Successful Exploration Through the Interior of Australia eBook

Successful Exploration Through the Interior of Australia by William John Wills

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CHAPTER 14.

Letters of sympathy and condolence; from Sir Henry Barkly; Major Egerton Warburton; A.J. Baker, Esquire; P.A. Jennings, Esquire; Dr. Mueller; The Council of Ballaarat East; Robert Watson, Esquire; John Lavington Evans, Esquire—Meeting at Totnes.—-Resolution to erect a Monument to Mr. Wills.—Proceedings in the Royal Geographical Society of London.—Letter from Sir Roderick Murchison to Dr. Wills.—Dr. Wills's Reply.—'The Lost Explorers,' a poetical tribute.—Concluding Observations.

Appendices.

Illustrations:

1. *The last hours of Mr*. *Wills*.

Painted by Scott. Melbourne. London: Richard Bentley, 1863.
Engraved by J. Saddle.

2. *William* J. *Wills*.

Painted by Scott. Melbourne. Engraved by J. Brown.

Biographical sketch.

CHAPTER 1.

Birth.
Infancy.
Boyhood and Early Education.
Youthful Traits of Character.

William John Wills was born at Totnes, in Devonshire, on the 5th of January, 1834. He had, therefore, attained the full age of twenty-seven at the time of his death. Even in infancy, his countenance was interesting and expressive. He began to speak and walk alone before he had completed his first year. His lively disposition gave ample employment to his nurses, though I cannot remember that he ever worried one, through peevishness or a fractious temper. As soon as he could talk distinctly, he evinced an aptitude to name things after his own fancy; and I may fairly say, that he was never a child in the common acceptation of the term, as he gave early indications of diligence and discretion scarcely compatible with the helplessness and simplicity of such tender years. About the time of his completing his third year, Mr. Benthall, a friend and near neighbour, asked permission to take him for a walk in his garden. The boy was then in the habit of attending a school for little children, close by, kept by an old lady. In less

than an hour, Mr. Benthall returned to ask if he had come home. No one had seen him, and we began to be alarmed lest he might have fallen into a well in the garden; but this apprehension was speedily ascertained to be groundless. Still he returned not, and our alarm increased, until his mother thought of the school, and there he was found, book in hand, intent on his lesson. He knew it was the school hour, and while Mr. Benthall was speaking to the gardener, had managed to give him the slip, passing our own door and proceeding alone to the school, on the opposite side of the square. Mr. Benthall, who can have seen or heard very little of him since, was one of the first, on hearing of his recent fate, to send a subscription to his monument, about to be erected at Totnes. Perhaps he remembered the incident.

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Another anecdote of the child bears upon a leading characteristic in the after life of the man. My late lamented brother, W.T. Wills, who has since died at Belleville, in Upper Canada, was on a visit at my house from abroad. He had occasion to go to Plymouth and Devonport, and I engaged to drive him over in a gig. A petition was made to his mother, that little Willy might accompany us. It was granted, and we put up for the night at the Royal Hotel, at Devonport, where he became quite a lion. The landlady and servants were much taken by their juvenile visitor. The next morning, my brother and I had arranged to breakfast at ten, each having early business of his own to attend to, in different directions. When we returned at the appointed time, the boy was missing. None of the household had seen him for an hour. Each supposed that someone else had taken charge of him. After a twenty minutes' search in all directions by the whole establishment, he was discovered at the window of a nautical instrument maker's shop, eight or ten doors below the inn, on the same side of the street, within the recess of the door-way, gazing in riveted attention on the attractive display before him. The owner told me that he had noticed him for more than an hour in the same place, examining the instruments with the eye of a connoisseur, as if he understood them. His thirst for knowledge had superseded his appetite for breakfast. About twelve months subsequent to this date, we had nearly lost him for ever, in a severe attack of remittent fever. At the end of a fortnight, the danger passed away and he was restored to us. As he lay in complete prostration from the consequent weakness, our old and faithful servant, Anne Winter, who seldom left him, became fearful that his intellects might be affected; and I shall never forget her heartfelt delight and thankfulness when she saw him notice and laugh at the ludicrous incident of a neighbour's tame magpie hopping upon his bed. The effect of this fever was to alter the contour of his features permanently, to a longer shape, giving him a more striking resemblance to his mother's family than to mine. His utterance, also, which had been voluble, became slow and slightly hesitating.

