seemed loosened throughout the city during my stay ; and the wine merchants became nervous lest the supply of what then became known as "Elder wine" should get exhausted.

I paid a visit down the country southwards, to Bunbury, The Vasse, and other places of interest in that quarter. Our residence at Perth was extended to two months. Saleh was in his glory. The camels were out in a paddock, where they did not do very well, as there was only one kind of acacia tree upon which they could browse. Occasionally Saleh had to take two or three riding camels to Government House, as it became quite the thing, for a number of young ladies to go there and have a ride on them ; and on those days Saleh was resplendent. On every finger, he wore a ring, he had new, white and coloured, silk and satin, clothes, covered with gilt braid ; two silver watches, one in each side-pocket of his tunic ; and two jockey whips, one in each hand. He used to tell people that he brought the expedition over, and when he went back he was sure Sir Thomas Elder would fit him out with an expedition of his own. Tommy was quite a young coloured swell, too ; he would go about the town, fraternise with people, treat them to drinks at any hotel, and tell the landlord, when asked for payment, that the liquor was for the expedition. Every now and again I had little bills presented to me for refreshments supplied to Mr. Oldham. Alec Ross expended a good deal of his money in making presents to young ladies ; and Peter Nicholls was quite a victim to the fair sex of his class. I managed to escape these terrible dangers, though I can't tell how.

Both my officers left for South Australia by the mail steamer. Mr. Tietkens was the more regretted. I did not wish him to leave, but he said he had private business to attend to. I did not request

Mr. Young to accompany me on my return journey, so they went to Adelaide together. The remainder of the party stayed until the 13th of January, 1876, when the caravan departed from Perth on its homeward route to South Australia, having a new line of unexplored country to traverse before we could reach our goal. My projected route was to lie nearly 400 miles to the north of the one by which I arrived; and upon leaving Perth we travelled up the country, through the settled districts, to Champion Bay, and thence to Mount Gould, close to the River Murchison.

Before leaving the city I was invited by the Mayor and Municipality of the town of York, to visit that locality; this invitation I, of course, accepted, as I was supposed to be out on show. My party now consisted of only four other members besides myself, namely, young Alec Ross, now promoted to the post of second in command, Peter Nicholls, still cook, Saleh, and Tommy Oldham. At York we were entertained, upon our arrival, at a dinner. York was a very agreeable little agricultural town, the next in size to Fremantle. Bushmen, farmers, and country people generally, flocked in crowds to see both us and the camels. It was amusing to watch them, and to hear the remarks they made. Saleh and Tommy used to tell the most outrageous yarns about them; how they could travel ten miles an hour with their loads, how they carried water in their humps, that the cows ate their calves, that the riding bulls would tear their riders' legs off with their teeth if they couldn't get rid of them in any other way. These yarns were not restricted to York, they were always going on.

The day after leaving York we passed Mr. Samuel Burgess's establishment, called Tipperary, where we were splendidly entertained at a dinner, with his brothers and family. The Messrs. Burgess are among the oldest and wealthiest residents in the Colony. From hence we travelled towards a town-site called Northam, and from thence to Newcastle, where we were entertained upon our first arrival. A lady in Newcastle, Mrs. Dr. Mayhew, presented me with a pair of little spotted puppies, male and female, to act for us, as she thought, as watch(ful) guards against the attacks of hostile natives in the interior. And although they never distinguished themselves very much in that particular line, the little creatures were often a source of amusement in the camp; and I shall always cherish a feeling of gratitude to the donor for them.

At ten miles from Newcastle is Culham, the hospitable residence of the well-known and universally respected Squire Phillips, of an old Oxford family in England, and a very old settler in the Colony of Western Australia. On our arrival at Culham we were, as we had formerly been, most generously received; and the kindness and hospitality we met, induced us to remain for some days. When leaving I took young Johnny Phillips with me to give him an insight into the mysteries of camel travelling, so far as Champion Bay. On our road up the country we met with the greatest hospitality from every settler, whose establishment the caravan passed. At every station they vied with each other as to who should show us the greatest kindness. It seems invidious to mention names, and yet it might appear as though I were

ungrateful if I seemed to forget my old friends ; for I am a true believer in the dictum, of all black crimes, accurst ingratitude's the worst. Leaving Culham, we first went a few miles to Mr. Beare's station and residence, whither Squire Phillips accompanied us. Our next friend was Mr. Butler, at the St. Joseph's schoolhouse, where he had formerly presented me with an address. Next we came to the Messrs. Clunes, where we remained half an hour to refresh, en route for New Norcia, the Spanish Catholic Benedictine Monastery presided over by the good Bishop Salvado, and where we remained for the night ; the Bishop welcoming us as cordially as before. Our next halt was at the McPhersons', Glentromie, only four or five miles from the Mission. Our host here was a fine, hospitable old Scotchman, who has a most valuable and excellent property. From Glentromie we went to the Hon. O'Grady Lefroy's station, Walebing, where his son, Mr. Henry Lefroy, welcomed us again as he had done so cordially on our first visit. At every place where we halted, country people continually came riding and driving in to see the camels, and an amusing incident occurred here. Young Lefroy had a tidy old house-keeper, who was quite the grande dame amongst the young wives and daughters of the surrounding farmers. I remained on Sunday, and, as usual, a crowd of people came. The camp was situated 200 yards from the buildings, and covered a good space of ground, the camels always being curled round into a circle whenever we camped ; the huge bags and leather-covered boxes and pack-saddles filling up most of the space. On this Sunday after-

noon a number of women, and girls, were escorted over by the housekeeper. Alec and I had come to the camp just before them, and we watched as they came up very slowly and cautiously to the camp. I was on the point of going over to them, and saying that I was sorry the camels were away feeding, but something Alec Ross said, restrained me, and we waited—the old housekeeper doing the show. To let the others see how clever she was, she came right up to the loads, the others following, and said, “Ah, the poor things!” One of the new arrivals said, “Oh, the poor things, how still and quiet they are,” the girls stretching their necks, and nearly staring their eyes out. Alec and I were choking with laughter, and I went up and said, “My dear creature, these are not the camels, these are the loads; the camels are away in the bush, feeding.” The old lady seemed greatly annoyed, while the others, in chorus, said, “Oh, oh! what, ain’t those the camels there?” &c. By that time the old lady had vanished.

Up to this point we had returned upon the road we had formerly travelled to Perth; now we left our old line, and continued up the telegraph line, and main overland road, from Perth to Champion Bay. Here we shortly entered what in this Colony is called the Victoria Plains district. I found the whole region covered with thick timber, if not actual scrubs; here and there was a slight opening covered with a thorny vegetation three or four feet high. It struck me as being such a queer name, but I subsequently found that in Western Australia a plain means level country, no matter how densely covered with scrubs; undulating scrubs are thickets,

and so on. Several times I was mystified by people telling me they knew there were plains to the east, which I had found to be all scrubs, with timber twenty to thirty feet high densely packed on it. The next place we visited, was Mr. James Clinche's establishment at Berkshire Valley, and our reception there was most enthusiastic. A triumphal arch was erected over the bridge that spanned the creek upon which the place was located, the arch having scrolls with mottoes waving and flags flying in our honour. Here was feasting and flaring with a vengeance. Mr. Clinche's hospitality was unbounded. We were pressed to remain a week, or month, or a year; but we only rested one day, the weather being exceedingly hot. Mr. Clinche had a magnificent flower and fruit garden, with fruit-trees of many kinds en espalier; these, he said, throve remarkably well. Mr. Clinche persisted in making me take away several bottles of fluid, whose contents need not be specifically particularised. Formerly the sandal-wood-tree of commerce abounded all over the settled districts of Western Australia. Merchants and others in Perth, Fremantle, York, and other places, were buyers for any quantity. At his place Mr. Clinche had a huge stack of I know not how many hundred tons. He informed me he usually paid about eight pounds sterling per measurement ton. The markets were London, Hong Kong, and Calcutta. A very profitable trade for many years was carried on in this article; the supply is now very limited.

There was a great deal of the poison-plant all over this country, not the *Gyrostemon*, but a sheep-poisoning plant of the *Gastrolobium* family; and I

was always in a state of anxiety for fear the camels should eat any of it. The shepherds in this Colony, whose flocks are generally not larger than 500, are supposed to know every individual poison-plant on their beat, and to keep their sheep off it ; but with us, it was all chance work, for we couldn't tie the camels up every night, and we could not control them in what they should eat. Our next friends were a brother of the McPherson at Glentromie and his wife. The name of this property was Cornamah ; there was a telegraph station at this place. Both here and at Berkshire Valley Mrs. McPherson and Miss Clinche are the operators. Next to this, we reached Mr. Cook's station, called Arrino, where Mrs. Cook is telegraph mistress. Mr. Cook we had met at New Norcia, on his way down to Perth. We had lunch at Arrino, and Mrs. Cook gave me a sheep. I had, however, taken it out of one of their flocks the night before, as we camped with some black shepherds and shepherdesses, who were very pleased to see the camels, and called them emus, a name that nearly all the West Australian natives gave them.

After leaving Arrino we met Mr. Brookyn and Mr. King, two Government surveyors, at whose camp we rested a day. The heat was excessive, the thermometer during that day going up 115° in the shade. The following day we reached a farm belonging to Mr. Goodwin, where we had a drink of beer all round. That evening we reached an establishment called Irwin House, on the Irwin River, formerly the residence of Mr. Lock Burgess, who was in partnership there with Squire Phillips. Mr. Burgess having gone to

England, the property was leased to Mr. Fane, where we again met Mrs. Fane and her daughters, whom we had first met at Culham. This is a fine cattle run and farming property. From thence we went to Dongarra, a town-site also on the Irwin. On reaching this river, we found ourselves in one of the principal agricultural districts of Western Australia, and at Dongarra we were met by a number of the gentlemen of the district, and an address was presented to me by Mr. Laurence, the Resident Magistrate. After leaving Dongarra, we were entertained at his house by Mr. Bell; and here we met a French gentleman of a strong Irish descent, with fine white eyes and a thick shock head, of red hair; he gazed intently both at us and the camels. I don't know which he thought the more uncouth of the two kinds of beasts. At last he found sufficient English to say, "Do dem tings goo faar in a deayah, ehah?" When he sat down to dinner with us, he put his mutton chop on his hand, which he rested on his plate. The latter seemed to be quite an unknown article of furniture to him, and yet I was told his father was very well to do.

The next town-site we reached was the Greenough—pronounced Greenuff—Flats, being in another very excellent agricultural district; here another address was presented to me, and we were entertained at an excellent lunch. As usual, great numbers of people came to inspect us, and the camels, the latter laying down with their loads on previous to being let go. Often, when strangers would come too near, some of the more timid camels would jump up instantly, and the people not being on their guard, would often have torn faces and bleeding noses

before they could get out of the way. On this occasion a tall, gaunt man and his wife, I supposed, were gazing at Tommy's riding camel as she carried the two little dogs in bags, one on each side. Tommy was standing near, trying to make her jump up, but she was too quiet, and preferred lying down. Any how, Tommy would have his joke—so, as the man who was gazing most intently at the pups said, "What's them things, young man?" he replied, "Oh, that's hee's pickaninnies"—sex having no more existence in a black boy's vocabulary than in a highlander's. Then the tall man said to the wife, "Oh, lord, look yer, see how they carries their young." Only the pup's heads appeared, a string round the neck keeping them in; "but they looks like dogs too, don't they?" With that he put his huge face down, so as to gaze more intently at them, when the little dog, who had been teased a good deal and had got snappish, gave a growl and snapped at his nose. The secret was out; with a withering glance at Tommy and the camels, he silently walked away—the lady following.

All the riding camels and most of the pet baggage camels were passionately fond of bread. I always put a piece under the flap of my saddle, and so soon as Reechy came to the camp of a morning, she would come and lie down by it, and root about till she found it. Lots of the people, especially boys and children, mostly brought their lunch, as coming to see the camels was quite a holiday affair, and whenever they incautiously began to eat in the camp, half a dozen camels would try to take the food from them. One cunning old camel called Cocky, a huge beast, whose hump was over

seven feet from the ground, with his head high up in the air, and pretending not to notice anything of the kind, would sidle slowly up towards any people who were eating, and swooping his long neck down, with his soft tumid lips would take the food out of their mouths or hands—to their utter astonishment and dismay. Another source of amusement with us was, when any man wanted to have a ride, we always put him on Peter Nicholls's camel, then he was led for a certain distance from the camp, when the rider was asked whether he was all right? He was sure to say, "Yes." "Well, then, take the reins," we would say; and so soon as the camel found himself free, he would set to work and buck and gallop back to the camp; in nine cases out of ten the rider fell off, and those who didn't never wished to get on any more. With the young ladies we met on our journeys through the settled districts, I took care that no accidents should happen, and always gave them Reechy or Alec's cow Buzoe. At the Greenough, a ball was given in the evening.* We were now only a short distance from Champion Bay, the town-site being called Geraldton; it was the 16th February when we reached it. Outside the town we were met by a number of gentlemen on horseback, and were escorted into it by them.

On arrival we were invited to a lunch. Champion Bay, or rather Geraldton, is the thriving centre of what is, for Western Australia, a large agricultural and pastoral district. It is the most busy and bustling

* I should surely be forgetting myself were I to omit to mention our kind friend, Mr. Maley, the miller at Greenough, who took us to his house, gave us a lunch, and literally flooded us with champagne.

place I have seen on this side of the continent. It is situated upon the western coast of Australia, in latitude $28^{\circ} 40'$ and longitude $114^{\circ} 42' 30''$, lying about north-north-west from Perth, and distant 250 miles in a straight line, although to reach it by land more than 300 miles have to be traversed. I delayed in the neighbourhood of Geraldton for the arrival of the English and Colonial mails, at the hospitable encampment of Mr. James Palmer, a gentleman from Melbourne, who was contractor for the first line of railway, from Champion Bay to Northampton, ever undertaken in Western Australia.

While we delayed here, Mr. Tietkens's fine young riding bull got poisoned, and though we did everything we possibly could for him, he first went cranky, and subsequently died. I was very much grieved; he was such a splendid hack, and so quiet and kind; I greatly deplored his loss. The only substance I could find that he had eaten was Gyrostemon, there being plenty of it here. Upon leaving Mr. Palmer's camp we next visited a station called the Bowes—being on the Bowes Creek, and belonging to Mr. Thomas Burgess, whose father entertained us so well at Tipperary, near York. Mr. Burgess and his wife most cordially welcomed us. This was a most delightful place, and so home-like; it was with regret that I left it behind, Mrs. Burgess being the last white lady I might ever see.

Mr. Burgess had another station called Yuin, about 115 miles easterly from here, and where his nephews, the two Messrs. Wittenoon, resided. They also have a station lying north-east by north

called Cheangwa. On the fifth day from the Bowes we reached Yuin. The country was in a very dry state. All the stock had been removed to Cheangwa, where rains had fallen, and grass existed in abundance. At Yuin Mr. Burgess had just completed the erection of, I should say, the largest wool-shed in the Colony. The waters on the station consist of shallow wells and springs all over it. It is situated up the Greenough River. Before reaching Cheangwa I met the elder of the two Wittenoons, whom I had previously known in Melbourne; his younger brother was expected back from a trip to the north and east, where he had gone to look for new pastoral runs. When he returned, he told us he had not only been very successful in that way, but had succeeded in capturing a native desperado, against whom a warrant was out, and who had robbed some shepherds' huts, and speared, if not killed, a shepherd in their employ. Mr. Frank Wittenoon was leading this individual alongside of his horse, intending to take him to Geraldton to be dealt with by the police magistrate there. But O, tempora mutantur! One fine night, when apparently chained fast to a verandah post, the fellow managed to slip out of his shackles, quietly walked away, and left his fetters behind him, to the unbounded mortification of his captor, who looked unutterable things, and though he did not say much, he probably thought the more. This escape occurred at Yuin, to which place I had returned with Mr. E. Wittenoon, to await the arrival of Mr. Burgess. When we were all conversing in the house, and discussing some excellent sauterne, the opportunity for his successful attempt

was seized by the prisoner. He effected his escape through the good offices of a confederate friend, a civilised young black fellow, who pretended he wanted his hair cut, and got a pair of sheep shears from Mr. Wittenoon during the day for that apparent purpose, saying that the captive would cut it for him. Of course the shears were not returned, and at night the captive or his friend used them to prise open a split link of the chain which secured him, and away he went as free as a bird in the air.

I had Mr. Burgess's and Mr. Wittenoon's company to Cheangwa, and on arrival there my party had everything ready for a start. We arranged for a final meeting with our kind friends at a spring called Pia, at the far northern end of Mr. Wittenoon's run. A great number of natives were assembled round Cheangwa: this is always the case at all frontier stations, in the Australian squatting bush. Some of the girls and young women were exceedingly pretty; the men were not so attractive, but the boys were good-looking youngsters. The young ladies were exceedingly talkative; they called the camels emus, or, as they pronounced it, immu. Several of these girls declared their intention of coming with us. There were Annies, and Lizzies, Lauras, and Kittys, and Judys, by the dozen. One interesting young person in undress uniform came up to me and said, "This is Judy, I am Judy; you Melbourne walk? me Melbourne walk too!" I said, "Oh, all right, my dear;" to this she replied, "Then you'll have to gib me dress." I gave her a shirt.

When we left Cheangwa a number of the natives persisted in following us, and though we outpaced

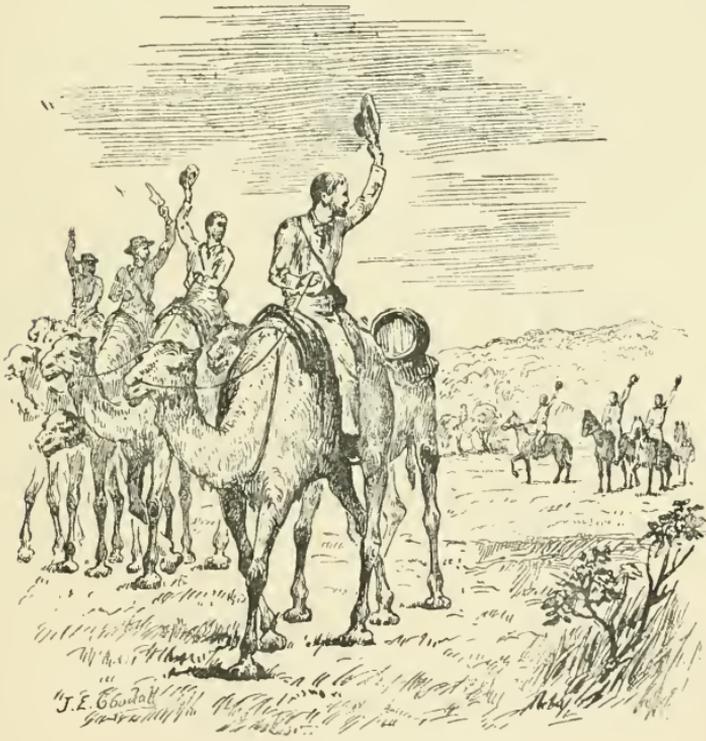
them in travelling, they stopping to hunt on the way, they found their way to the camp after us. By some of the men and boys we were led to a water-hole of some length, called Cooerminga, about eleven miles nearly north from Cheangwa. As the day was very warm, we and the natives all indulged promiscuously in the luxury of swimming, diving, and splashing about in all directions. It might be said that—

“By yon mossy boulder, see an ebony shoulder,
Dazzling the beholder, rises o'er the blue ;
But a moment's thinking, sends the Naiad sinking,
With a modest shrinking, from the gazer's view.”

The day after we crossed the dry channel of what is called the River Sandford, and at two or three miles beyond it, we were shown another water called Moodilah, six miles from our last night's encampment. We were so hampered with the girls that we did not travel very rapidly over this part of the continent. Moodilah lay a little to the east of north from Cooerminga ; Barlowerie Peak bore north 37° west from camp, the latitude of which was $27^{\circ} 11' 8''$. On Saturday, the 8th of April, we went nearly north to Pia Spring, where the following day we met for the last time, Messrs. Burgess and Wittenoon. We had some bottles of champagne cooling in canvas water-buckets, and we had an excellent lunch. The girls still remained with us, and if we liked we might have stayed to “sit with these dark Orianas in groves by the murmuring sea.”

On Sunday, the 9th of April, we all remained in peace, if not happiness, at Pia Spring ; its position

is in latitude $27^{\circ} 7'$ and longitude $116^{\circ} 30'$. The days were still very hot, and as the country produced no umbrageous trees, we had to erect awnings with tarpaulins to enable us to rest in comfort, the thermometer in the shade indicating 100° . Pia is a small granite rock-hole or basin, which contains no great supply of water, but seems to be permanently supplied by springs from below. From here Mount Murchison, near the eastern bank of the River Murchison, bore north 73° east, twenty-



FAREWELL TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

three or twenty-four miles away, and Barloweerie, behind us, bore south 48° west, eight miles.

The country belonging to Mr. Burgess and the Messrs. Wittenoon Brothers appeared to me the

best and most extensive pastoral property I had seen in Western Australia. Water is obtained in wells and springs all over the country, at a depth of four or five feet ; there are, besides, many long standing pools of rain-water on the runs. Mr. Burgess told me of a water-hole in a creek, called Natta, nine or ten miles off, where I intend to go next. On Monday, the 10th of April, we bade farewell to our two kind friends, the last white men we should see. We finished the champagne, and parted.

CHAPTER II.

FROM 10TH APRIL TO 7TH MAY, 1876.

The natives continue with us—Natta water-hole—Myriads of flies—Alec returns to Cheangwa—Bashful Tommy—Cowra man—Native customs and rites—Red granite mounds—Loads carried by women—Laura and Tommy—"Cowra" remains—Pretty amphitheatre—Mount Hale range—Flooded grassy flat—*Clianthus* or desert pea—Natives show us water—New acquaintances—Tell-tale fat—Timber of the Murchison—A water-hole—Fine vegetation—Mount Gould and Mount Hale—A new tribe of natives—Melbourne—Pretty girls brought to the camp—A picturesque place—Plague of flies—Angels' faces—Peterman—Ascend Mount Gould—A high peak—Country beautifully green—Natives less friendly—Leave Mount Gould—Saleh's ponds—Mount Labouchère—Sandalwood-trees—Native well in a thicket—An Australian scene—The Valley of the Gascoyne—Beautiful trees—A fire-brand—Stony pass—Native orange—A second anniversary—Ascent of the peak—Severe country for camels' feet—Grassy plain—The Lyon's river—Native fires—Another anniversary—A new watercourse—A turkey bustard—An extraordinary scene—Remarks upon the country.

THE harem elected to continue with us. Natta was reached in about nine miles, north-east by north from Pia. On the way we passed some excellent and occasionally flooded country, and saw some sheets of rain-water on which were numerous ducks, but our sportsmen were not so fortunate as to bag any, the birds being so exceedingly shy. I got a few afterwards, when we reached Natta.

The thermometer to-day, 96°. The country was beautifully green, and the camels beginning to show great signs of improvement. The only drawbacks to our enjoyments were the myriads of flies by day and mosquitoes at night. It now turned out that Alec Ross had forgotten something, that he wanted at Cheangwa, and we waited here until he returned. During his absence we actually got enough ducks to give us all a most excellent dinner, and some to spare for the girls, who left all the hunting to the men and boys, and remained very comfortably in the camp. Peter Nicholls was quite in his glory among them. Tommy, being a very good-looking boy, was an object of great admiration to a good many of them; but he was so bashful he wouldn't even talk to them, though they tried very hard to make love to him. Alec having returned, we left Natta on the 14th, and went about north-east by east, to a small brackish water in a little creek channel, which we reached in about fifteen miles. Here our native escort was increased by the arrival of a young black gentleman, most beautifully dressed in fat and red ochre, with many extraordinary white marks or figures all over his back; we were informed that he was a "cowra man." I had heard this expression before, and it seems it is a custom with the natives of this part of the country, like those of Fowler's and Streaky Bays on the south coast, to subject the youths of the tribe to a mutilating operation. After this they are eligible for marriage, but for a certain time, until the wounds heal, they are compelled to absent themselves from the society of women. They go about the country solitary and wretched, and continually utter a short, sharp

“cowra cry” to warn all other men to keep their women away, until the time of their probation is over. Married men occasionally go on “cowra” also, but for what reason, I do not know. The time of our new arrival, it appeared, was just up, and he seemed very glad indeed of it, for he was evidently quite a society young man, and probably belonged to one of the first families. He talked as though he knew the country in advance for hundreds of miles, and told us he intended to come with us.

The country we were now passing through was all covered with low timber, if indeed the West Australian term of thicket was not more applicable. There was plenty of grass, but as a rule the region was poor; no views could be had for any distance. I was desirous of making my way to, or near to, Mount Hale, on the Murchison River. None of our natives knew any feature beyond, by its European name. A low line of hills ran along westerly, and a few isolated patches of granite hills occurred occasionally to the east of our line of march. We reached a chain of little creeks or watercourses, and on the 15th camped at a small water-hole in latitude $26^{\circ} 46'$, and longitude about $116^{\circ} 57'$. From hence we entered thickets, and arrived at the foot of some red granite mounds, where our cowra man said there was plenty of water in a rock-hole. It turned out, however, as is usually the case with these persons, that the information was not in strict accordance with the truth, for the receptacle he showed us was exceedingly small, and the supply of water which it contained was exceedingly smaller.

Mount Murchison bore south 14° west; the lati-

tude of the camp at these rocks was $26^{\circ} 36' 8''$. A lot of stony hills lay in front of us to the north. Our Cheangwa natives, like the poor, were always with us, although I was anxious to get rid of them; they were too much of a good thing; like a Portuguese devil, when he's good he's too good. Here I thought it advisable to try to induce them to return. A good many of the girls really cried; however, by the promise of some presents of flour, tea, sugar, shirts, tobacco, red handkerchiefs, looking-glasses, &c., we managed to dry their tears. It seemed that our little friends had now nearly reached the boundary of their territories, and some of the men wanted to go back, perhaps for fear of meeting some members of hostile tribes beyond; and though the men do occasionally go beyond their own districts, they never let the women go if they can help it; but the women being under our protection, didn't care where they went. Many of them told me they would have gone, perhaps not in such poetic phrase as is found in Lallah Rookh, east, west—alas! I care not whither, so thou art safe and I with thee. It was, however, now agreed that they should return. The weight of the loads some of these slim-figured girls and young wives carried, mostly on their heads, was astonishing, especially when a good-sized child was perched astride on their shoulders as well. The men, of course, carried nothing but a few spears and sticks; they would generally stay behind to hunt or dig out game, and when obtained, leave it for the lubras or women to bring on, some of the women following their footsteps for that purpose.

The prettiest of these girls, or at least the one I

thought the prettiest, was named Laura ; she was a married young lady with one child. They were to depart on the morrow. At about eleven or twelve o'clock that night, Laura came to where my bed was fixed, and asked me to take her to see Tommy, this being her last opportunity. " You little viper," I was going to say, but I jumped up and led her quietly across the camp to where Tommy was fast asleep. I woke him up and said, " Here, Tommy, here's Laura come to say 'good-bye' to you, and she wants to give you a kiss." To this the uncultivated young cub replied, rubbing his eyes, " I don't want to kiss him, let him kiss himself!" What was gender, to a fiend like this? and how was poor Laura to be consoled?

Our cowra and a friend of his, evidently did not intend to leave us just yet ; indeed, Mr. C. gave me to understand, that whithersoever I went, he would go ; where I lodged, he would lodge ; that my people should be his people ; I suppose my God would be good enough for him ; and that he would walk with me to Melbourne. Melbourne was the only word they seemed to have, to indicate a locality remote. Our course from these rocks was nearly north, and we got into three very pretty circular spaces or amphitheatres ; round these several many-coloured and plant-festooned granite hills were placed. Round the foot of the right-hand hills, between the first and second amphitheatre, going northerly, Mr. C. showed us three or four rock water-holes, some of which, though not very large in circumference, were pretty deep, and held more than sufficient for double my number of camels. Here we outspanned for an hour and had some dinner,

much to the satisfaction of our now, only two attendants ; we had come about six miles. From a hill just above where we dined, I sighted a range to the north, and took it to be part of the Mount Hale Range ; Mount Hale itself lying more easterly, was hidden by some other hills just in front. After dinner we proceeded through, or across, the third amphitheatre, the range in front appearing thirty to forty miles away. That night we encamped in a thicket, having travelled only sixteen or seventeen miles. In a few miles, on the following day, we came on to a line of white or flood gum-trees, and thought there was a river or creek ahead of us ; but it proved only a grassy flat, with the gum-trees growing promiscuously upon it. A profusion of the beautiful Sturt, or desert-pea, or *Clianthus Damperii*, grew upon this flat. A few low, red granite hills to the north seemed to form the bank or edge of a kind of valley, and before reaching them, we struck a salt watercourse, in which our two satellites discovered, or probably knew of before, a fresh water-hole in rock and sand in the channel of the creek, with plenty of water in, where we encamped. The day was exceedingly hot, and though near the end of the hot months, our continued northerly progress made us painfully aware that we were still in the region of "sere woodlands and sad wildernesses, where, with fire, and fierce drought, on her tresses, insatiable summer oppresses." Our latitude here was $26^{\circ} 14' 50''$.

Immediately upon arrival, our cowra man and his friend seemed aware of the presence of other natives in the neighbourhood, and began to make signal smokes to induce their countrymen to ap-

proach. This they very soon did, heralding their advent with loud calls and cries, which our two answered. Although I could not actually translate what the jabber was all about, I am sure it was a continual question as to our respectability, and whether we were fit and presentable enough to be introduced into their ladies' society. The preliminaries and doubts, however, seemed at last to be overcome, and the natives then made their appearance. With them came also several of their young women, who were remarkably good-looking, and as plump as partridges; but they were a bit skeery, and evidently almost as wild as wild dogs. Our two semi-civilised barbarians induced them to come nearer, however, and apparently spoke very favourably about us, so that they soon became sociable and talkative. They were not very much dressed, their garments being composed of a very supple, dark kind of skin and hair, which was so thickly smeared over with fat and red ochre, that if any one attempted to hold them, it left a tell-tale mark of red fat all over their unthinking admirers. The following day they wanted to accompany us, but I would not permit this, and they departed; at least, we departed, and with us came two men, who would take no denial, or notice of my injunction, but kept creeping up after us every now and then. Our cowra led us by evening to a small—very small, indeed—rock-hole, in which there was scarcely sufficient water for our four followers. It took me considerably out of my road to reach it, and I was greatly disgusted when I did so. It lay nearly north-west by west from the last camp, and was in latitude $26^{\circ} 7' 9''$. Mount Hale now bore a little

to the north of east from us, and the timber of the Murchison could be seen for the first time from some hills near the camp.

I now steered nearly north-east, for about fifteen miles, until we struck the river. The country here consisted of extensive grassy flats, having several lines of gum-timber traversing it, and occasionally forming into small water-channels; the entire width of the river-bed here was between five and six miles. We went about three miles into it, and had to encamp without water, none of the channels we had passed having any in. I sent Alec Ross still further northwards, and he found a small rain water-hole two miles farther north-north-easterly; we went there on the following morning. The grass and vegetation here, were very rich, high, and green. One of the little dogs, Queenie, in running after some small game, was lost, and at night had not returned to the camp, nor was she there by the morning; but when Saleh and Tommy went for the camels, they found her with them. I did not intend to ascend Mount Hale, but pushed for Mount Gould, which bore north 55° east. After crossing the Murchison channel and flats—fine, grassy, and green—we entered thickets of mulga, which continued for fifteen miles, until we arrived on the banks of a watercourse coming from the north, towards the Murchison near Mount Hale, and traversing the country on the west side of Mount Gould. Mount Gould and Mount Hale are about twenty-two miles apart, lying nearly north-north-east and south-south-west from one another, and having the Murchison River running nearly east and west between, but almost under the northern foot of

Mount Hale. These two mounts were discovered by H. C. Gregory in 1858.

We reached the Mount Gould creek on the 22nd of April, and almost so soon as we appeared upon its banks, we flushed up a whole host of natives who were living and hunting there. There were men, women, and children in scores. There was little or no water in the many channels of the new creek; and as there appeared yet another channel near Mount Gould, we went towards it; the natives surrounding us, yelling and gesticulating in the most excited state, but they were, so to say, civil, and showed us some recent rain water in the channel at Mount Gould's foot, at which I fixed the camp. As these were the same natives or members of the same tribes, that had murdered one if not both the young Clarksons, I determined to be very guarded in my dealings with them. The men endeavoured to force their way into the camp several times. I somewhat more forcibly repelled them with a stick, which made them very angry. As a rule, very few people like being beaten with a stick, and these were no exception. They did not appear in the least degree afraid, or astonished, at the sight of the camels. When they were hobbled out several of the men not only went to look at them, but began to pull them about also, and laughed heartily and in chorus when a camel lay down for them. One or two could say a few words of English, and said, "Which way walk? You Melbourne walk?" the magic name of Melbourne being even in these people's mouths. This is to be accounted for by the fact that Mr. E. Wittenoon had returned from thence not long before, and having taken a

Cheangwa black boy with him, the latter had spread the news of the wonders he had seen in the great metropolis, to the uttermost ends of the earth.

There was not very much water where we camped, but still ample for my time. The grass and herbage here were splendid and green. When the men found I would not allow them to skulk about the camp, and apparently desired no intercourse with them, some of them brought up first one, then another, and another, and another, very pretty young girls; the men leading them by the hand and leaving them alone in the camp, and as it seemed to them that they were required to do or say something, they began to giggle. The men then brought up some very nice-looking little boys. But I informed them they might as well go; girls and boys went away together, and we saw nothing more of them that evening. This was a very pretty and picturesque place. Mount Gould rose with rough and timbered sides to a pointed ridge about two miles from the camp. The banks of the creek were shaded with pretty trees, and numerous acacia and other leguminous bushes dotted the grassy flooded lands on either side of the creek. The beauty of the place could scarcely be enjoyed, as the weather was so hot and the flies such awful plagues, that life was almost a misery, and it was impossible to obtain a moment's enjoyment of the scene. The thermometer had stood at 103° in the shade in the afternoon, and at night the mosquitoes were as numerous and almost more annoying than the flies in the day. The following day being Sunday, we rested, and at a very early hour crowds of

black men, women, boys, and children, came swarming up to the camp. But the men were not allowed to enter. There was no resisting the encroachments of the girls; they seemed out of their wits with delight at everything they saw; they danced and pirouetted about among the camels' loads with the greatest glee. Everything with them was, "What name?" They wanted to know the name of everything and everybody, and they were no wiser when they heard it. Some of these girls and boys had faces, in olive hue, like the ideal representation of angels; how such beauty could exist amongst so poor a grade of the human race it is difficult to understand, but there it was. Some of the men were good-looking, but although they had probably been beautiful as children, their beauty had mostly departed. There were several old women at the camp. They were not beautiful, but they were very quiet and retiring, and seemed to feel gratification at the pleasures the young ones enjoyed. Sometimes they would point out some pretty girl or boy and say it was hers, or hers; they were really very like human beings, though of course no one can possibly be a real human being who does not speak English. A custom among the natives here is to cicatrise in parallel horizontal lines the abdomens of the female portion of the community. The scars of the old being long healed left only faint raised lines, intended to hide any natural corrugations; this in a great measure it did, but the younger, especially those lately operated on, had a very unsightly appearance. Surely these people cannot deem these the lines of beauty. These young ladies were much pleased at beholding their pretty faces in a looking-

glass for the first time. They made continual use of the word "Peterman." This was a word I had first heard from the natives of the Rawlinson Range, upon my last horse expedition of 1874. It seems to signify, where are you going? or where have you come from? or something to that effect; and from the fact of their using it, it appears that they must speak the same language as the natives of the Rawlinson, which is over 600 miles away to the eastward, and is separated from their territory by a vast and dreary desert. The day was again distressingly hot; the thermometer in the afternoon rising to 104° in the shade, which so late in April is something extraordinary. The girls seemed greatly to enjoy sitting in the fine shade made by our awnings. The common house-fly swarmed about us in thousands of decillions, and though we were attended by houris, I at least did not consider myself in Paradise. The latitude of this camp was $25^{\circ} 46' 37''$, and longitude $117^{\circ} 25'$. Next day Alec Ross and I climbed to the top of Mount Gould; this was rather rough work, the height being between 1100 and 1200 feet above the surrounding country, and 2600 feet above the sea level. The country immediately to the eastward was flat and grassy, but with the exception of a few miles from the foot of the mount, which was open and clear, the whole region, though flat, is thickly covered with mulga or thickets; this, in Western Australian parlance, is called a plain. Mount Hale appeared much higher than this hill.