For some time after this he resided at home, under my own tuition. Our intercourse, even at this early age, was that of friendly companionship. Instructing him was no task; his natural diligence relieved me from all trouble in fixing his attention. We were both fond of history. From what I recollect, he took more interest in that of Rome than of Greece or England. Virgil and Pope were his favourite poets. He was very earnest with his mother in studying the principles of the Christian religion. More than once my wife remarked, "that boy astonishes me by the shrewdness with which he puts questions on different points of doctrine." In his readings with me he was never satisfied with bare statements unaccompanied by reasons. He was always

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for arguing the matter before taking either side. One question, when very young, he would again and again recur to, as a matter on which the truth should be elicited. This was a saying of our old servant, above named, when she broke either glass or earthenware: that “it was good for trade.” His ideas of political economy would not permit him to allow that this axiom was a sound one for the benefit of the state; and on this point, I think, Adam Smith and Malthus would scarcely disagree.

The pleasure I enjoyed in my son’s society when a boy, was greater than that which intercourse with many grown men contributed; for I may strictly repeat, as I have already said, that he was never a child in intellect although juvenile enough in habits and manners. He never made foolish remarks, although not in the slightest degree uncomfortably precocious or pragmatical. I had no fear of trusting him with anything, and was often reproved for allowing so young a child to handle a gun, which he was accustomed to do as early as eleven years of age. His first practice was on some young rooks which he brought down with unerring aim, from a rookery on the grounds at our country residence. He was so particular in his general demeanour that I designated him Gentleman John, and my Royal Boy. His brothers, all younger than himself, styled him, Old Jack, and Gentleman Jack. He had a wonderful power of attaching animals of all kinds. Nothing moved him to anger so readily as seeing one ill-used. Beating a horse savagely would excite his disgust, as well as his dislike to the person who did it. Not having a dog, he used to take a fine cat we had, which would accompany him to any distance in the fields, and hunt the hedges and hedgerows for him. Never feeling that I could have too much of his company, I frequently made him my companion in long country walks, during which he incessantly asked for information. For the science of astronomy he evinced an early taste. When a very little boy, I began to teach him the names and positions of the principal constellations, the revolutions of the earth on its axis, and the fixity of the polar star. I believe we were the first to notice a comet in 1845, which was only a short time visible here, having a south declination, and which we afterwards knew to have been a fine object in the Southern hemisphere.

At the age of eleven he went to school at Ashburton. Although the distance was not more than six miles from the cottage of Ipplepen, my then general place of residence, it was with much reluctance that I consented to the separation. Several friends urged on me that I was not doing him justice by keeping him at home; that a public seminary where he could mix with other boys was an advantage, even though he might not learn more. It also happened that, at this time, a gentleman with whom I had been long acquainted, and of whose talents I held a high opinion, was elected to the head-mastership of that school, which held its

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chief endowments from Gifford, the satiric poet, and Dr. Ireland, the late Dean of Westminster. I remember how I returned in gloomy spirits after leaving him there. As I had four other children, it may be said that I showed undue partiality for this one, but my conscience clears me from the charge. I deeply felt the loss of his companionship. He was so suggestive that he set me thinking; and whilst I was endeavouring to teach, I acquired more knowledge than I imparted. There was nothing remarkable in his progress at school. I experienced no disappointment because he did not return home at the end of every half-year with the head prize. He merely brought his six months' bill, and a letter commending his steady diligence and uniform propriety of conduct. In viva voce examinations he had scarcely an equal chance with one of inferior intellect who might be quicker in expression; for besides the trifling hesitation of speech I have already noticed, he would have been ashamed to give a wrong answer from eagerness. A remark of Mr. Page, his tutor, confirmed me in my own previous impression on this point. "It vexes me," he said, "that John does not take a top prize, for I see by his countenance that he understands as much, if not more, than any boy in my school; yet from want of readiness in answering he allows very inferior lads to win the tickets from him." On the whole, I think he derived much benefit from Ashburton; for besides his scholastic improvement he became an adept at the usual games, and a social favourite out of school hours.

At the age of sixteen he left the grammar-school, and I find the 30th of May, 1850, to be the date of his articles to me as surgeon. I had at that time taken a partner, Henry Manly, Esquire, now resident at Ipplepen, with a view of introducing and resigning to him my Ipplepen practice. Being in a country place, five miles from Totnes, where there was no chemist or dispensary, my son readily acquired his duties, which were to distribute the medicines and appliances directed for our patients by my partner and myself. In all cases his caution was extreme and we had no fear of his making mistakes. The ordinary operations of extracting a tooth or breathing a vein when a bumpkin presented himself as a patient, he speedily mastered. The absurd practice of going to be bled on any occasion that might strike the fancy of the party, without the advice of the doctor, was not at that time so completely obsolete as in this advanced age I hope it is, and ought to be. I remember, during the time of my own articles, that I frequently performed venesection five or six times in a day on persons who requested and fancied they required it; and I seldom indulged in the liberty of asking, wherefore.