The only other conspicuous object in view was a high peak to the north-north-east. The timber of the River Murchison could be traced for some miles as coming from the eastwards, and sweeping under

the northern foot of Mount Hale. The creek the camp is situated on came from the north-east. The creek we first saw the natives on, comes from the north, and the two join before reaching the Murchison. Mount Gould is almost entirely composed of huge blocks of almost pure iron, which rendered the compass useless. The creek the camp is on appears to come from some low hills to the north-eastwards, and on leaving this place I shall follow it up. Some recent rains must have fallen in this neighbourhood, for the whole country is beautifully green. The flies at the camp to-day were, if possible, even more numerous than before. They infest the whole air; they seem to be circumambient; we can't help eating, drinking, and breathing flies; they go down our throats in spite of our teeth, and we wear them all over our bodies; they creep up one's clothes and die, and others go after them to see what they died of. The instant I inhale a fly it acts as an emetic. And if Nature abhors a vacuum, she, or at least my nature, abhors these wretches more, for the moment I swallow one a vacuum is instantly produced. Their bodies are full of poisonous matter, and they have a most disgusting flavour, though they taste sweet. They also cause great pains and discomfort to our eyes, which are always full of them. Probably, if the flies were not here, we might think we were overrun with ants; but the flies preponderate; the ants merely come as undertakers and scavengers; they eat up or take away all we smash, and being attracted by the smell of the dead victims, they crawl over everything after their prey. The natives appear far less friendly to-day, and no young houris have visited us. Many

of the men have climbed into trees in the immediate neighbourhood of the camp, not being allowed in, and are continually peering down at us and our doings, and reporting all our movements to their associates. At our meal-times they seem especially watchful, and anxious to discover what it is we eat, and where it comes from. Some come occasionally creeping nearer to our shady home for a more extensive view. Wistfully gazing they come—

“ And they linger a minute,
Like those lost souls who wait,
Viewing, through heaven’s gate,
Angels within it.”

By the morning of the following day I was very glad to find that the natives had all departed. Saleh and Tommy were away after the camels, and had been absent so many hours that I was afraid these people might have unhobbled the camels and driven them off, or else attacked the two who were after them. We waited, therefore, for their return in great anxiety, hour after hour. As they only took one gun besides their revolvers, I was afraid they might not be able to sustain an attack, if the natives set upon them. After the middle of the day they turned up, camels and all, which put an end to our fears.

We departed from Mount Gould late in the day, and travelled up the creek our camp was on, and saw several small ponds of clear rain-water, but at the spot where we camped, after travelling fifteen miles, there was none. Mount Gould bore south 56° west from camp. The travelling for about twenty miles up the creek was pretty good. At

twenty-seven miles we came to the junction with another creek, where a fine permanent rocky pool of fresh water, with some good-sized fish in it, exists. I named this fine watering-place Saleh's Fish-ponds, after my Afghan camel-driver, who was really a first-rate fellow, without a lazy bone in his body. The greatest requirement of a camel caravan, is some one to keep the saddles in repair, and so avert sore backs. Saleh used to do this admirably, and many times in the deserts and elsewhere I have known him to pass half the night at this sort of work. The management of the camels, after one learns the art, is simple enough; they are much easier to work than a mob of pack-horses; but keeping the saddles right is a task of the hardest nature. In consequence of Saleh's looking after ours so well, we never had any trouble with sore-backed camels, thus escaping a misfortune which in itself might wreck a whole caravan. We kept on farther up our creek, and at a place we selected for a camp we got some water by digging in the channel at a depth of only a few inches in the sandy bed. The country now on both sides of the creek was both stony and scrubby. Following it up, at ten miles farther, we reached its head amongst the mass of hills which, by contributing lesser channels, combine to form its source. Here we re-sighted the high-peaked mount first seen from Mount Gould, and I decided to visit it. It is most probably the mountain seen from a distance by H. C. Gregory, and named by him Mount Labouchère. We were now among a mass of dreadfully rough and broken hills, which proved very severe to the camels' feet, as they had continually to descend into and rise

again out of, sharp gullies, the stones being nearly up-edged. The going up and down these short, sharp, and sometimes very deep, stony undulations, is a performance that these excellent animals are not specially adapted for. Heavily-loaded camels have only a rope crupper under their tails to keep the saddles and loads on, and in descending these places, when the animals feel the crupper cutting them, some of them would skip and buck, and get some of their loading off, and we had a great deal of trouble in consequence.

Both yesterday and to-day, the 27th of April, we saw several stunted specimens of the sandal-wood-tree of commerce, *santalum*. In the afternoon, getting over the highest part of the hills, the country fell slightly towards the north, and we reached a small creek with gum-trees on it, running to the north-north-west; it was quite dry; no rain appeared to have visited it or the country surrounding it for centuries. As the sharp stones had not agreed with the camels, we encamped upon it, although we could get no water. The latitude of our camp on this dry creek was $25^{\circ} 19'$. The flies and heat were still terrible. Leaving the creek and steering still for the high peak of Mount Labouchère, we came, at thirteen miles, upon a native well in the midst of a grassy flat among thickets. The peak bore $6^{\circ} 30'$ east of north from it. This well appeared to have been dug out of calcareous soil. We did not use it, but continued our journey over and through, both stony and occasionally sandy thickets, to some low hills which rose before us to the north. On ascending these, a delightful and truly Australian scene was presented to our view,

for before us lay the valley of the Gascoyne River. This valley is three or four miles wide, and beautifully green. It is bounded on the north, north-easterly, and north-westerly, by abrupt-faced ranges of hills, while down through the centre of the grassy plain stretch serpentine lines of vigorous eucalyptus-trees, pointing out the channels of the numerous watercourses into which the river splits. The umbrageous and evergreen foliage of the tops, the upright, creamy white stems of these elegant gum-trees, contrasted remarkably and agreeably with the dull and sombre hues of the treeless hills that formed the background, and the enamelled and emerald earth that formed the groundwork of the scene. We lost no time in descending from the hills to the beautiful flat below, and discovered a fine long reach of water in the largest channel, where there were numbers of wild ducks. The water was slightly brackish in taste. It appeared to continue for a considerable distance upon either hand, both east and west. The herbage was exceedingly fine and green, and it was a most excellent place for an encampment. The trees formed the greatest charm of the scene; they were so beautifully white and straight. It could not be said of this place that—

“The gnarled, knotted trunks Eucalyptian,
Seemed carved like weird columns Egyptian;
With curious device, quaint inscription,
And hieroglyph strange.”

The high Mount Labouchère bore $8^{\circ} 20'$ east of north, the latitude was $25^{\circ} 3'$, longitude $117^{\circ} 59'$, and the variation $4^{\circ} 28'$ west. The wind blew

fiercely from the east, and seemed to betoken a change in the weather. From a hill to the north of us we could see that small watercourses descended from low hills to the north and joined the river at various points, one of which, from a north-easterly direction, I shall follow. The country in that direction seemed very rough and stony. We shot a number of ducks and pigeons here. No natives came near us, although Saleh picked up a burning fire-stick close to the camp, dropped by some wandering savage, who had probably taken a very keen scrutiny and mental photograph of us all, so as to enable him to give his fellow-barbarians a full, true, and particular account of the wild and hideous beings who had invaded their territory. The water-hole was nearly three miles long; no other water was to be found in any of the other channels in the neighbourhood. We have seen no other native game here than ducks and pigeons. We noticed large areas of ground on the river flats, which had not only been dug, but re-dug, by the natives, and it seems probable that a great portion of their food consists of roots and vegetables. I remained here two days, and then struck over to the creek before mentioned as coming from the north-east. At eight miles it ran through a rough stony pass between the hills. A few specimens of the native orange-tree, capparid, were seen. We encamped in a very rough glen without water. The country is now a mass of jumbled stones. Still pushing for the peak, we moved slowly over hills, down valleys, and through many rocky passes; generally speaking, the caravan could proceed only along the beds of the trumpery watercourses. By the middle of the 1st of May,

the second anniversary of the day I crawled into Fort McKellar, after the loss of Gibson, we crawled up to the foot of Mount Labouchère; it seemed very high, and was evidently very rough and steep. Alec Ross and Saleh ascended the mount in the afternoon, and all the satisfaction they got, was their trouble, for it was so much higher than any of its surroundings that everything beyond it seemed flattened, and nothing in particular could be seen. It is composed of a pink and whitish-coloured granite, with quantities of calcareous stone near its base, and it appears to have been formed by the action of submarine volcanic force. No particular hills and no watercourses could be seen in any northerly direction. The Gascoyne River could be traced by its valley trend for twenty-five or thirty miles eastwards, and it is most probable that it does not exist at all at fifty miles from where we crossed it. The elevation of this mountain was found to be 3400 feet above sea level, and 1800 feet above the surrounding country. The latitude of this feature is $24^{\circ} 44'$, and its longitude $118^{\circ} 2'$, it lying nearly north of Mount Churchman, and distant 330 miles from it. There were no signs of water anywhere, nor could any places to hold it be seen. It was very difficult to get a camel caravan over such a country. The night we encamped here was the coolest of the season; the thermometer on the morning of the 2nd indicated 48° . On the stony hills we occasionally saw stunted specimens of the scented commercial sandal-wood and native orange-trees. Leaving the foot of this mountain with pleasure, we went away as north-easterly as we could, towards a line of hills with a gap or pass in

that direction. We found a small watercourse trending easterly, and in it I discovered a pool of clear rain-water, all among stones. We encamped, although it was a terribly rough place. Arriving at, and departing from, Mount Labouchère has made some of the camels not only very tender-footed, but in consequence of the stony layers lying so up-edged, has cut some of them so badly that the caravan might be tracked by a streak of blood on the stones over which we have passed. This was not so much from the mere stones, but from the camels getting their feet wedged into clefts and dragging them forcibly out. Some were so fortunate as to escape without a scratch. We made very little distance to-day, as our camp is not more than five miles from the summit of the mountain, which bore south 61° west from us. We rested at this little pond for a day, leaving it again upon the 4th.

Following the watercourse we were encamped upon, it took us through a pass, among the rough hills lying north-easterly. So soon as we cleared the pass, the creek turned northerly, and ran away over a fine piece of grassy plain, which was a kind of valley, between two lines of hills running east and west, the valley being of some width. The timber of the creek fell off here, and the watercourse seemed to exhaust itself upon the valley in a westerly direction, but split into two or three channels before ending, if, indeed, it does end here, which I doubt, as I believe this valley and creek, form the head of the Lyons River, as no doubt the channel forms again and continues its course to the west. To-day on our journey I noticed some native poplar-trees. We left all the water-channels on our left hand, and

proceeded north across the plain, towards a low part or fall, between two ranges that run along the northern horizon. The valley consists of grassy flats, though somewhat thickly timbered with mulga. Some natives' fires were observed in the hills on our line of march. That night we encamped without water, in a low part of the hills, after travelling nineteen or twenty miles. The night became very cloudy, and so was the next morning. We had more rough, stony, and scrubby hills to traverse. At six miles we got over these and down into another valley, but even in this, the country was all scrub and stones. We encamped at a dry gum-creek, where there was good herbage and bushes for the camels; but the whole region being so rough, it does not please either us or the camels at all. They can't get soft places to stand on while they are feeding, nor are their sleeping places like feather-beds either. At night a very slight sprinkling of rain fell for a minute or two.

May the 6th was the anniversary of the departure of the caravan from Beltana in South Australia, whither we were now again endeavouring to force our way by a new line. More hills, rough and wretched, were travelled over to-day. In five miles we got to a new watercourse, amongst the hills, which seemed inclined to go north-easterly, so we followed it. It meandered about among the hills and through a pass, but no water was seen, though we were anxiously looking for it at every turn. Alec shot a wild turkey or bustard to-day. After going thirteen or fourteen miles, and finding no water, I camped, and as we had none for ourselves, I sent Alec Ross, Saleh, and Tommy into the hills with

the camels to a place about ten miles back, where I had seen a small native well. They returned the following day, having found a good-sized water-hole, and brought a supply to the camp. The last two nights were cloudy, and I could get no observations for latitude. While the camels were away I ascended a hill close by the camp; the scene was indeed most extraordinary, bald and abrupt hills, mounts, and ranges being thrown up in all directions; they resemble the billows of a tempestuous ocean suddenly solidified into stone, or as though a hundred thousand million Pelions had been upon as many million Ossas hurled, and as though the falling masses, with superincumbent weight, falling, flattened out the summits of the mountains low but great.

Our creek, as well as I could determine, seemed to be joined by others in its course north-easterly. I was surprised to find a creek running in that direction, expecting rather to find the fall of the whole region to the opposite point, as we are now in the midst of the hill-country that forms the watershed, that sends so many rivers into the sea on the west coast. The hills forming these water-sheds are almost uniformly composed of granite, and generally lie in almost parallel lines, nearly east and west. They are mostly flat-topped, and at various points present straight, rounded, precipitous, and corrugated fronts, to the astonished eyes that first behold them. A few small water-channels rise among them, and these, joining others of a similar kind, gather strength and volume sufficient to form the channels of larger watercourses, which eventually fall into some other, dignified by the name of a river, and eventually discharge themselves into the sea.

Between the almost parallel lines of hills are hollows or narrow valleys, which are usually as rough and stony as the tops of the hills themselves ; and being mostly filled with scrubs and thickets, it is as dreadful a region for the traveller to gaze upon as can well be imagined ; it is impossible to describe it. There is little or no permanent water in the whole region ; a shower occasionally falls here and there, and makes a small flood in one or other of the numerous channels ; but this seems to be all that the natives of this part of the country have to depend upon. If there were any large waters, we must come upon them by signs, or instinct, if not by chance. The element of chance is not so great here as in hidden and shrouded scrubs, for here we can ascend the highest ground, and any leading feature must instantly be discovered. The leading features here are not the high, but the low grounds, not the hills, but the valleys, as in the lowest ground the largest watercourses must be found. Hence we follow our present creek, as it must run into a larger one. I know the Ashburton is before us, and not far off now ; and as it is the largest river ? in Western Australia, it must occupy the largest and lowest valley. The number of inhabitants of this region seems very limited ; we have met none, an occasional smoke in the distance being the only indication of their existence. In the hot months of the year this region must be vile in the extreme, and I consider myself most fortunate in having the cool season before me to traverse it in. It is stony, sterile, and hideous, and totally unsuited for the occupation or habitation of the white man.

CHAPTER III.

FROM 7TH MAY TO 10TH JUNE, 1876.

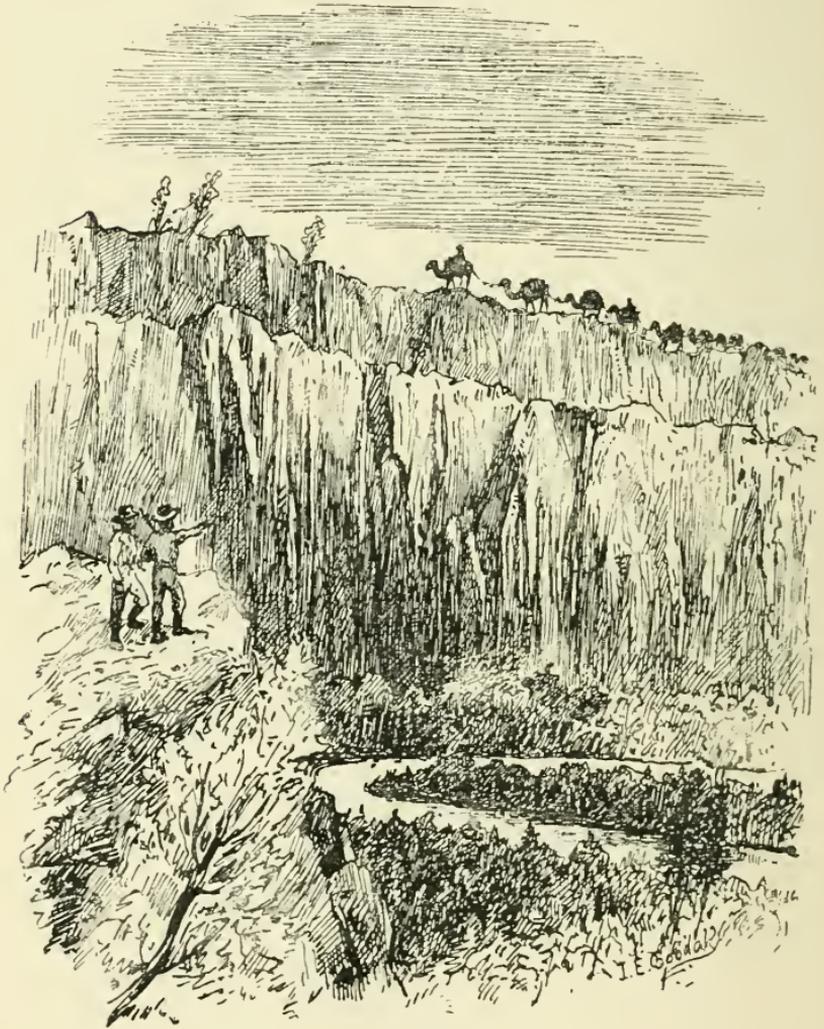
Depart for higher ground—Rainfalls—Ophthalmia—Romantic glen—Glen Ross—Camels on the down grade—Larger creek—The Ashburton—No natives—Excellent bushes for camels—A strange spot—Junction of several creeks—Large snake—Grand Junction Depot—A northerly journey—Milk thistle—Confined glen—Pool of water—Blind with ophthalmia—Leading the blind—Dome-like masses—Mount Robinson and The Governor—Ophthalmia range—Rocky spring—Native fig-trees—A glen full of water—Camels nearly drowned—Scarcity of living things—And of water—Continued plague of flies—A pretty view—Tributaries join—Nicholls's Fish Ponds—Characteristics of watering places—Red hill—Another spring—Unvarying scene—Frost, thermometer 28° —A bluff hill—Gibson's Desert again—Remarks upon the Ashburton—The desert's edge—Barren and wretched region—Low ridges and spinifex—Deep native well—Thermometer 18° —Salt bush and acacia flats—A rocky cleft—Sandhills in sight—Enter the desert—The solitary caravan—Severe ridges of sand—Camels poisoned in the night—In doubt, and resolved—Water by digging—More camels attacked—A horrible and poisonous region—Variable weather—Thick ice—A deadly Upas-tree.

THOUGH the camels returned early from where the water was found, some of them required a rest on the soft ground on the banks of the creek, and as there were good bushes here also, we remained for the rest of the day. The night set in very close and oppressive, and a slight rain fell. On the morning of May the 8th there was some appearance

of more rain, and as we were camped upon ground liable to be flooded, I decided to be off at once to some higher ground, which we reached in about two miles down the creek. While we were packing up, and during the time we were travelling, the rain came down sufficiently heavily to wet us all thoroughly. We got to the side of a stony hill, put up our tents and tarpaulins, and then enjoyed the rain exceedingly, except that our senses of enjoyment were somewhat blunted, for all of us had been attacked with ophthalmia for several days previously. Livingstone remarks in one of his works that, in Africa, attacks of ophthalmia generally precede rain. The rain fell occasionally throughout the remainder of the day and during the night. "All night long, in fitful pauses, falling far, but faint and fine." By the next morning it had flooded the small lateral channels; this, however, caused a very slight trickling down the channel of the larger creek. The following day was windy and cloudy, but no more rain fell; about an inch and a half had fallen altogether. We remained in camp to-day, and dried all our things. The position of the camp was in latitude $24^{\circ} 12' 8''$, and longitude about $118^{\circ} 20'$.

On the 10th of May we left, still following our creek about east-north-east. We have had a line of hills to the north of us for some distance, but now at five miles this fell off, and some other hills on the south, running up close to the creek, turned its course up to the north, and in two or three miles it ran into a most picturesque and romantic glen, which had now a rushing torrent roaring through its centre. Here no doubt some permanent water exists, as we not only saw great quantities of mussel

shells at deserted native camps, but Alec Ross saw a large rocky water reservoir in the glen, in which were quantities of good-sized fish. The camels



GLEN ROSS.

could not pass through this glen, it was too rocky ; they therefore had to travel along the top of a precipice of red and white granite, that overlooked it on the eastern side. The noise of waters rushing

over the rocky bottom of this stone-bound glen, was music sweet, and sound melodious, to ears like ours, so unaccustomed to the beautiful cadences of Nature's pure and soothing voice. The atmosphere was pure and clear, the breeze fresh, the temperature such as man may enjoy; and this was one of those few and seldom-met-with, places where the wanderer's eye may rest for a moment with pleasure as it scans the scene around. The verdure of the glen, the bright foliage of the trees that lined the banks of the stream below, the sparkling water as it danced and glittered in the sunlight, the slow and majestic motion of the passing caravan, as it wound so snake-like along the top of the precipitous wall, combined with the red and white colouring of the rifted granite of which it is composed, formed a picture framed in the retina of his eye, which is ever pleasing to the traveller to remember, and a pleasure also to describe. I have named this pretty place Glen Ross, after my young friend Alec. We got the caravan easily enough up on top of the wall, the difficulty was to get it down again. A very steep place had to be negotiated, and we were more than an hour in descending to ground not a hundred yards below us. Camels are not designed for going down places of this kind, with loads on; but they have so many other splendid qualities, that I cannot censure them for not possessing the faculty of climbing like cats or monkeys.

From a hill near the mouth of this glen it could be seen that this creek ran into a much larger one, in the course of three or four miles. There also appeared a kind of valley in which the new creek lay; it and its valley seemed to run east and west.

On arrival at this new feature the following morning, I found the channel very broad and sandy-bedded, with fine vigorous eucalyptus timber growing upon either bank. I was at once certain that this new feature was the upper portion of the Ashburton River, which enters the sea upon the west coast. It has always been supposed to be the largest river in Western Australia. No traveller had ever reached so high a point up it previously ; of course its flow was to the west. Only a small stream of water was running down its bed, caused no doubt by the late rains. The valley down which it runs is so confined and stony, that no sufficient areas of country suitable for occupation can be had on it, in this neighbourhood. Its course was nearly from the east, and we followed along its banks. In the immediate neighbourhood there was very fine grass and herbage. I struck it in latitude $24^{\circ} 5'$, and longitude $118^{\circ} 30'$. A branch creek joins it from the north-east at nine miles. I encamped upon it for the first time on the 11th of May. In our progress up this river—I use the term in its Australian sense, for at this portion the Ashburton might be termed a dry river only—we found a slight stream of water trickling along its bed. The banks are low, the bed is broad. We had to travel mainly in the sandy bed, as this proved the best travelling ground in general, the valley being both narrow and stony. On the second day it appeared that the only water that ran down the bed came from another creek, which joined from the south ; above that spot the Ashburton channel was quite dry, although we occasionally found small ponds of water in the sand here and there. At night, on the 12th, there was

none where we camped ; the river still ran nearly east and west. That hideous and objectionable vegetation, the *Triodia irritans*, or spinifex, was prevalent even in places where the waters sometimes flowed. We have had plenty of this enemy ever since we left Mount Gould. No natives were seen, or appear to exist here. A few strips of good country occur occasionally on the banks of the river, but not in areas of sufficient extent to be of any use for occupation. Neither man, beast, bird, nor fish was to be seen, only an odd and apparently starving crow was occasionally heard. As we travelled farther up the river, there was even less appearance of rain having fallen ; but the grass and herbage is green and fresh, and it may be it was visited by rains previously. There are excellent acacia and other leguminous bushes for the camels.

On the 13th of May we came to a very strange spot, where a number of whitish, flat-topped hills hemmed in the river, and where the conjunction of three or four other creeks occurred with the Ashburton, which now appeared to come from the south, its tributaries coming from the east and north-east. On the most northerly channel, Peter Nicholls shot a very large snake ; it was nearly nine feet long, was a foot round the girth, and weighed nearly fifty pounds. It was a perfect monster for Australia. Had we been without food, what a godsend it would have been to us ! It would have made two or three good meals for the whole party. I called this place the Grand Junction Depot, as the camp was not moved from there for thirteen days. The position of the camp at this Grand Junction was in latitude $94^{\circ} 6' 8''$, and longi-

tude 119°. At this time I had a second attack of ophthalmia ; but on the 15th, thinking I was recovering, I went away in company with Alec Ross to penetrate as far north as the 23rd parallel of latitude, as I was in hopes of finding some new hills or ranges in that locality that might extend for a distance eastwards. We took four camels with us, three being the same animals which Alec and I took when we found the Boundary Dam.

Leaving the depot, we went up the most easterly of the creeks that came in at the Grand Junction. In its channel I saw some of the milk or sow-thistle plant growing—the *Sonchus oleraceus*. I have met this plant in only four places during my explorations. The trend of the creek was nearly from the east-north-east. At six miles the gum-timber disappeared from the creek, and the channel being confined by hills, we were in a kind of glen, with plenty of running water to splash through. A great quantity of tea-tree—*Malaleuca*—grew in the creek bed. There we saw another large snake, but not of such dimensions as Nicholls's victim. At ten miles up from the depot the glen ceased, and the creek ran through a country more open on the north bank. We camped at about twenty miles. During the day we saw some native poplars, quandong, or native peach, cappariss, or native orange, and a few scented sandal-wood-trees ; nearly all of these different kinds of trees were very stunted in their growth. At night my eyes were so much inflamed and so painful with ophthalmia, that I could scarcely see. The next day we steered north-north-east, the ground being very stony and bad for travelling.

We passed some low hills at seven or eight miles, and at twenty-one we encamped in a dry, stony creek channel. The following day the country was almost identical in its nature, only that we found a small pool of water at night in a creek, our course being still the same. My eyes had been so bad all day, I was in agony; I had no lotion to apply to them. At length I couldn't see at all, and Alec Ross had to lead the camels, with mine tied behind them. I not only couldn't see, I couldn't open my eyes, and had no idea where I was going. That day Alec sighted a range of somewhat high hills to our left; he next saw another range having rounded, dome-like masses about it, and this lay across our path. Alec ascended one of the hills, and informed me that he saw an extensive mass of hills and ranges in every direction but the east. To the north they extended a great distance, but they rose into the highest points at two remarkable peaks to the north-west, and these, although I cannot be certain exactly where they are situated, I have named respectively Mount Robinson and The Governor, in the hope that these designations will remain as lasting memorials of the intelligent and generous interest displayed by Governor Robinson in the exploration of the province under his sway. The country to the east is all level; no ranges whatever appear in that direction. From what Alec saw and described to me, it was evident that we were upon the edge of the desert, as if the ranges ceased to the east, it was not likely that any watercourses could exist without them. No watercourses could be seen in any direction, except that from which we had come. It was a great dis-

appointment to me to get such information, as I had hoped to discover some creeks or rivers that might carry me some distance farther eastward ; but now it was evident they did not exist. I called this range, whose almost western end Alec ascended, Ophthalmia Range, in consequence of my suffering so much from that frightful malady. I could not take any observations, and I cannot be very certain where this range lies. I wanted to reach the 23rd parallel, but as the country looked so gloomy and forbidding farther north, it was useless plunging for only a few miles more into such a smashed and broken region. By careful estimate it was quite fair to assume that we had passed the Tropic of Capricorn by some miles, as my estimated latitude here was $23^{\circ} 15'$, and longitude about $119^{\circ} 37'$. I was in such pain that I ordered an instant retreat, my only desire being to get back to the depot and repose in the shade.

This was the 18th of May, and though the winter season ought to have set in, and cool weather should have been experienced, yet we had nothing of the kind, but still had to swelter under the enervating rays of the burning sun of this shadeless land ; and at night, a sleeping-place could only be obtained by removing stones, spinifex, and thorny vegetation from the ground. The latter remark, it may be understood, does not apply to only this one place or line of travel ; it was always the case. After returning for a few miles on our outgoing tracks, Alec found a watercourse that ran south-westerly, and as it must eventually fall into the Ashburton, we followed it. In travelling down its course on the 22nd the creek became enclosed by

hills on either side, and we found an extraordinary rocky spring. The channel of the creek dropped suddenly down to a lower level, which, when in flood, must no doubt form a splendid cascade. Now a person could stand on a vast boulder of granite and look down at the waters, as they fell in little sprays from the springs that supplied the spot; the small streams rushing out from among the fissures of the broken rocks, and all descending into a fine basin below. To Alec's eyes was this romantic scene displayed. The rocks above, below, and around, were fringed and decked with various vegetations; shrubs and small trees ornamented nearly the whole of the surrounding rocks, amongst which the native fig-tree, *Ficus platypoda*, was conspicuous. It must have been a very pretty place. I could hear the water rushing and splashing, but could not see anything. It appeared also that the water ran out of the basin below into the creek channel, which goes on its course apparently through or into a glen. I describe this peculiar freak of nature from what Alec told me; I hope my description will not mislead others. Soon after we found that this was the case, as we now entered an exceedingly rough and rocky glen full of water—at least so it appeared to Alec, who could see nothing but water as far down as he could look. At first the water was between three and four feet deep; the farther we went the deeper the water became. Could any one have seen us we must have presented a very novel sight, as the camels got nearly up to their humps in water, and would occasionally refuse to go on; they would hang back, break their nose-ropes, and then lie quietly down until they were nearly drowned. We

had to beat and pull them up the best way we could. It was rather disagreeable for a blind man to slip off a camel up to his neck in cold water, and, lifting up his eyelids with both hands, try to see what was going on. Having, however, gone so far, we thought it best to continue, as we expected the glen to end at any turn ; but the water became so deep that Alec's riding cow Buzoe, being in water deep enough for her to swim in, if she could swim, refused to go any farther, and thought she would like to lie down. This she tried, but the water was too deep for her to keep her head above it, and after being nearly smothered she got up again—

“ And now to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wand'ers' ken,
Unless they climb, with footing nice,
A far-projecting precipice.”

It would be out of all propriety to expect a camel to climb a precipice ; fortunately at a few yards further a turn of the glen showed Alec a place on the southern bank where a lot of rocks had fallen down. It was with the greatest difficulty we got to it, and with still greater that at last we reached the top of the cliff, and said good-bye to this watery glen. Our clothes, saddles, blankets, and food were soaked to a pulp. We could not reach the depot that night, but did so early on the following day. I called this singular glen in which the camels were nearly drowned, Glen Camel.

No natives had visited the camp, nor had any living thing, other than flies, been seen, while we were away, except a few pigeons. The camp at this depot was fixed on the soft, sandy bed of the

Ashburton, close to the junction of the east creek, which Alec and I had followed up. It had been slightly flooded by the late rains, and two open ponds of clear water remained in the bed of the Ashburton. It seems probable that water might always be procured here by digging, but it is certainly not always visible on the surface. Once or twice before reaching the depot, we saw one or two places with dried-up bulrushes growing in the bed, and water may have existed there in the sand. In consequence of my eyes being so bad, we remained here for the next two days. The heat and the flies were dreadful; and the thermometer indicated 93° one day and 95° the next, in the shade. It was impossible to get a moment's peace or rest from the attacks of the flies; the pests kept eating into our eyes, which were already bad enough. This seemed to be the only object for which these wretches were invented and lived, and they also seemed to be quite ready and willing to die, rather than desist a moment from their occupation. Everybody had an attack of the blight, as ophthalmia is called in Australia, which with the flies were enough to set any one deranged. Every little sore or wound on the hands or face was covered by them in swarms; they scorned to use their wings, they preferred walking to flying; one might kill them in millions, yet other, and hungrier millions would still come on, rejoicing in the death of their predecessors, as they now had not only men's eyes and wounds to eat, but could batten upon the bodies of their slaughtered friends also. Strange to say, we were not troubled here with ants; had we been, we should only have required a few spears stuck into us to complete our

happiness. A very pretty view was to be obtained from the summit of any of the flat-topped hills in this neighbourhood, and an area of nearly 100 square miles of excellent country might be had here.

On Friday, the 26th of May, we left the depot at this Grand Junction. The river comes to this place from the south for some few miles. In ten miles we found that it came through a low pass, which hems it in for some distance. Two or three tributaries joined, and above them its bed had become considerably smaller than formerly. At about eighteen miles from the depot we came upon a permanent water, fed by springs, which fell into a fine rock reservoir, and in this, we saw many fish disporting themselves in their pure and pellucid pond. Several of the fishes were over a foot long. The water was ten or more feet deep. A great quantity of tea-tree, Malaleuca, grew in the river-bed here; indeed, our progress was completely stopped by it, and we had to cut down timber for some distance to make a passage for the camels before we could get past the place, the river being confined in a glen. Peter Nicholls was the first white man who ever saw this extraordinary place, and I have called it Nicholls's Fish Ponds after him. It will be noticed that the characteristics of the only permanent waters in this region are rocky springs and reservoirs, such as Saleh's Fish Ponds, Glen Ross, Glen Camel, and Nicholls's Fish Ponds will show. More junctions occurred in this neighbourhood, and it was quite evident that the main river could not exist much farther, as immediately above every tributary its size became manifestly reduced.

On the 27th of May we camped close to a red hill on the south bank of the river; just below it, was another spring, at which a few reeds and some bulrushes were growing. The only views from any of the hills near the river displayed an almost unvarying scene; low hills near the banks of the river, and some a trifle higher in the background. The river had always been in a confined valley from the time we first struck it, and it was now more confined than ever. On the morning of the 28th of May we had a frost for the first time this year, the thermometer indicating 28°. To-day we crossed several more tributaries, mostly from the north side; but towards evening the river split in two, at least here occurred the junction of two creeks of almost equal size, and it was difficult to determine which was the main branch. I did not wish to go any farther south, therefore I took the more northerly one; its trend, as our course for some days past had been, was a good deal south of east; indeed, we have travelled about east-south-east since leaving the depot. In the upper portions of the river we found more water in the channel than we had done lower down; perhaps more rain had fallen in these hills.

By the 29th, the river or creek-channel had become a mere thread; the hills were lowering, and the country in the glen and outside was all stones and scrub. We camped at a small rain-water hole about a mile and a half from a bluff hill, from whose top, a few stunted gum-trees could be seen a little farther up the channel. Having now run the Ashburton up to its head, I could scarcely expect to find any more water before entering Gibson's Desert, which I felt sure commences here. So far as I

knew, the next water was in the Rawlinson Range of my former horse expedition, a distance of over 450 miles. And what the nature of the country between was, no human being knew, at least no civilised human being. I was greatly disappointed to find that the Ashburton River did not exist for a greater distance eastwards than this, as when I first struck it, it seemed as though it would carry me to the eastwards for hundreds of miles. I had followed it only eighty or a trifle more, and now it was a thing of the past. It may be said to rise from nowhere, being like a vast number of Australian rivers, merely formed in its lower portions by the number of tributaries that join it. There are very few pretty or romantic places to be seen near it. The country and views at the Grand Junction Depot form nearly the only exceptions met. From that point the river decreased in size with every branch creek that joined it, and now it had decreased to nothing. No high ranges form its head. The hills forming its water-shed become gradually lower as we approach its termination, or rather beginning, at the desert's edge. The desert's edge is a raised plateau of over 2000 feet above the sea-level—the boiling point of water being $208^{\circ} = 2049$ feet—and being about 350 miles in a straight line from where the Ashburton debouches into the sea. My camp upon the evening of the 29th of May, a little westward of the bluff-faced hill before mentioned, was in latitude $24^{\circ} 25'$ and longitude $119^{\circ} 58'$. We remained here during the 30th. The horizon to the east was formed by a mass of low ranges; from them we saw that several diminutive watercourses ran into our exhausted channel. I could not expect

that any hills would extend much farther to the east, or that I should now obtain any water much farther in that direction. A line of low ridges ran all round the eastern horizon, and another bluff-faced hill lay at the south-west end of them. The whole region had a most barren and wretched appearance, and there was little or no vegetation of any kind that the camels cared to eat. Feeling certain that I should now almost immediately enter the desert, as the explorer can scent it from afar, I had all our water-vessels filled, as fortunately there was sufficient water for the purpose, so that when we leave this camp we shall not be entirely unprepared.

The morning of the 31st of May was again cold, the thermometer falling to 27° , and we had a sharp frost. I was truly delighted to welcome this long-expected change, and hoped the winter or cool season had set in at last. This day we travelled east, and went over low, rough ridges and stony spinifex hills for several miles. At about eleven miles, finding a dry water-channel, which, however, had some good camel shrubs upon its banks, we encamped in latitude $24^{\circ} 28'$, being still among low ridges, where no definite view could be obtained. On June the 1st we travelled nearly east-north-east towards another low ridge. The ground became entirely covered with spinifex, and I thought we had entered the desert in good earnest; but at about six miles we came upon a piece of better country with real grass, being much more agreeable to look at. Going on a short distance we came upon a dry water-channel, at which we found a deep native well with bitter water in it. We encamped in latitude

24° 24'. The night and following morning were exceedingly cold—the thermometer fell to 18°.