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In 1851, I took my son to London to show him the Great Exhibition. His chief attractions there, were the instruments and mechanical inventions. If, after a day or two, I chanced to deviate from the leading thoroughfares and missed my way, he would set me right in a moment. This was rather mortifying to one who fancied himself well acquainted with London from frequent visits, but he smiled when he saw I was not a true guide. I asked him how he acquired this apt knowledge. "On the second day," he replied, "when you were out, I took the map and studied it for two hours, so that now I am well versed in it." My subsequent experience made me think he had some instinctive power in matters like these, such as horses and carrier-pigeons possess, for the darkest night never baulked him. On a visit to Windsor, being told that it was considered a feat to climb the statue of King George the Third at the end of the long walk, he accomplished it in a very short time. At Hampton Court he unravelled the mystery of the Maze in ten minutes and grew quite familiar with all its ins and outs.

In the following spring, 1852, I took him again to London, at the opening of the session for medical students. As there was no anatomical class he studied that branch of science by visiting the museum at Guy's. Having myself been a student at that school, I introduced him to my late respected teacher, Charles Aston King, Esquire, through whom he obtained permission to attend. Surgical operations he witnessed at the theatres of any hospital on the regular days. The only class he entered was that of practical chemistry, under Dr. John Stenhouse, LL.D., at Bartholomew's. When the course had nearly terminated, I saw Dr. Stenhouse, and inquired whether my son evinced any particular talent in that line. Dr. Stenhouse came from the lecture-room, and walked with me through Newgate-Street into Cheapside, earnestly requesting me not to take from him one of the most promising pupils he had ever had. "I venture an assurance," he said, "that in two years, in practical chemistry, he will be second to few in England." Dr. Stenhouse at that time was engaged in analyzing the different articles of food sold in the shops, and found my son useful and suggestive. His testimonial ran thus:—

I have much pleasure in certifying that Mr. W.J. Wills attended a course of practical chemistry at this medical school during the summer season of 1852. He obtained considerable proficiency, and invariably distinguished himself by great propriety of conduct.

(Signed) *John Stenhouse* LL.D., Lecturer to the Medical School of St. Bartholomew's Hospital,

September 1st, 1852.

At the house where he lodged, kept by an old couple and their servant, he was as one of themselves, and amused them greatly by the discoveries he made of the tricks practised by vendors of goods in the street; tricks they had no idea of, although they

had lived in London all their lives. They used to say he would be a great genius in the detective department of the Police.

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CHAPTER 2.

My two sons leave England for Australia.
Incidents of the Voyage.
Extracts from Journal.
Arrival at Port Phillip.
Melbourne.
Employed as Shepherds in the Interior.
Mode of Life.
Melbourne in 1853.
Advice to Immigrants.
Descriptive Letters from the Bush.

During the summer of 1852, I formed the intention of joining the exodus, then pouring out from England to Australia. I had been in treaty with the "Melbourne Gold Mining Company," recently started, in which promising speculation, on paper, I held some shares. The late Earl of Devon was chairman. I was to go in the Sarah Sands, in my professional capacity. My two sons, William John, and his younger brother, were to accompany me; but on further investigation of the modus operandi, I gave up all idea of attaching myself to the scheme, sold my shares at a slight discount, and engaged as medical attendant on the passengers, taking my two sons with me, in a fine new ship, the Ballaarat, on her first voyage. This arrangement I considered final. But a few days after William returned home, he came to me when I was sitting alone, engaged in writing, and with that expression in his countenance so peculiarly his own, said; "My dear father, I have a favour to ask of you." "My dear boy," I replied, "there is nothing you would venture to ask that I could possibly refuse." "Then," continued he, "it is this. I see my mother is grieving, although she says nothing, at our all leaving her together. Let Tom and I go alone: I will pledge myself to take care of him." After a consultation with my wife this new plan was agreed upon. I released myself from my engagement with Messrs. Simpkin and Marshall for the Ballaarat, and secured two berths for the boys in one of Mr. W.S. Lindsay's ships, which at that time were conveying living freights to Melbourne, their Channel port of departure being Dartmouth.