We had not yet reached the low ridge, but arrived at it in two miles on the morning of the 2nd. From it another low ridge bore 23° north of east; and I decided to travel thither.

To-day we had a good deal of country covered with ironstone gravel; we passed a few grassy patches with, here and there, some salt bush and acacia flats; there were also many desert shrubs and narrow thickets. The camp was fixed nearly under the brow of the ridge we had steered for, and it was quite evident, though a few ridges yet appeared for a short distance farther east, that we had at length reached the desert's edge and the commencement of the water-shed of the western coast. It will be observed that in my journey through the scrubs to Perth, I had met with no creeks or water-sheds at all, until after I reached the first outlying settlement.

The question which now arose was, what kind of country existed between us and my farthest watered point in 1874 at the Rawlinson Range? In a perfectly straight line it would be 450 miles. The latitude of this camp was 24° 16' 6". I called it the Red Ridge camp. Since my last attack of ophthalmia, I suffer great pain and confusion when using the sextant. The attack I have mentioned in this journey was by no means the only one I have had on my numerous journeys; I have indeed had more or less virulent attacks for the last twenty years, and I believe the disease is now chronic, though suppressed. From the Red Ridge camp we went about eight miles east-north-east, and I found

under a mass of low scrubby hills or rises tipped with red sandstone, a rocky cleft in the ground, round about which were numerous old native encampments ; I could see water under a rock ; the cleft was narrow, and slanted obliquely downwards ; it was not wide enough to admit a bucket. There was amply sufficient water for all my camels, but it was very tedious work to get enough out with a quart pot ; the rock was sandstone. There was now no doubt in my mind, that all beyond this point was pure and unrelieved desert, for we were surrounded by spinifex, and the first waves of the dreaded sandhills were in view. The country was entirely open, and only a sandy undulation to the eastward bounded the horizon. The desert had to be crossed, or at least attempted, even if it had been 1000 miles in extent ; I therefore wasted no time in plunging into it, not delaying to encamp at this last rocky reservoir. After watering our camels we made our way for about four miles amongst the sandhills. As we passed by, I noticed a solitary desert oak-tree, *Casuarina decaisneana*, and a number of the Australian grass-trees, *Xanthorrhœa*. The country was almost destitute of timber, except that upon the tops of the parallel lines of red sandhills, which mostly ran in a north-east and south-west direction, a few stunted specimens of the eucalypt, known as blood-wood or red gum existed. This tree grows to magnificent proportions in Queensland, and down the west coast from Fremantle, always in a watered region. Heaven only knows how it ever got here, or how it could grow on the tops of red sandhills. Having stopped to water our camels at the rocky cleft, our first day's march into the

desert was only eleven miles. Our camp at night was in latitude $24^{\circ} 12' 22''$.

The next day all signs of rises, ridges, hills, or ranges, had disappeared behind the sandhills of the western horizon, and the solitary caravan was now launched into the desert, like a ship upon the ocean, with nothing but Providence and our latitude to depend upon, to enable us to reach the other side.

The following morning, Sunday, the 4th June, was remarkably warm, the thermometer not having descended during the night to less than 60° , though only two mornings ago it was down to 18° . I now travelled so as gradually to reach the 24th parallel, in hopes some lines of hills or ranges might be discovered near it. Our course was east by north. We had many severe ridges of sand to cross, and this made our rate of travelling very slow. We saw one desert oak-tree and a few currajong-trees of the order of *Sterculias*, some grass-trees, quandong, or native peach, *Fusanus*, a kind of sandalwood, and the red gum or blood-wood-trees; the latter always grows upon ground as high as it can get, and therefore ornaments the tops of the sandhills, while all the first-named trees frequent the lower ground between them. To-day we only made good twenty miles, though we travelled until dark, hoping to find some food, or proper bushes for the camels; but, failing in this, had to turn them out at last to find what sustenance they could for themselves. On the following morning, when they were brought up to the camp—at least, when some of them were—I was informed that several had got poisoned in the night, and were quite unable to move, while one or two of them were supposed to be dying.

This, upon the outskirts of the desert, was terrible news to hear, and the question of what's to be done immediately arose; but it was answered almost as soon, by the evident fact that nothing could be done, because half the camels could not move, and it would be worse than useless to pack up the other half and leave them. So we quietly remained and tended our sick and dying ones so well, that by night one of the worst was got on his legs again. We made them sick with hot water, butter, and mustard, and gave them injections with the clyster pipe as well; the only substance we could get out of them was the chewed-up *Gyrostemon ramulosus*, which, it being nearly dark, we had not observed when we camped. We drove the mob some distance to another sandhill, where there was very little of this terrible scourge, and the next morning I was delighted to find that the worst ones and the others were evidently better, although they were afflicted with staggers and tremblings of the hind limbs. I was rather undecided what to do, whether to push farther at once into the desert or retreat to the last rocky cleft water, now over five-and-twenty miles behind us. But, as Othello says, once to be in doubt is once to be resolved, and I decided that, as long as they could stagger, the camels should stagger on. In about twelve miles Alec Ross and Tommy found a place where the natives had formerly obtained water by digging. Here we set to work and dug a well, but only got it down twelve feet by night, no water making its appearance. The next morning we were at it again, and at fifteen feet we saw the fluid we were delving for. The water was yellowish, but pure, and there was

apparently a good supply. We had, unfortunately, hit on the top of a rock that covered nearly the whole bottom, and what water we got came in only at one corner. Two other camels were poisoned in the night, but those that were first attacked were a trifle better.

On the 8th of June more camels were attacked, and it was impossible to get out of this horrible and poisonous region. The wretched country seems smothered with the poisonous plant. I dread the reappearance of every morning, for fear of fresh and fatal cases. This plant, the *Gyrostemon*, does not seem a certain deadly poison, but as I lost one camel by death from it, at Mr. Palmer's camp, near Geraldton, and so many are continually becoming prostrated by its virulence, it may be well understood how we dread the sight of it, for none can tell how soon or how many of our animals might be killed. As it grows here, all over the country, the unpoisoned camels persist in eating it; after they have had a shock, however, they generally leave it entirely alone; but there is, unfortunately, nothing else for them to eat here.

The weather now is very variable. The thermometer indicated only 18° this morning, and we had thick ice in all the vessels that contained any water over-night; but in the middle of the day it was impossible to sit with comfort, except in the shade. The flies still swarmed in undiminished millions; there are also great numbers of the small and most annoying sand-flies, which, though almost too minute to be seen, have a marvellous power of making themselves felt. The well we put down was sunk in a rather large flat between the

sandhills. The whole country is covered with spinifex in every direction, and this, together with the poisonous bushes and a few blood-wood-trees, forms the only vegetation. The pendulous fringe instead of leaves on the poison bush gives it a strange and weird appearance, and to us it always presents the hideous, and terrible form of a deadly Upas-tree.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM 11TH JUNE TO 23RD AUGUST, 1876.

Farther into the desert—Sandhills crowned with stones—Natives' smokes and footprints seen—Weakened camels—Native well—Ten days' waterless march—Buzoe's grave—A region of desolation—Eagles—Birds round the well—Natives hovering near—Their different smokes—Wallaby—Sad Solitude's triumphant reign—The Alfred and Marie range once more—The Rawlinson range and Mount Destruction—Australia twice traversed—Fort McKellar—Tyndall's Springs—A last search after Gibson—Tommy's Flat—The Circus—The Eagle—Return to Sladen Water—The Petermann tribes—Marvellous Mount Olga—Glen Watson—Natives of the Musgrave range—A robbery—Cattle camps—The missing link—South for the Everard range—Everard natives—Show us a watering-place—Alec and Tommy find water—More natives—Compelled to give up their plunder—Natives assist at dinner—Like banyan-trees—A bad camping-place—Natives accompany us—Find the native well—The Everard revisited—Gruel thick and slab—Well in the Ferdinand—Rock-hole water—Natives numerous and objectionable—Mischief brewing—A hunt for spears—Attack frustrated—Taking an observation—A midnight foe—The next morning—Funeral march—A new well—Change of country—Approaching the telegraph line—The Alberga—Decrepit native women—The Neales—Mount O'Hallaran—The telegraph line—Dry state of the country—Hann's Creek—Arrival at the Peake.

ON the 11th of June I was delighted to be able to be again upon the move, and leave this detestable poisonous place and our fifteen-foot shaft behind.

Our only regret was that we had been compelled to remain so long. The camels had nearly all been poisoned, some very much worse than others; but all looked gaunt and hollow-eyed, and were exceedingly weak and wretched, one remarkable exception being noticed in Alec Ross's riding-cow, old Buzoe, who had either not eaten the poison plant, or had escaped untouched by it. Our course was now east by north, and as we got farther into the desert, I noticed that occasionally some of the undulations of sand were crowned with stones, wherever they came from. Where these stones crop up a growth of timber, generally mulga, occurs with them. It is sandstone that tips these rises. Some smokes of native fires were seen from our line of march, in northerly and southerly directions, and occasionally the footprints upon the sands, of some wandering child of the desert. These were the only indications we could discover of the existence of primordial man upon the scene. We passed a few grass-trees, which are usually called "black boys" in almost every part of the continent where they exist, and they seem to range over nearly the whole of Australia, from Sydney to Perth, south of the Tropic. The camels were so weak that to-day we could only accomplish about eighteen miles. At five miles, on the following morning, we passed a hollow with some mulga acacia in it. Near them Alec and I found a place where the number of deserted huts, or gunyahs of the natives induced us to look about for a well or some other kind of watering-place. An old well was soon found, which was very shallow; the water was slightly brackish and not more than three feet

below the surface. How I wished I had known of its existence before, it being not twenty-five miles from our poison camp, and that some good acacia bushes grew here also; as it was, I made no use of it. The weather being cool, and the camels having filled themselves with water at the deep well, they would not drink. That afternoon we got into a hollow where there was a low ridge of flat-topped cliffs, and a good deal of mulga timber in it. Very likely in times of rain a flow of water might be found here, if there ever are times of rain in such a region. We just cleared the valley by night, having travelled nearly twenty miles. My latitude here was $23^{\circ} 56' 20''$, and not desiring to go any farther north, I inclined my course a little southerly—that is to say, in an east by south direction.

We had left the deep well on the 9th June, and not until ten days of continuous travelling had been accomplished—it being now the 18th—did we see any more water. That evening we reached a little trifling water-channel, with a few small scattered white gum-trees, coming from a low stony mulga-crowned ridge, and by digging in it we found a slight soakage of water. Here we dug a good-sized tank, which the water partly filled, and this enabled us to water all the camels. They had travelled 230 miles from our deep well. For the last two or three days poor old Buzoe, Alec Ross's riding cow, has been very ill, and almost unable to travel; she is old and worn out, poor old creature, having been one of Sir Thomas Elder's original importations from India. She had always been a quiet, easy-paced old pet, and I was very much grieved to see

her ailing. I did not like to abandon her, and we had to drag her with a bull camel and beat her along, until she crossed this instalment of Gibson's Desert ; but she never left this spot, which I have named Buzoe's Grave. I don't think this old cow had been poisoned—at least she never showed any signs of it ; I believe it was sheer old age and decay that assailed her at last. The position of this welcome watered spot was in latitude $24^{\circ} 33'$, and longitude $123^{\circ} 57'$. It was by wondrous good fortune that we came upon it, and it was the merest chance that any water was there. In another day or two there would have been none ; as it was, only a little rain-water, that had not quite ceased to drain down the half-stony, half-sandy bed of the little gully, was all we got. The weather had been very disagreeable for some days past, the thermometer in the early dawn generally indicating 18° , while in the middle of the day the heat was oppressive.

The flies were still about us, in persecuting myriads. The nature of the country during this march was similar to that previously described, being quite open, it rolled along in ceaseless undulations of sand. The only vegetation besides the ever-abounding spinifex was a few blood-wood-trees on the tops of some of the red heaps of sand, with an occasional desert oak, an odd patch or clump of mallee-trees, standing desolately alone, and perhaps having a stunted specimen or two of the quandong or native peach-tree, and the dreaded Gyrostemon growing among them. The region is so desolate that it is horrifying even to describe. The eye of God looking down on the solitary caravan, as with its slow, and snake-like motion, it presents the only

living object around, must have contemplated its appearance on such a scene with pitying admiration, as it forced its way continually on; onwards without pausing, over this vast sandy region, avoiding death only by motion and distance, until some oasis can be found. Slow as eternity it seems to move, but certain we trust as death; and truly the wanderer in its wilds may snatch a fearful joy at having once beheld the scenes, that human eyes ought never again to see. On the 15th of June we found a hollow in which were two or three small salt-lake beds, but these were perfectly dry; on the 16th also another solitary one was seen, and here a few low rises lay across a part of the eastern horizon. On the 17th a little water left in the bottom of a bucket overnight was frozen into a thick cake in the morning, the thermometer indicating 18° . The nights I pass in these fearful regions are more dreadful than the days, for "night is the time for care, brooding o'er days misspent, when the pale spectre of despair comes to our lonely tent;" and often when I lay me down I fall into a dim and death-like trance, wakeful, yet "dreaming dreams no mortals had ever dared to dream before."

The few native inhabitants of these regions occasionally burn every portion of their territories, and on a favourably windy day a spinifex fire might run on for scores of miles. We occasionally cross such desolated spaces, where every species of vegetation has been by flames devoured. Devoured they are, but not demolished, as out of the roots and ashes of their former natures, phœnix-like, they rise again. A few Australian eagles are occasionally seen far up in the azure sky, hovering

with astonished gaze, over the unwonted forms below; and as the leading camels of the caravan frighten some wretched little wallaby from its lair under a spinifex bunch, instantly the eagle swoops from its height, and before the astonished creature has had time to find another refuge he is caught in the talons of his foe. We also are on the watch, and during the momentary struggle, before the eagle can so quiet his victim as to be able to fly away with it, up gallops Reechy, Alec and Tommy, and very often we secure the prize. Round this spot at Buzoe's Grave, just while the water lasts I suppose, there were crows, small hawks, a few birds like cockatoos, and many bronze-winged pigeons. Some natives also were hovering near, attracted probably by the sight of strange smoke. The natives of these regions signal with different kinds of smoke by burning different woods or bark, and know a strange smoke in an instant. Some smokes which they make, go up like a thin white column, others are dark and tower-like, while others again are broad and scattered. These natives would not come to visit us. The small marsupial wallaby, which I mentioned just now, exists throughout the whole of these deserts; they live entirely without water, as do many small birds we occasionally see where there is a patch of timber. The wallabies hide during the day amongst the spinifex bushes, and feed, like other rodents, on their roots at night. Another way of getting some of these wallabies was by knocking them over, black-fellow fashion, with a short stick, when startled from their hiding-places. Tommy used to work very hard at this game, and we usually got one a

day for food for our little dogs. They are exceedingly good eating, being very like rabbits in size and taste. We remained at this little oasis, I suppose I may call it—at least it was so to us, though I should not like to return to it with any expectation of getting water again, for when we left, the water had ceased to drain in, and there were only a few pints of thick muddy fluid left in the tank at the end of our three days' rest. The place might well be termed the centre of silence and solitude; despair and desolation are the only intruders here upon sad solitude's triumphant reign. Well may the traveller here desire for more inhabited lands; rather to contend with fierce and warlike men; to live amongst far noisier deaths, or die amid far louder dangers! I often declare that—

“ I'll to Afric lion haunted,
Baboons' blood I'll daily quaff;
And I'll go a tiger-hunting
On a thorough-bred giraffe.”

Whenever we had east winds in this region, the weather was cool and agreeable; but when they blow from any other quarter, it becomes much hotter, and the flies return in myriads to annoy us. Where they get to when an east wind blows, the east wind only knows.

Leaving Buzoe's Grave, which had proved a godsend to us, with a swarm of eagles, crows, hawks, vultures, and at night wild dogs, eating up her carcase, in four days' farther travel we neared the spot from the west, where the Alfred and Marie Ranges lie. The first sight of these ranges from the east, had cost my former horse expedition

into this region so dear. I could not help believing that the guiding hand of a gracious Providence had upon that occasion prevented me from obtaining my heart's desire to reach them ; for had I then done so, I know now, having proved what kind of country lay beyond that, neither I nor any of my former party would ever have returned. Assuredly there is a Providence that shapes our ends, rough hew them how we will. These hills were in reality much lower than they appeared to be, when looked at from the east ; in fact, they were so low and uninteresting, that I did not investigate them otherwise than with field-glasses. We passed by the northern end, and though the southern end was a little higher, I could see that there were no watering-places possible other than chance rock receptacles, and of these there were no signs. At the northern end we came upon a small shallow kind of stony pan, where a little rain-water was yet lying, proving that the rains we had experienced in May, before leaving the western watershed, must have extended into the desert. We reached this drop of water on the 25th of June, and the camels drank it all up while we rested on the 26th. After five days' more travelling over the same kind of desert as formerly described, except that the sand-mounds rose higher yet in front of us, still progressing eastwards, the well-remembered features of the Rawlinson Range and the terrible Mount Destruction rose at last upon my view. On reaching the range, I suppose I may say that the exploring part of my expedition was at an end, for I had twice traversed Australia ; and although many hundreds of miles had yet to be travelled before we should

reach the abodes of civilisation, the intervening country had all been previously explored by myself. For a full account of my former explorations into this region, I must refer my reader to the chapters on my second expedition. The first water we reached in the Rawlinson Range was at a rock-hole about ten miles eastwards from the Circus water, the place from whence Gibson and I started to explore to the west. His death, the loss of all the horses, and my struggles to regain my depot on foot, are they not written in the chronicles of that expedition?

On reaching my former depot at Fort McKellar, I found the whole place so choked up with shrubs and bushes, that it was quite impossible to camp there, without wasting a week in cutting the vegetation away, although it had formerly been sufficiently open for an explorer's camp. The spring was running as strong as ever. The bridge had been washed away. However, at less than a mile from it, there was Tyndall's Spring, with an open shady space, among the clump of fine gum-trees, which gave us an excellent camping-place. Here the camp remained for some days. A line of green bulrushes fringed this spring. While the main party camped here, I once more tried to find some remains or traces of my lost companion Gibson, taking with me only Tommy Oldham. It was quite a forlorn hope, as Gibson had gone away with only one horse; and since we reached the range, we had passed over places where I knew that all the horses I then had with me had gone over the ground, but no signs of former horse-tracks could be seen, therefore the chance of finding any traces of a single

animal was infinitesimal. Tommy and I expended three days in trying to discover traces, but it was utterly useless, and we returned unsuccessful to the depot.

Singular to say, on this attempt I found a place west from the end, the Rawlinson Range, where there were some rock-holes on a grassy mulga flat, but we did not require the water, as the camels would not drink. Had I come upon this spot when I was in this region before, it might have saved Gibson and all the horses that were lost with him. I called this little watered spot, Tommy's Flat; the latitude of it is $24^{\circ} 52' 3''$. It bears 9° south of west from a peculiar red sandhill that is visible from any of the hills at the western extremity of the Rawlinson Range; and lies in a flat or hollow between the said red sandhill, and the nearest of a few low stony hills, about four miles farther away to the west. On visiting the Circus, I found the water-hole was full and deep. This was very different from its state when I had seen it last. The recording eagle still was sitting immovable on his crag, Prometheus-like, apparently chained to the rock.

On the 11th of July, the main party having been encamped at Tyndall's Springs for seven days, we departed for Sladen Water, at the Pass of the Abencerrages. All the other places previously mentioned on the range, had plenty of water running on for ever, though at the Pass the supply was rather lower than I had seen it previously. There was, however, quite enough for all our requirements. The little sweet-water spring was bubbling up, and running over as of yore. Both at Fort McKellar and here I found that the bones of the horses we

had smoked and eaten had been removed by the natives, or wild dogs. At Fort McKellar the smoke-house frame had either fallen or been knocked down; while here, at the Pass, the natives had removed the timber, and placed portions of it in different places and positions. We saw none of the natives belonging to the range, although their smokes were a very short distance away. Sladen Water was always a favourite spot with me, and we rested a day at it for old association's sake.

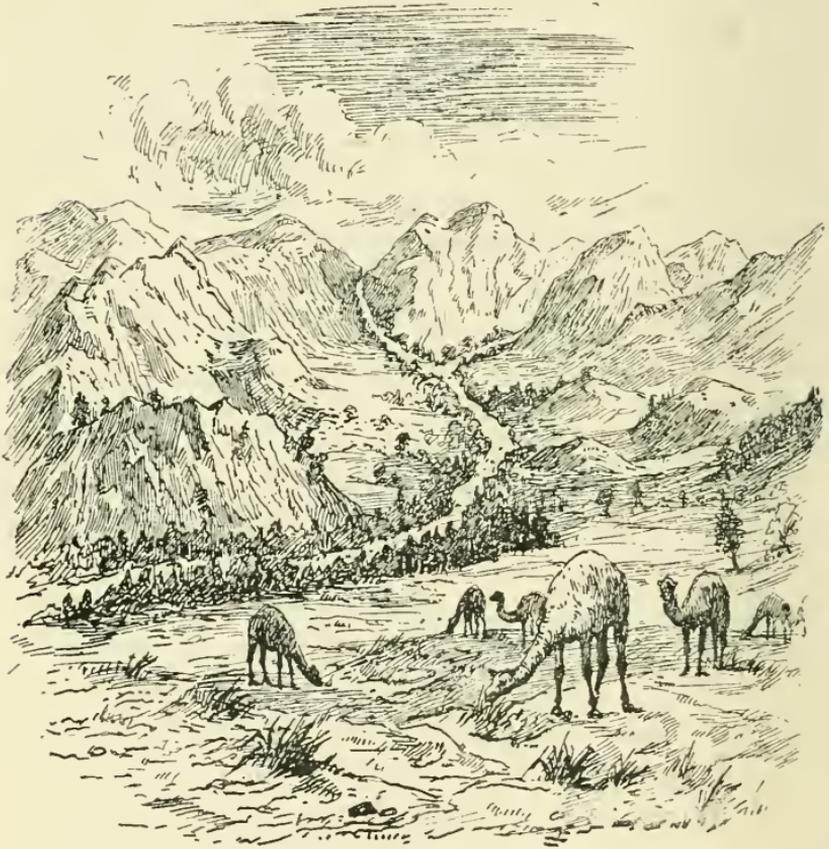
On the 14th of July we left the place, and travelled along my former route, viâ Gill's Pinnacle, and all the other watering-places mentioned in my preceding narrative. The Petermann Range looked green and beautiful. It had evidently been visited by rains. A portion of the Rawlinson and the Petermann Ranges were the only spots for hundreds of miles of which this could be said. The Hull here runs near the boundary of the two colonies of South, and Western Australia, and crossing it, we entered the former province once more. When nearly at the eastern end of the Petermann—that is to say, close to Mount Phillips—we camped in Winter's Glen, where the whole tribes of the Petermann were located. They instantly armed themselves, and endeavoured to prevent our progress. Several of them recognised me, and I them; for in my first visit to this range, with Tietkens, we had three encounters with them. They evidently intended mischief again; but they kept off until morning, and we then, being in full marching order, with our firearms in our hands, and all walking alongside of the camels and ready for attack, managed to pass away from them without a collision.

Leaving their country behind us, we went viâ the Sugar-loaf, and thence to the Musgrave Ranges, not now revisiting the marvellous Mount Olga; we entered the range near Glen Watson. There was plenty of water in the glen, but the country, in general, about the range, was in a very dry state. As, however, it has permanent springs, we had no difficulty from want of water. When nearly at the eastern end of the Musgrave Range, a number of natives came to interview the caravan, and actually pulled some coats and blankets off Nicholls's and Tommy's riding camels, and ran away with them. They had previously begged Nicholls to shoot kangaroos for them, thereby showing that they remembered the use of firearms, which formerly I had been compelled to teach them.

I was away from the party when this robbery was committed. Near the eastern end of this range it will be remembered I had formerly discovered a large watercourse, with a fine spring running along its bed, which I called the Ferdinand; here we encamped again. From hence I determined to reach the South Australian Telegraph Line upon a new route, and to follow the Ferdinand, which runs to the south. A mass of hills that I had formerly seen and named the Everard Ranges, lay in that direction, and I desired to visit them also. At and around the water at Glen Ferdinand, as well as at other places on this range, considerable quantities of dung, old tracks, and sleeping camps of cattle were found, but no live animals were seen.

After resting a day at Glen Ferdinand we departed, following the banks of the creek. Just at

leaving, an old black man and two lads made their appearance. This old party was remarkably shy; the elder boy seemed a little frightened, and didn't relish being touched by a white man, but the youngest was quite at his ease, and came up to me with the



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audacity and insouciance of early youth, and pulled me about. When I patted him, he grinned like any other monkey. None of them were handsome; the old man was so monkey-like—he would have charmed the heart of Professor Darwin. I thought I had found the missing link, and I had thoughts of

preserving him in methylated spirits, only I had not a bottle large enough.

Following the channel of the Ferdinand nearly south, we came to some limestone rises with one or two native wells, but no water was seen in them. The country was good, grassy, nearly level, with low, sandy, mulga rises, fit for stock of any kind. There were a few detached granite hills, peeping here and there amongst the tree-tops. The creek-channel appeared to run through, or close to, some of the hills of the Everard Ranges; and I left it to visit them. At one of the outcropping granite mounds, at about forty-eight miles from Glen Ferdinand, Alec Ross found a large native well, which bore 12° east of south from Mount Ferdinand, a conspicuous point overlooking the glen. We did not require to use this well, but there was plenty of water in it. Arriving at the first hills of the Everard, I found they were all very peculiar, bare, red, granite mounds, being the most extraordinary ranges one could possibly imagine, if indeed any one could imagine such a scene. They have thousands of acres of bare rock, piled up into mountainous shapes and lay in isolated masses, forming something like a broken circle, all round a central and higher mass. They have valleys filled with scrubs between each section. Numerous rocky glens and gorges were seen, having various kinds of shrubs and low trees growing in the interstices of the rocks. Every thing and every place was parched, bare, and dry. We searched in many places for water without success.

At length some natives made their appearance, and showed us where water could be had by

digging. This was a most disagreeable and awkward spot to get the camels to, but after a great deal of labour in making a tank, and rolling boulders of rock out of the way, we were enabled to give them a drink. There was but a very poor supply.

The water we got here was in a small gum-creek under the highest hill in the centre of the group upon its northern face. The summit of the hill above it bore 21° east of south, from Mount Ferdinand, in the Musgrave Ranges, and it is sixty-four miles from my camp at Glen Ferdinand water. Alec and Tommy searched for, and found, some other water in rock-holes at the back or south side of this central hill, nearly three miles round. Several more natives came to the camp; and some of them worked a little at watering the camels, but were greatly scandalised at seeing them drink such enormous quantities, and no doubt, in their heart of hearts, they were grieved that they had shown us the place. And in order to recoup themselves in some measure for their romantic generosity, they quietly walked away with several unconsidered trifles out of the camp, such as ration bags, towels, socks, &c. These thefts always occur when I am away. I made one old gentleman who took some things disgorge his loot, and he and his friend who had dined with us went away, in the last stage of displeasure. There are apparently but few natives about here just now; had there been more of them we might have had some trouble, as indeed I subsequently had at the rock-holes at the back of this hill.

The following day we went round to Alec's rock-holes, intending to have dinner, water the

camels if they would drink, and fill our casks before plunging again into the scrubs that extended everywhere to the south. To the east a flat-topped, bluff-faced hill was visible. While we were at dinner several natives came and assisted us, and pointed in a direction a little west of south, where they said water existed. The whole space round the foot of the rocks here is choked up with a thick and vigorous growth of the native fig-trees, which grow somewhat like banyan-trees, except that suckers do not descend from the upper branches and take root in the ground alongside the parent stem ; but the roots of this tree run along the rocks to find crevices with soil, and then a fresh growth springs up ; in general it does not grow very high, twenty feet is about the limit. There was a small creek channel, and mulga scrubs to the west of it, that grew right up to the bank, and any party camping here would be completely hemmed in. I am particular in describing the place, as on a subsequent occasion, myself and the party then with me, escaped death there. I will relate the circumstances further on. Now we left the place after dinner, and the natives accompanied us ; we camped in mulga scrubs at about ten miles from the rocks. These young darkies seemed very good, and friendly fellows ; in all wild tribes of Australian natives, the boys and very young men, as well as the girls and women, seem to take immediately to white men. The young children, however, are generally very much frightened ; but it is the vile and wicked old men that are the arch-villains of the piece, and who excite the passions of the juniors of the tribe to commit all sorts of atrocities.

These fellows were the best of friends with my men and myself ; we were laughing and joking and generally having a good time. I amused them greatly by passing a stick through my nose ; I had formerly gone through an excruciating operation for that purpose, and telling them I once had been a black fellow. They spoke but little English, and it was mostly through a few words that Alec Ross knew, of the Peake, Macumba, or Alberga tribes that we could talk to each other at all. After this we got them map-making on the sand. They demonstrated that the Ferdinand, which we had left, and had still on our right or west of us, running south, swept round suddenly to the eastwards and now lay across the country in front of us ; that in its further progress it ran into, and formed a lake, then continuing, it at last reached a big salt lake, probably Lake Eyre ; they also said we should get water by digging in the sand in the morning, when we struck the Ferdinand channel again. Soon after we started and were proceeding on our course, south 26° west, from the rock-water, the natives all fell back and we saw no more of them. In twenty miles we came to the creek, and turning down its channel eastwards we found the well of which they had told us. There was plenty of water in it, no doubt, but we did not require it. The well seemed rather deep. We followed the creek for some distance, at length it became very undefined, and the gum timber disappeared. Only a few acacia bushes now indicated the flow of the water over the grassy mulga flats, which wound about so much around sand-hills in the scrub, that I left the creek, and pushed on now for the South Australian Telegraph Line.

I will now give a rapid account of what I said was a narrow escape from death at those rock-holes we had just left. I may say in passing, that what I have recorded as my travels and explorations in Australia in these volumes, are probably not half of what I have really performed, only I divide them under the two headings of public and private explorations.

In the month of December, 1882, I was in this part of the world again. During the six years that had elapsed since my last visit in 1876, a survey party had reached these ranges on a trigonometrical survey, and upon its return, the officer in charge reported having had some trouble and a collision with the natives of the Everard Range. I suppose my second visit occurred two years after that event. I was accompanied on that journey by a very young friend, named Vernon Edwards, from Adelaide, and two young men named Perkins and Fitz, the latter being cook, and a very good fellow he proved to be, but Perkins was nothing of the sort. I had a black boy named Billy, and we had twelve camels. I approached the Everard Range from the south-westward, having found a good watering-place, which I called Verney's Wells, in that direction. There, we met a lot of natives who did not belong to the Everard Range tribes. At Verney's Wells we had a grand corroboree in the warm moonlight; my young men and black boy stripped themselves, and young and old, black and white, danced and yelled, and generally made the night hideous with their noise till early morning. After the ball a grand supper was laid for our exhausted blackmen and brothers. The material of

this feast was hot water, flour, and sugar mixed into a consistent skilly. I had told the cook to make the gruel thick and slab, and then pour it out on sheets of bark. Our guests supplied themselves with spoons, or rather we cut them out of bark for them, and they helped themselves ad lib. A dozen pounds of flour sufficed to feed a whole multitude. We left Verney's Wells and made up to the well in the Ferdinand that I have just mentioned. This we opened out with shovels, and found a very good supply of water. From thence we proceeded to my old dinner-camp at the range, where, as I said before, the whole space about, was filled up with fig-trees. Almost immediately upon our appearance, we heard the calls and cries and saw the signal smokes, of the natives. We had to clear a space for the camp and put up an awning. The water in the two lower holes was so low that the camels could not reach it, nor could we get enough out with a bucket. There was plenty of water in the holes above, and as it was all bare rock we set to work, some of the natives assisting, to bale the water out of some of the upper holes and splash it over the rocks into the lower. The weather was very hot, and some of the old men sat or lay down quite at their ease in our shade. The odours that exude from the persons of elderly black gentlemen, especially those not addicted to the operation of bathing, would scarcely remind one of the perfumes of Araby the Blest, or Australia Felix either, therefore I ordered these intruders out. Thereupon they became very saucy and disagreeable, and gave me to understand that this was their country and their water—carpee—and after they had spoken in low guttural tones to some of the

younger men, the latter departed. Of course I knew what this meant; they were to signal for and collect, all the tribe for an attack. I could read this purpose in their glances. I have had so much to do with these Australian peoples that, although I cannot speak all their languages—for nearly every ten miles a totally different one may be used—yet a good deal of the language of several tribes is familiar to me, and all their gestures speak to me in English. I could at any rate now see that mischief was brewing. Near sundown we spread a large tarpaulin on the ground to lay our blankets, rugs, &c., to sleep on. When I had arranged my bed, several old men standing close by, the master-fiend, deliberately threw himself down on my rugs. I am rather particular about my rugs and bedding, and this highly though disagreeably perfumed old reptile, all greasy with rotten fat, lying down on and soiling them, slightly annoyed me; and not pretending to be a personification of sweetness and light, I think I annoyed him a great deal more, for I gave him as good a thrashing with a stick as he ever received, and he went away spitting at us, bubbling over with wrath and profanity, and called all the tribe after him, threatening us with the direst retribution. They all went to the west, howling, yelling, and calling to one another.

Young Verney Edwards was always most anxious to get a lot of natives' spears and other weapons, and I said, "Now, Verney, here's a chance for you. You see the blacks have cleared out to the west, now if you go up the foot of the hill to the east, the first big bushy tree you see, you will find it stuck thick with spears. You can have them all if

you like. But," I added, "it's just supper-time now, you had better have supper first." "Oh no," he said, "I'll go and get them at once if you think they are there," and away he went. I was expecting the enemy to return, and we had all our firearms in readiness alongside of us on the tarpaulin where we sat down to supper. I had a cartridge-pouch full of cartridges close to my tin plate, and my rifle lay alongside also. Jimmy Fitz, Perkins, Billy the black boy, and I, had just begun to eat when we heard a shot from Verney's revolver. I did not take very much notice, as he was always firing at wallaby, or birds, or anything; but on another shot following we all jumped up, and ran towards him. As we did so we heard Verney calling and firing again; Perkins seized my cartridge pouch in his excitement, and I had to get more cartridges from my saddle. In the meantime shots were going off, howls and yells rent the air, and when I got up the enemy had just formed in line. Another discharge decided the conflict, and drove them off.

When Verney left the camp he found a bushy tree, as I had told him, stuck full of spears, and while he was deliberating as to which of those weapons he should choose, being on the west side of the bush, he suddenly found himself surrounded by a host of stealthy wretches, most of whom were already armed, all running down towards the camp. Some ran to this bush for their weapons, and were in the act of rushing down on to the camp, and would have speared us as we sat at supper, at their ease, from behind the thick fig-trees' shelter. Verney was so astounded at seeing them, and they were so astounded at seeing him, that it completely upset

their tactics ; for they naturally thought we were all there, and when Verney fired, it so far checked the advance column, that they paused for a second, while the rear guard ran up. Then some from behind threw spears through the bush at Verney. He fired again, and called to us, and we arrived in time to send the enemy off, as fast as, if not faster, than they had come. It was a very singular circumstance that turned these wretches away ; if Verney hadn't gone for the spears, they could have sneaked upon, and killed us, without any chance of our escape. We must have risen a good deal in their estimation as strategists, for they were fairly out-generalled by chance, while they must have thought it was design. After the dispersion, they reappeared on the top of the rocks some distance away, and threw spears down ; but they were too far off ; and when we let them see how far our rifle bullets could be sent, they gave several parting howls and disappeared.

I decided to keep watch to-night ; there was a star passing the meridian soon after eleven, and I wished to take an observation by it. I told the others to turn in, as I would watch till then. Nearly at the time just mentioned, I was seated cross-legged on my rugs facing the north, taking my observation with the sextant and artificial horizon, when I thought I saw something faintly quivering at the corner of my left eye. I kept the sextant still elevated, and turned my head very slowly half way round, and there I saw the enemy, creeping out of the mulga timber on the west side of the little creek channel, and ranging themselves in lines. It was a very dusky, cloudy, but moonlight night. I

dared not make any quick movement, but slowly withdrawing my right hand from the sextant, I took hold of my rifle which lay close alongside. A second of time was of the greatest importance, for the enemy were all ranged, and just ready balancing their spears, and in another instant there would have been a hundred spears thrown into the camp. I suddenly put down the sextant, and having the rifle almost in position, I grabbed it suddenly with my left hand and fired into the thickest mob, whereupon a horrible howling filled the midnight air. Seizing Verney's rifle that was close by, I fired it and dispersed the foe. All the party were lying fast asleep on the tarpaulin, but my two shots quickly awoke them. I made them watch in turns till morning, with orders to fire two rifle cartridges every half hour, and the agony of suspense in waiting to hear these go off, kept me awake the whole night, like Carlyle and his neighbours' fowls.