By the advice of Mr. Lindsay himself I took steerage passages for them. He shrewdly remarked, "They will be there as soon and as safely as the cabin-passengers, and their money will be saved." This sounded so like an axiom in practical economy that my dear boy never attempted to argue the question. Having obtained permission to knock two cabins into one, my sons considerably diminished their expenses, and had quite as agreeable a voyage as if they had paid sixty guineas each; for I have lately learned by experience, in a homeward passage, that you have to put up with companions in the cabin, as objectionable as can be imagined in almost any situation of life.

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At Dartmouth, a day or two before the ship started, I found that William had expended some money on a quantity of stuff rolled up like balls of black ropeyarn. I exclaimed with astonishment, “In the name of goodness, are you going to chew or smoke all the way to Australia?” for the commodity was the good old pig-tail tobacco. He said, smiling, “This is to make friends with the sailors: I intend to learn something about a ship by the time we reach our destination.” I dare say the worthy skipper of the good ship Janet Mitchell, should he be still alive, has some recollection of him. His mode of proceeding, as he told me, was first to secure the good graces of the crew through the persuasive medium of the pig-tail; then, to learn the name and use of every rope, and of every part of the ship’s tackle from stem to stern. He soon acquired the art of splicing and reefing, and was amongst the first to go aloft in a storm, and to lend a hand in taking in topsails. When I arrived in Melbourne at a later period, several of his fellow-passengers spoke to me with praise and wonder, referring to his activity, and readiness to leave an unfinished meal, on the slightest indication of danger or difficulty. His journal of this voyage, is now before me, from which I extract a few remarks:—

1852. October 1st.—Left Dartmouth—Slightly sick for the first few days—My brother much more so, but got right again—Foretopmast carried away by a squall, just at the crosstrees, bringing down with it the main top-gallant mast—’We look a precious wreck! ’—Remember the Honourable Michael de Courcy, brother of Lord Kingsale, saying to me on the quay at Dartmouth, the day before we sailed, that the first gale would carry away the fore-top-gallant mast—I believe the Janet Mitchell is quite a new ship, on her first voyage—The remark speaks well for the judgment of a young officer.

19th.—Sailors prigged some spirits in the hold and got very drunk—A passenger so drunk that he became mad, and was put in irons.

20th.—Sailors not yet recovered from their drunkenness—A naval captain, passenger on board, insulted by one of them; struck him with his fist and cut his face open.

22nd.—Fine weather—Getting hot—Latitude north 21, longitude west 36—The Great Bear getting low—Sunsets and risings very fine, particularly the former.

November 1st.—Shark taken, of which I had a large share and rather enjoyed the novelty of the feed.

5th.—Crossed the Line—Sailors shaved and ducked a good many—Tom and I got off very well. (Query—effects of the pig-tail?)

16th.—Stormy weather—Obtained some books on navigation and studied trigonometry.

20th and 21st.—Passed Tristan da Cunha, Inaccessible and Nightingale Islands, about 37 south latitude, 12 longitude west. —Saw a great many whales, mostly sperm,

thousands of birds, albatross, Cape pigeon, and many others, the names of which I am ignorant of.

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23rd.—A shoal of porpoises passed us. A sailor struck one with a harpoon, but it got off again. They are of a salmon colour, no more like pigs than horses, just the shape of salmon, only much larger. In swimming they turn on their sides.

December 1st.—Smart breeze this morning which soon increased to a gale—Assisted in furling top-gallant sail—sailors only half dressed—After breakfast, had to double reef top-sails and main-sail. I like reefing very much.

2nd.—Waves not so high as I expected. It is amusing to see how the birds ride them.

27th.—Saw an eclipse of the moon last night, which lasted three hours; little more than three quarters were eclipsed—Some of the passengers discontented with the provisions—wonder that some of them ever thought of leaving home.

1853. January 1st.—Saw land this morning—Reached Cape Otway in the afternoon; much the appearance of Berry Head, with a slight haze on it—Coast to the west very like that about Dartmouth—Cliffs, high; could fancy I saw Rock Vale.

[Footnote: The residence of a gentleman, near Dartmouth, with whom he had been on a visit a short time before his departure.]

3rd.—Dropped anchor—Captain and Doctor going ashore will post my journal and our letters.

. . .

His own was short:—

Port Phillip, January 3rd, 1853.