Our foes did not again appear. At the first dawn of light, over at some rocky hills southwestward, where, during the night, we saw their camp fires, a direful moaning chant arose. It was wafted on the hot morning air across the valley, echoed again by the rocks and hills above us, and was the most dreadful sound I think I ever heard; it was no doubt a death-wail. From their camp up in the rocks, the chanters descended to the lower ground, and seemed to be performing a funereal march all round the central mass, as the last tones we heard were from behind the hills, where it first arose.

To resume: we left the almost exhausted channel

of the Ferdinand, and pushed on for the Telegraph Line. In the sandhills and scrub we came upon an open bit of country, in latitude $27^{\circ} 35' 34''$, and found a shallow well, at which we encamped on the evening of August 11th. In sixty miles farther, going nearly east by north, the nature of the country entirely altered; the scrubs fell off, and an open stony country, having low, flat-topped ridges or table-lands, succeeded. This was a sure indication of our near approach to the Telegraph Line, as it is through a region of that kind, that the line runs in this latitude. I turned more northerly for a water-hole in the Alberga, called Appatinna, but we found it quite dry. There were two decrepit old native women, probably left there to starve and die by their tribe. I gave them some food and water, but they were almost too far gone to eat. From thence, travelling south-easterly, we came upon the Neale's River, in forty miles. At twenty miles farther down the Neale's, which was quite dry as far as we travelled on it, going easterly, we arrived at Mount O'Halloran, a low hill round whose base the Trans-Continental Telegraph Line and road sweeps, at what is called the Angle Pole, sixty miles from the Peake Telegraph Station. We were very short of water, and could not find any, the country being in a very dry state. We pushed on, and crossed the stony channel of a watercourse called the St. Cecilia, which was also dry. The next water that I knew of, between us and the Peake, was a spring near Hann's Creek, about thirty miles from the Peake. However, on reaching Hann's Creek, we found sufficient water for our requirements, although it was rather brackish. Moving on again we

reached the Peake Telegraph Station on the 23rd of August, and were most cordially received and welcomed by my old friend Mr. Chandler, Mr. Flynn, the police trooper, and every one else at that place.

CHAPTER V.

FROM 23RD AUGUST TO 20TH SEPTEMBER, 1876.

Depart for the south—Arrive at Beltana—Camels returned to their depot—The Blinman Mine—A dinner—Coach journey to the Burra-Burra Mines—A banquet and address—Rail to Adelaide—Reception at the Town Hall—A last address—Party disbanded—Remarks—The end.

BEING among such good friends at the Peake, we naturally remained a few days before we left for Adelaide; nothing remarkable occurred on the road down. At Beltana the camels were returned to their depot. The Blinman Copper Mine is about thirty miles from there, and was then, the terminus of the mail coach line from Adelaide. The residents of the Blinman invited Alec Ross and myself to a dinner, presided over by my very good friend Mr. J. B. Buttfield, the Resident Police Magistrate. Then we all took the mail coach, and reached the Burra-Burra Copper Mines, on the evening of the next day. Here a banquet was held in our honour, at which a number of ladies attended, and I was presented with a very handsome address. The Burra Mines are a hundred miles from Adelaide.

Next day we took the train for the city. At the town of Gawler, or, as it used to be called, Gawler-town, twenty-five miles from the metropolis, a number of gentlemen were assembled to welcome

us on the platform. Our healths were drunk in champagne, and an address presented to me. Pursuing our journey, Adelaide was reached by mid-day. A number of people were waiting the arrival of the train, and when we alighted we were welcomed with cheers. Carriages were in attendance to take us to the Town Hall, where we were welcomed by Caleb Peacock, Esq., the Mayor, who first invited us to refreshments, and then presented us to the citizens, who were crowded in the large hall. Mr. Peacock made a very eloquent and eulogistic speech, and presented me with a very handsome address on behalf of himself, the Corporation, and the citizens of Adelaide. The next day the party was disbanded, and the expedition was at an end.

A few closing remarks, I suppose I may make. We again joined the great family of civilised mankind; and if I have any readers who have followed my story throughout its five separate phases, I may account myself fortunate indeed. A long array of tautological detail is inseparable from the records of Australian, as well as any other exploration, because it must be remembered that others, who come after, must be guided by the experiences and led to places, and waters, that the first traveller discovers; and am I to be blamed if I have occasionally mixed up my narrative with an odd remark, anecdote, or imaginative idea? These, I trust, will not in my reader's opinion detract from any merits it may possess. I have collected many thousands of plants and hundreds of entomological and geological specimens; a great portion of the list of the former and all of the latter

have unfortunately been lost, only a list of plants collected during my first and second expeditions now remains, which appears at the end of these volumes.

It is with regret I have had to record the existence of such large areas of desert land encountered in my travels in Australia. The emigrant, however, need have no fear on that account. The scenes of his avocations will be far removed from them. They are no more a check to emigration now than fifty years ago. As a final remark, I may say my former companion in the field, Mr. W. H. Tietkens, has just returned from a fresh exploration of the country in the vicinity of Lake Amadeus, and the report of his travels should be looked forward to with pleasure by all who take any interest in our Colonial dependencies.

If my narrative has no other recommendation, it may at least serve to while away a vacant hour, and remind my readers of something better, they have read before. It was not for what I had written, that I hoped to reap the good opinion of the world, but for what I have done, and that I have recorded. Any one who is sufficiently interested to read these pages, may well understand the trials and dangers that have beset my path. The number of miles of previously unknown country that I have explored reaches to the sum of many thousands. The time I expended was five of the best years of my life. As a recognition of my labours, I have received the Patron's Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society of London; and the late King Victor Emanuel sent me a decoration and diploma of Knighthood, of the Order of the Crown of Italy.

To a man accustomed to camels for exploration, the beautiful horse sinks into the insignificance of a pigmy when compared to his majestic rival, the mighty ship of the desert, and assuredly had it not been for these creatures and their marvellous powers, I never could have performed the three last journeys which complete my public explorations in Australia.

I have called my book *The Romance of Exploration*; the romance is in the chivalry of the achievement of difficult and dangerous, if not almost impossible, tasks. Should I again be called on to enter the Field of Discovery, although to scenes remote from my former Australian sphere, I should not be the explorer I have represented myself in these pages, if, even remembering the perils of my former adventures, I should shrink from facing new. An explorer is an explorer from love, and it is nature, not art, that makes him so.

The history of Australian exploration, though not yet quite complete, is now so far advanced towards its end, that only minor details now are wanting, to fill the volume up; and though I shall not attempt to rank myself amongst the first or greatest, yet I think I have reason to call myself, the last of the Australian explorers.

As a last remark, I may say the following lines may convey some of my real feelings towards—

AUSTRALIA.

What though no hist'ries old,
Rest o'er that land of gold;
And though no bard has told
Tales, of her clime :

What though no song records,
Deeds of her martial hordes,
Who made, with conqu'ring swords,
Heroes sublime.

What though no tow'r displays,
Man's work of other days ;
And, though her sun's bright rays
 In the old time ;

Gleam'd on no mighty fanes,
Built by the toiling pains
Of slaves, in galling chains,
 In the earth's prime.

Hers is a new bright land ;
By God's divine command,
Where each industr'us hand,
 Willing to toil ;

Gathers the fruits of peace,
Gathers the golden fleece,
And the fair earth's increase,
 From the rich soil.

Hers is a flow'ry crown ;
Science and Hope look down
On each new glitt'ring town,
 Whose structures rise ;

And to Time's latest age,
Hers shall, the brightest page,
Written by bard or sage,
 Be, 'neath the skies.

APPENDIX.

LIST OF PLANTS

COLLECTED BY ERNEST GILES, F.R.G.S.,

DURING HIS FIRST AND SECOND EXPLORING EXPEDITIONS,

1872-1874.

(ARRANGED BY BARON VON MUELLER.)

DILLENIACEÆ.

Hibbertia glaberrima, F. M., Fragm. III., 1.
Mount Olga, Glen of Palms.

CRUCIFERÆ.

Menkea sphaerocarpa, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 223.
Near Mount Olga.

Lepidium papillosum, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 370.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

Lepidium phlebopetalum, F. M., Plants of Vict. I., 47.
Between the River Finke and Lake Eyre.

Sisymbrium trisectum, F. M., Transact. Vict. Inst. I., 114.
Near Lake Eyre and Mount Olga.

CAPPARIDEÆ.

Cleome viscosa, L. Sp. Pl., 938.
Rawlinson's Range.

Capparis Mitchellii, Lindl. in Mitch. Three Exped. I., 315.
MacDonnell's Range, Mount Udor.

PITTOSPOREÆ.

Pittosporum phillyroides, Cand. Prodr. I., 347.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, also on Gosse's Range.

DROSERACEÆ.

- Drosera Indici*, L. Sp., 403.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Drosera Burmanni*, Vahl., Symb. III., 50.
MacDonnell's Range.

POLYGALEÆ.

- Comesperma silvestre*, Lindl. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 342.
Between MacDonnell's and Gill's Ranges.

VIOLACEÆ.

- Ionidium aurantiacum*, F. M. in Benth. Fl. Austr. I., 102.
MacDonnell's Range.

GERANIACEÆ.

- Oxalis corniculata*, L. Sp., 624.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

TILIACEÆ.

- Corchorus sidoides*, F. M., Fragm. III., 9.
MacDonnell's Range.

MALVACEÆ.

- Hibiscus Farragei*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 241.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Hibiscus Sturtii*, Hook. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 363.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Hibiscus microchlaenus*, F. M., Fragm. II., 116.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Gossypium Sturtii*, F. M., Fragm. III., 6.
On Mount Olga, also towards the Alberga, Gosse's Range, and
MacDonnell's Range.
- Abutilon diplotrichum*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 380.
Between Lake Eyre and the River Finke.
- Abutilon halophilum*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 381.
Near Lake Eyre.
- Sida cardiophylla*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 242.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Sida inclusa*, Benth., Flor. Austr. I., 197.
Rawlinson's Range, MacDonnell's Range.
- Sida cryphiopetala*, F. M., Fragm. II., 4.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Sida virgata*, Hook. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 361.
Mount Olga.
- Sida petrophila*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 381.
MacDonnell's Range.

- Sida corrugata*, Lindl. in Mitch. Three Exped. II., 13.
Lake Eyre, Mount Olga, Gosse's Range, MacDonnell's Range,
Lake Amadeus.
- Malvastrum spicatum*, As. Gr. Plant Fendl., 23.
Near Lake Eyre.
- Plagianthus glomeratus*, Benth. in Journ. of Linn. Soc. VI., 103.
Near Lake Eyre.

STERCULIACEÆ.

- Keraudrenia nephrosperma*, Benth., Fl. Austr. I., 246.
Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range.
- Keraudrenia Hookeriana*, Walp. Annal. II., 164.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Rulingia magniflora*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 223.
Mount Olga.
- Rulingia loxophylla*, F. M., Fragm. I., 68.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Brachychiton Gregorii*, F. M. in Hook. Kew Mis. IX., 199.
Mount Stevenson, MacDonnell's Range, Carmichael's Creek,
Mount Udon. The specific position, in the absence of
flowers and fruit, not to be ascertained beyond doubts from
the material secured.

FRANKENIACÆ.

- Frankenia pauciflora*, Cand. Prodr. I., 350.
Lake Eyre, River Finke.

ZYGOPHYLLÆ.

- Tribulus terrestris*, L. Sp., 554.
Rawlinscn's Range.
- Tribulus Hystrix*, R. Br., App. to Sturt's Centr. Austr., 6.
Near Lake Amadeus.
- Zygophyllum fruticosum*, Cand. Prodr. I., 705.
Near Lake Eyre.

SAPINDACEÆ.

- Atalaya hemiglauca*, F. M. in Benth. Fl. Austr. I., 463.
MacDonnell's Range and Lake Amadeus.
- Dodonæa viscosa*, L. Mantiss., 231.
Alberga, Mount Olga, Rawlinson's Range, Barrow's Range,
D. microzyga, F. M., Plants of Stuart's Exped., 1862.
p. 12, is known from the Neale River.
- Diplopeltis Stuartii*, F. M., Fragm. III., 12.
MacDonnell's Range.

PHYTOLACCEÆ.

- Codonocarpus cotinifolius*, F. M., Plants of Vict. I., 200.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

Gyrostemon ramulosus, Desf. in Mem. Du Mus. VI., 17, t. 6.
Glen of Palms.

Cyclothea Australasica, Mog. in Cand. Prodr. XIII., Sect. II., 38.
Mount Olga, Rawlinson's Range, Barrow's Range.

CARYOPHYLLÆ.

Polycarpæa corymbosa, Lam. Ill. N., 2798.
Glen of Palms.

FICOIDEÆ.

Trianthema crystallina, Vahl., Symb. I., 32.
Near Lake Eyre.

Aizoon zygophylloides, F. M., Fragm. VII., 129.
Between Lake Eyre and the River Finke.

PORTULACÆÆ.

Calandrinia Balonnensis, Lindl. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 148.
MacDonnell's Range.

Portulaca oleracea, L. Sp. Pl., 638.
Towards MacDonnell's Range.

SALSOLACÆÆ.

Rhagodia nutans, R. Br., Prodr., 408.
Lake Eyre.

Rhagodia spinescens, R. Br., Prodr., 408.
Lake Eyre.

Chenopodium carinatum, R. Br., Prodr., 407.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

Babbagia dipteroearpa, F. M., Rep. on Babb. Pl., 21.
Lake Eyre.

Kochia villosa, Lindl. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 91.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

AMARANTACÆÆ.

Hemichroa mesembryanthema, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 38.
Lake Eyre.

Euxolus Mitchellii, *Amarantus Mitchellii*, Benth., Fl. Austr. V., 214.
Lake Eyre.

Alternanthera nodiflora, R. Br., Prodr., 417.
MacDonnell's Range.

Ptilotus obovatus, F. M., Fragm. VI., 228.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; MacDonnell's and
Rawlinson's Ranges.

Ptilotus alopecuroides, F. M., Fragm. VI., 227.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

Ptilotus nobilis, F. M., Fragm. VI., 227.
Mount Olga.

- Ptilotus Hoodii*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 232.
Mount Olga.
- Ptilotus helipteroides*, F. M., Fragm. VI., 231.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga ; also Barrow's Range.
- Ptilotus hemisteirus*, F. M., Fragm. VI., 231.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

NYCTAGINEÆ.

- Boerhaavia repanda*, Willd., Sp. Pl., I., 22.
Lake Eyre.
- Boerhaavia diffusa*, L. Sp. Pl., 4.
Lake Amadeus.

LEGUMINOSÆ.

- Daviesia arthropoda*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 225.
Mount Olga.
- Brachysema Chambersii*, F. M. in Benth. Fl. Austr. II., 13.
Mount Olga ; MacDonnell's Range.
- Isotropis atropurpurea*, F. M., Fragm. III., 16.
Mount Olga.
- Burtonia polyzyga*, Benth., Fl. Austr. II., 51.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Mirbelia oxyclada*, F. M., Fragm. IV., 12.
MacDonnell's and Rawlinson's Ranges.
- Gastrolobium grandiflorum*, F. M., Fragm. III., 17.
Glen of Palms.
- Psoralea patens*, Lindl. in Mitch. Three Exped. II., 9.
Between Lake Eyre and Mount Olga. *P. balsamica* is known
from MacDonnell's Range.
- Crotalaria Cunninghamsii*, R. Br., App. to Sturt's Exped., 8.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Crotalaria dissitiflora*, Benth. in Mitch. Trop. Austr. 386.
Lake Eyre.
- Clianthus Dampierii*, A. Cunn. in Trans. Hort. Soc. Lond., Sec.
Ser. I., 522.
Mount Whitby.
- Swainsona phacoides*, Benth. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 363.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Swainsona unifoliolata*, F. M., Fragm., VIII., 226.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga ; also on Rawlinson's
Range. Several other species of *Swainsona*, but in an im-
perfect state, occur in the collection, also a species of
Tephrosia.
- Lotus Australis*, Andr., Bot. Reg., t. 624.
Lake Eyre.
- Caulinia prœrepens*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 225.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Indigofera monophylla*, Cand. Prodr. II., 222.
MacDonnell's Range.

- Indigofera brevicens*, Benth. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 385.
Between Lake Eyre and the River Finke; also Glen of Palms, MacDonnell's Range, Rawlinson's Range, between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range. (*I. villosa* is also known from MacDonnell's Range.)
- Erythrina Vespertilio*, Benth. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 218.
MacDonnell's Range, Mount Udor.
- Bauhinia Leichhardtii*, F. M. in Transact. Vict. Inst. III., 50.
Occurs also in many of the central regions of the continent.
- Cassia notabilis*, F. M., Fragm. III., 28.
Mount Olga, Rawlinson's Range.
- Cassia venusta*, F. M., Fragm. I., 165.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Cassia pleurocarpa*, F. M., Fragm. I., 223.
Between Lake Eyre and the River Finke; also between the Alberga and Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range.
- Cassia desolata*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 389.
Mount Olga, Rawlinson's Range.
- Cassia artemisioides*, Gaud. in Cand. Prodr. II., 495.
From the Alberga to Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Petalostylis labicheoides*, R. Br., App. to Sturt's Centr. Austr., 17.
Glen of Palms; between the Alberga and Mount Olga, and towards Barrow's Range.
- Acacia Sentis*, F. M. in Journ. Linn. Soc. III., 128.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Acacia patens*, F. M. in Journ. Linn. Soc. III., 120.
Mount Olga and MacDonnell's Range.
- Acacia spondylophylla*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 243.
Glen of Palms; MacDonnell's and Rawlinson's Ranges.
- Acacia lycopodifolia*, A. Cunn. in Hook. Icon., 172.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Acacia minutifolia*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 243.
Mount Olga.
- Acacia strongylophylla*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 226.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, Glen of Palms, MacDonnell's Range.
- Acacia salicina*, Lindl. in Mitch. Three Exped. II., 20.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range; also towards Lake Amadeus and Barrow's Range.
- Acacia ancura*, F. M. in Linnæa XXVI., 627.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.

Numerous other species of *Acacia* were gathered, but not found in flower or fruit, hence are not with certainty referable to the respective species of this great genus.

EUPHORBIACEÆ.

- Adriana tomentosa*, Gaud. in Ann. Sc. Nat., Prem. Ser. VI., 223.
From the Alberga to Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range, Barrow's Range.
- Euphorbia Drummondii*, Boiss., Cent. Euph., 14.
Finke's River.

Euphorbia cremophila, A. Cunn. in Mitch. Austr., 348.
Lake Eyre; MacDonnell's Range.

URTICEÆ.

Ficus platypoda, A. Cunn. in Hook. Lond. Journ. VI., 561.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, Ayer's Range, Gill's
Range.

Ficus orbicularis, A. Cunn. in Hook. Lond. Journ. VII., 426.
Glen of Palms.

Parietaria debilis, G. Forst., Prodr., 73.
Mount Olga.

RHAMNACEÆ.

Spyridium spathulatum, F. M. in Benth. Fl. Austr. I., 430.
Glen of Palms.

MYRTACEÆ.

Calycotrix longiflora, F. M., Fragm. I., 12.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; MacDonnell's Range.

Thryptomene Maisonnucuvii, F. M., Fragm. IV., 64.
On Mount Olga, also towards the Alberga.

Thryptomene flaviflora, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 13.
MacDonnell's Range.

Bacckea polystemonea, F. M., Fragm. II., 124.
MacDonnell's Range.

Eucalyptus pachyphylla, F. M. in Journ. Linn. Soc. III., 98.
Glen of Palms.

STACKHOUSIACEÆ.

Macgregoria racemigera, F. M. in Caruel's Giorn., 1873, p. 129.
MacDonnell's Range; between Mount Olga and Barrow's
Range.

Stackhousia megaloptera, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 35.
MacDonnell's Range.

CUCURBITACEÆ.

Mukia scabrella, Arn. in Hook. Journ. III., 276.
Rawlinson's Range.

Cucumis trigonus, Roxb., Flor. Indic. III., 722.
MacDonnell's Range.

LORANTHACEÆ.

Loranthus Exocarpi, Behr in Linn. XX., 624.
Musgrave Range.

SANTALACEÆ.

Santalum lanceolatum, R. Br., Prodr., 256.
Mount Olga, Rawlinson's Range, Lake Amadeus.

- Santalum acuminatum*, A. de Cand. Prodr. XIV., 684.
Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range, Mount Udor, Lake Amadeus,
Musgrave Range, Fort Mueller, Petermann's Range.
- Anthobolus exocarpoides*, F. M., Fragm. IX., ined.
MacDonnell's Range.

PROTEACEÆ.

- Hakea multilincata*, Meissn. in Lehm. Pl. Preiss. II., 261.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Hakea lorea*, R. Br., Prot. Nov., 25.
Glen of Palms, MacDonnell's, Petermann's, and Rawlinson's
Ranges.
- Grevillea stenobotrya*, F. M., Fragm. IX., ined.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Grevillea juncifolia*, Hook. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 341.
Glen of Palms, MacDonnell's Range, Mount Olga, and towards
the Alberga.
- Grevillea pterosperma*, F. M. in Trans. Phil. Soc. Vict. I., 22.
Mount Olga.
- Grevillea Wickhami*, Meissn. in Cand. Prodr. XIV., 380.
Glen of Palms, Gosse's Range, MacDonnell's Range; towards
Lake Amadeus.

THYMELEÆ.

- Pimelca trichostachya*, Lindl. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 355.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, Gosse's Range.
- Pimelca ammocharis*, F. M. in Hook. Kew Misc. IX., 24.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.

UMBELLIFERÆ.

- Didiscus glaucifolius*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 395.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Hydrocotyle trachycarpa*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 394.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.

RUBIACEÆ.

- Pomax umbellata*, Soland. in Gaertn. Fruct. I., 112.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Plectronia latifolia*, Benth. et Hook. Gen. Pl. II., 110.
MacDonnell's Range.

COMPOSITÆ.

- Aster subspicatus*, F. M., Fragm. V., 68.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Aster megalodontus*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., ined.
Mount Olga.
- Aster Ferresii*, F. M., Fragm. V., 75.
MacDonnell's Range.

- Calotis lappulacea*, Benth. in Hueg. Enum., 60.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Pluchea Eyrea*, F. M., Rep. on Babb. Pl., 11.
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- Minuria leptophylla*, Cand. Prodr. V., 298.
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Olga and Lake Amadeus.
- Flaveria Australasica*, Hook. in Mitch. Trop. Austr., 118.
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- Gnephosis codonopappa*, F. M., Fragm. IX., ined.
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- Angianthus tomentosus*, Wendl. Coll. II., 31, t. 48.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Calocephalus platycephalus*, Benth., Fl. Austr. III., 576.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Myriocephalus Stuartii*, Benth., Fl. Austr. III., 560.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Pterocaulon sphacelatus*, Benth. et Hook., Gen. Pl. II., 295.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, also on Rawlinson's
Range.
- Ixiolaena tomentosa*, Sond. et Muell. in Linnæa XXV., 504.
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- Helichrysum Thomsoni*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 45.
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- Helichrysum Ayersii*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 167.
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- Helichrysum semifertile*, F. M., Rep. on Babb. Plants, p. 14.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Helichrysum Davenporti*, F. M., Fragm. III., 32.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Helichrysum Cassinianum*, Gaud. in Freyc. Voy. Bot., 466, t. 87.
MacDonnell's Range; also between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Helichrysum lucidum*, Henck. Adumb. Ann., 1806.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, Glen of Palms,
Rawlinson's Range.
- Helichrysum apiculatum*, Cand. Prodr. VI., 195.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Helichrysum rutidolepis*, Cand. Prodr. VI., 194.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Helipterum floribundum*, Cand. Prodr. VI., 217.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Helipterum Tietkensii*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 227.
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- Helipterum incanum*, Cand. Prodr. VI., 215.
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- Helipterum stipitatum*, F. M. in Benth. Fl. Austr. III., 643.
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- Helipterum Charsleyæ*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 168.
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- Gnaphalium luteo-album*, L. Sp. Pl., 1196.
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- Gnaphalium japonicum*, Thunb., Fl. Jap., 311.
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- Senecio Gregorii*, F. M. in Greg. Rep. on Leich. Search, p. 7.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range.
- Senecio lautus*, G. Forst., Prodr., 91.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Senecio magnificus*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 418.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Erechtites picridioides*, Turcz. in Bull. de Mosc., 1851, part I., 200.
Mount Olga.
- Sonchus oleraceus*, Linné, Sp. Pl., 1116.
Mr. Giles records this in his Journal as abundant on the banks
of the Finke River, towards its source.

CAMPANULACEÆ.

- Wahlenbergia gracilis*, A. de Cand. Monogr. des Camp., 142.
Mount Olga, Barrow's Range, Lake Amadeus.
- Lobelia heterophylla*, Labill. Specim. I., 52, t. 74.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Isotoma petraea*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 420.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range.

GOODENOVIACEÆ.

- Brunonia Australis*, Sm. in Transact. Linn. Soc. X., 367, t. 28.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range.
- Goodenia Vilmoriniæ*, F. M., Fragm. III., 19, t. 16.
Mount Olga.
- Goodenia heterochila*, F. M., Fragm. III., 142.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Goodenia Mueckeanæ*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 56.
Between Mount Udor and Gill's Range; also on or near Mount
Olga.
- Goodenia Ramelii*, F. M., Fragm. III., 20, t. 17.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; also on Rawlinson's
Range and towards Barrow's Range.
- Leschenaultia divaricata*, F. M., Fragm. III., 33.
Lake Amadeus.
- Leschenaultia striata*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 245.
Mount Olga.
- Catosperma Muellieri*, Benth., Fl. Austr. IV., 83.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Scaevola collaris*, F. M., Rep. on Babb. Plants, 15.
Lake Eyre.
- Scaevola spinescens*, R. Br., Prodr., 568.
Lake Eyre.
- Scaevola depauperata*, R. Br., Append. to Sturt's Centr. Austr., 20.
MacDonnell's Range.

Velleya connata, F. M. in Hook. Kew Misc. VIII., 162.
MacDonnell's Range.

STYLIDÆ.

Stylidium floribundum, R. Br., Prodr., 569.
MacDonnell's Range.

ASPERIFOLIÆ.

- Heliotropium asperrimum*, R. Br., Prodr., 493.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, MacDonnell's Range.
- Heliotropium undulatum*, Vahl., Sym. I., 13.
Near Lake Eyre.
- Cynoglossum Drummondii*, Benth., Fl. Austr. IV., 409.
On Mount Olga and towards the Alberga.
- Trichodesma Zeilanicum*, R. Br., Prodr., 496.
From the Alberga to Mount Olga and MacDonnell's Range.
- Halgania anagalloides*, Endl. in Ann. des Wien. Mus. II., 204.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Halgania cyanea*, Lindl. Bot. Reg. XXV., App., 40.
MacDonnell's and Petermann's Ranges.

LABIATÆ.

- Plectranthus parviflorus*, Henck. Adumb., 1806.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Microcorys Macrediciana*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 231.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Prostanthera striatiflora*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 425.
From the Alberga to Mount Olga; also on Gosse's Range and
MacDonnell's Range.
- Prostanthera Wilkieana*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 230.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Teucrium racemosum*, R. Br., Prodr., 504.
Lake Eyre, Lake Amadeus, Finke River.

. VERBENACEÆ.

- Newcastlia bracteosa*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 49.
MacDonnell's Range; between Mount Olga and Warburton's
Range; Gill's Range.
- Newcastlia cephalantha*, F. M., Fragm. IX., ined.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Newcastlia spodiotricha*, F. M., Fragm. III., 21, t. 21.
MacDonnell's and Rawlinson's Ranges.
- Dicrastylis Dorani*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 230.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Dicrastylis ochrotricha*, F. M., Fragm. IV., 161.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.

- Dicrastylis Beveridgei*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 50.
Between Mount Udor and Gill's Range, also on Mount Olga.
- Dicrastylis Gilesii*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 229.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; Glen of Palms.
- Chloanthes Lewellini*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 50.
Mount Olga; MacDonnell's Range.

MYOPORINÆ.

- Eremophila Macdonnelli*, F. M., Rep. on Babb. Plants, 18.
Between Lake Eyre and the River Finke.
- Eremophila Willsii*, F. M., Fragm. III., 21, t. 20.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; Rawlinson's Range.
- Eremophila Berryi*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 228.
Musgrave Range.
- Eremophila Goodwini*, F. M., Rep. on Babb. Plants, 17.
Beyond Lake Eyre, Glen of Palms, MacDonnell's Range.
- Eremophila maculata*, F. M. in Papers of the Roy. Soc. of
Tasm. III., 297.
Lake Eyre.
- Eremophila Brownii*, F. M. in Papers of the Roy. Soc. of
Tasm. III., 297.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Eremophila Sturtii*, R. Br., App. to Sturt's Centr. Austr., 85.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Eremophila Gilesii*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 49.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Eremophila longifolia*, F. M. in Papers of the Roy. Soc. of
Tasm. III., 295.
Gosse's Range; MacDonnell's Range.
- Eremophila latifolia*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 428.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Eremophila alternifolia*, R. Br., Prodr., 518.
Mount Olga.
- Eremophila Latrobei*, F. M. in Papers of the Roy. Soc. of
Tasm. III., 294.
Mount Olga; Rawlinson's Range; MacDonnell's Range.
- Eremophila Elderi*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 228.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Eremophila Hughesii*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 228.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Eremophila Gibsoni*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 227.
Between Mount Olga and the Alberga.
- Eremophila scoparia*, F. M. in Papers of the Roy. Soc. of
Tasm. III., 296.
About Lake Eyre.
- Myoporum Cunninghamsi*, Benth. in Hueg. Enum., 78.
Glen of Palms.

JASMINEÆ.

- Jasminum lineare*, R. Br., Prodr., 521.
MacDonnell's Range ; Gosse's Range.
- Jasminum calcareum*, F. M., Fragm. I., 212.
MacDonnell's Range.

CONVOLVULACEÆ.

- Convolvulus erubescens*, Sims, Bot. Mag., t. 1067.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Evolvulus linifolius*, L. Sp. Pl., 392.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Breweria rosea*, F. M., Fragm. I., 233.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga, Glen of Palms, MacDonnell's Range.

BIGNONIACEÆ.

- Tecoma Australis*, R. Br., Prodr., 471.
Mount Olga, Rawlinson's Range.

ASCLEPIADEÆ.

- Sarcostemma Australe*, R. Br., Prodr., 463.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Marsdenia Leichhardtiana*, F. M., Fragm. V., 160.
MacDonnell's Range.

ACANTHACEÆ.

- Justicia procumbens*, L. Fl. Zeil., 19.
Mount Olga and towards Lake Eyre.

GENTIANEÆ.

- Erythraea Australis*, R. Br., Prodr., 451.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range, MacDonnell's Range.

SCROPHULARINÆ.

- Mimulus gracilis*, R. Br., Prodr., 439.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Stemodia viscosa*, Roxb., Pl. Coromand. II., 33, t. 163.
Rawlinson's Range.
- Stemodia pedicellaris*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 231.
Rawlinson's Range.

SOLANACEÆ.

- Anthrotroche Blackii*, F. M., Fragm. VIII., 232.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Anthocercis Hopwoodii*, F. M., Frag. II., 138.
Near Mount Liebig.

- Nicotiana suavecolens*, Lehm., Hist. Nicot., 43.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; Glen of Palms; Lake Amadeus.
- Solanum esuriale*, Lindl. in Mitch. Three Exped. II., 43.
Lake Eyre; thence to MacDonnell's Range.
- Solanum feroicissimum*, Lindl. in Mitch. Three Exped. II., 58.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Solanum ellipticum*, R. Br., Prodr., 446.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; thence to Barrow's Range, MacDonnell's Range.
- Solanum petrophilum*, F. M. in Linnæa XXV., 433.
Mount Olga.
- Solanum lacunarium*, F. M. in Trans. Phil. Soc. Vict. I., 18.
Lake Eyre.
- Datura Leichhardtii*, F. M. in Trans. Phil. Soc. Vict. I., 20.
Between the River Finke and the Glen of Palms.

PRIMULACEÆ.

- Samolus repens*, Pers. Synops. I., 171.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.

CASUARINEÆ.

- Casuarina Deccaisneana*, F. M., Fragm. I., 61.
From the Alberga and Finke River to Mount Olga; Gardiner's and MacDonnell's Ranges; Glen of Palms; also near Musgrave's Range, and on Rawlinson's, Petermann's, and Barrow's Ranges; Gibson's Desert.

CYCADEÆ.

- Encephalartos Macdonnelli*, F. M. in Vers. Akad. Wet. Amsterdam, XV., 376.
On Neale's River, found by J. M. Stuart, and probably the same species on Gill's Range.

CONIFERÆ.

- Callitris verrucosa*, R. Br. in Memoir. du Mus. Paris XIII., 74.
It is supposed that it is this species, which was seen on the River Finke, Lake Amadeus, and in the MacDonnell's, Gill's, Rampart's, Musgrave's and Gosse's Ranges, as it is the only one hitherto recorded from Central Australian collections.

LILIACEÆ.

- Thysanotus sparteus*, R. Br., Prodr., 283.
Between Mount Olga and Barrow's Range.
- Anguillaria Australis*, F. M. Fragm. VII., 74.
Between Lake Eyre and the River Finke. A species of Xanthorrhœa, reaching a height of twelve feet, was seen on the ranges along Rudall's Creek, but no specimen for examination was secured.

PALMÆ.

- Livistona Mariae*, F. M., *Fragm. IX.*, ined.
Glen of Palms. Height up to 60 feet.

TYPHACEÆ.

- Typha Muellcri*, Rohrb. in *Verhandl. Brandenb.*, 1869, p. 95.
It is probably this species which is recorded in the Journal as occurring in the swamps of Rawlinson's Range.

GRAMINEÆ.

- Andropogon laniger*, Desf., *Fl. Atlant. II.*, 379.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Eriachne scleranthoides*, F. M., *Fragm. VIII.*, 233.
Mount Olga.
- Pappophorum commune*, F. M. in *Greg. Rep. on Leichh. Search*,
App., p. 10.
MacDonnell's Range.
- Panicum Pseudo-Neurachne*, F. M., *Fragm. VIII.*, 199.
Lake Amadeus.
- Eleusine cruciata*, Lam. *Encyc.*, t. 48, f. 2.
Lake Eyre; between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Aristida stipoides*, R. Br., *Prodr.*, 174.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Bromus arenarius*, Labill., *Specim. I.*, 23, t. 28.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Festuca irritans*, F. M., *Chath. Isl. Veget.*, 59 (*Triodia irritans*,
R. Br. *Pr.*, 182).
Dispersed widely through the deserts, and called *Spinifex* by the explorers.

CYPERACEÆ.

- Cyperus textilis*, Thunb., *Prodr. Pl. Cap.*, 18.
MacDonnell's Range.

FILICES.

- Cheilanthes tenuifolia*, Swartz, *Syn. Fil.*, 129.
Rawlinson's Range; between the Alberga and Mount Olga.
- Cheilanthes vellea*, F. M., *Fragm. V.*, 123.
Between the Alberga and Mount Olga; also on MacDonnell's Range. *C. Reynoldsii*, discovered by Mr. Gosse, does not occur in Mr. Giles's collection, and is probably very local.

Mr. Giles's collection contains also species of the genera *Vigna*, *Tephrosia*, *Melaleuca*, *Callistemon*, *Haloragis*, *Pterigeron*, *Brachycome*, *Dampiera*, *Ipomœa*, *Morgania*, *Enchylena*, and *Atriplex*;

as also additional species of *Rulingia*, *Abutilon*, *Sida*, *Dodonæa*, *Euphorbia*, *Spyridium*, *Acacia* (many), *Eucalyptus*, *Sævola*, *Goodenia*, *Eremophila*, *Heliotropium*, *Rhagodia*, *Ptilotus*, *Hakea*, and *Panicum*; but none in a state sufficiently advanced to admit of ascertaining their precise specific position.

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