My dear father,

We have this morning dropped anchor, just off Williamstown. There are a fine set of ships here: amongst them are the Great Britain, Cleopatra, Ballaarat, Aberfoil, and an immense number of others, great and small. The Great Britain leaves early to-morrow, so I cannot finish my letter. We have been ninety-five days on our passage. The Cleopatra has only arrived two days. There are a great many vessels coming in. The day before yesterday we overtook and passed the Jane, and Truth, of London, which left Plymouth a fortnight before we sailed from Dartmouth. I hear already that things are very dear in Melbourne. Our pilot says he gives 200 pounds a year for a small four-roomed cottage, two miles from the town.

. . .

To show how well prepared the young adventurer was for life in Australia,—-notwithstanding letters of introduction and means of obtaining money if required—after remaining only a few days in Melbourne, and disbursing but a small modicum of the limited supply of cash he had taken with him, anxious to see the interior of the Island Continent, he obtained employment for himself and brother, a lad only fifteen years of age, at a large sheep station two hundred miles up the country. The following letter, dated February 12th, 1853, describes their proceedings to that date:—

My dear father,

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We are at Deniliquin. And where in the world is that? you will say. Well; it is about two hundred miles north from Melbourne, on the Edward River, in the New South Wales district, and nearly five hundred miles from Sydney. The station belongs to the Royal Bank Company. We have engaged as shepherds at 30 pounds per annum each, and rations. We are very comfortable, in a hut by ourselves, about four miles from the station. We have between thirteen and fourteen hundred rams, by far the smallest and easiest flock, under our charge. We take the hut-keeping and shepherding in turns. The hut is a very nice one, built of split wood, and roofed with bark. It is close beside a pleasant creek or river, where there are plenty of fish and ducks. I assure you we make ourselves quite snug here. One of us rises almost as soon as it is light, gets some breakfast, and starts off with the sheep; lets them feed about until ten o'clock, then brings them slowly home, where they lie down until four; after that, they go out again until sunset. The other stays within to clean up the hut and prepare the meals. We can kill a sheep when we like. [Footnote: Not the rams. There were a few others kept for the purpose. I stayed a few days with them, when I went out myself, at the end of the year.] The worst part serves for the dogs, of which we have three—a sheep dog, and two kangaroo dogs. [Footnote: They had a horse when I visited them, but not, I conclude, at the time when this letter was written.] The latter are good, and keep off the native curs at night. The sheep dog was the only one the former owner had last year, to watch a flock of five thousand sheep.

But you will want to hear something of Melbourne and how we came here. The first discovery we made after we got into port was, that we had to take ourselves and things ashore at our own expense. There was a good deal of fuss made about it to no purpose. It was four shillings each by steamer to Melbourne, and thirty shillings per ton for goods. It cost us about 2 pounds altogether. At Melbourne we found everything very dear; no lodgings to be had, every place full. At length we were offered lodgings at sixty shillings a week, to be paid in advance, and twenty-five persons sleeping in the same room; but we preferred the Immigrant's Home, a government affair, just fitted up for the accommodation of new-comers, where you pay one shilling a night, and find yourself. You must not stay more than ten days. We got there on Friday and remained until the Saturday week following. We then obtained this situation, and started on the same afternoon. Twenty-three of us came up together. Drays were provided to carry our luggage, but we ourselves had to walk. We were three weeks on the journey, through the bush, sleeping, of course, in the open air.

. . .

He then proceeds to describe Melbourne, as it then was:—

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Melbourne is situated, as you know, on the Yarra Yarra, [Footnote: A native term, which means “always running."], which has not nearly so large a bed as the Dart, although more navigable. It is narrow but very deep, and so far resembles a canal rather than a river. The town, or city, as they call it, is situated low, but laid out on a good scale. The streets are very wide, and I think when filled with houses it will be a fine place; but what spoils the appearance now is, the number of wooden buildings they are throwing up, as they cannot get workmen for others. When we were there, butter was from two shillings and fourpence to three shillings per pound, bread fourpence, milk eightpence per pint, vegetables enormous, butcher’s meat and sugar, as at home. Fruit very dear; a shilling would not purchase as much as a penny in England. Beer and porter, one shilling per pint in Melbourne, but from two shillings to two and sixpence here. The town of Melbourne is all on one side of the river, but on the opposite bank is Canvas Town, connected with Melbourne by a good bridge of one arch. Canvas Town takes its name from being entirely composed of tents, except a few wooden erections, such as a public-house, and the Immigrant’s Home, where we had lodged. I do not like Melbourne in its present state. You are not safe out after sundown, and in a short time you will not be safe during the day. There were some men taken out of the river drowned, suspected to have been murdered, and several attempts at robbery, while we were there. I sold my box of chemicals, after taking out what I wanted, for 4 pounds, and the soda-water apparatus for 2 pounds 5 shillings. I also sold some books that we could not carry, but got nothing for them. Scientific works do not take. The people who buy everything here are the gold-diggers, and they want story books. A person I know brought out 100 pounds worth of more serious reading, and sold the lot for 16 pounds.

We started from Melbourne on a Saturday, with the drays, eight bullocks to each, laden entirely with the luggage of the party, twenty-three in number. We made only five or six miles that afternoon, and slept under some gum trees. Our clothes were nearly saturated with dew; but as we advanced farther inland, the dews decreased, and in a night or two there was no sign of them. The land for a few miles is dry and sandy, but improves as you proceed. The woods extensive, sometimes without interval for two or three days’ march. There was no scarcity of water, except for the first fifteen miles, after leaving Melbourne. We enjoyed the journey much, and shot many birds, which constituted our principal food. Ducks abound in the creeks, [Footnote: Watercourses, running in flood time, but partially dry in dry seasons.] and up this way there are fine white cockatoos, which are good eating, and about the size of a small fowl. There is also a bird very plentiful here which they call a magpie. It is somewhat the colour of our magpie, but larger,

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and without the long tail; easily shot and eatable, and feeds, I believe, much like our wood-pigeons. [Footnote: It feeds more on insects.] The pigeon here is a beautiful bird, of a delicate bronze colour, tinged with pink about the neck, and the wings marked with green and purple. They are tame, and nicer eating than those at home. Where we are, we have abundance of food; plenty of mutton, and we can get a duck, pigeon, or cockatoo whenever we like, almost without going out of sight of our hut, besides a good supply of fish in the river; Murray cod, which in the Murray are said sometimes to weigh eighty pounds, but in our creeks generally run from two to twelve; also a kind of mussel, and a fish like a lobster, not quite so large, but good eating. [Footnote: Crawfish; the river lobster.]

Everyone who comes out does a very foolish thing in bringing such a quantity of clothes that he never wants. All you require, even in Melbourne, is a blue shirt, a pair of duck trousers, a straw hat or wide-awake, and what they call a jumper here. It is a kind of outside shirt, made of plaid, or anything you please, reaching just below the hips, and fastened round the waist with a belt. It would be a very nice dress for Charley. [Footnote: His youngest brother, at home.] I should wear it myself if I were in England. It ought to be made with a good-sized collar, and open at the breast, like a waistcoat, only to button at the neck, if required. We brought out the wrong sort of straw hat, as they are only fit for summer, but we sold all but two. One I made six shillings of, but the cabbage-tree hat is worth a pound. No one should bring out more than he can carry on his back, except it be to sell. Boots and shoes are at a great price, but they should be thick and strong. Wages are very high for butchers, carpenters, and bakers. A butcher's boy can get 3 pounds a week, with board and lodging. Bullock-drivers get the same. Innkeepers are making fortunes. I know a public-house, not larger than the Two Mile Oak, [Footnote: A small public-house between Totnes and Newton.] that cleared 500 pounds in three months, so it was reported. Sydney, I hear, is as cheap to live in as London. As to the diggings, I cannot say much about them. I have seen many who have made money there, and many who have lost it again. It is generally spent as fast as it is got. I hope we shall send you some specimens of gold dust soon. Please to give my love to my mother and all at home.

From your affectionate and dutiful son,

W.J. *Wills*.

. . .

His subsequent letters were of the same kind, descriptive of his management in his shepherd's life in the bush. He tells how he converted legs of mutton into excellent hams by pickling and smoking them; and how he also obtained preserves of melons, by sowing seeds which produced abundantly. The flies and ants were their greatest torment, particularly the former. The heat was not great, as there was

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a constant breeze from one quarter or another. Deniliquin is in between 35 and 36 degrees south latitude. The trees are almost exclusively gum trees, but they differ in appearance and leaves, according to age and locality. This gives the appearance of variety, when, in fact, there is none. The wood is hard and splits easily. The bark is tough and thick, and can be converted into canoes by closing the ends of a piece taken from half the circumference of a tree, and tying a cord round the centre to keep it from spreading. The colour is of a beautiful red. A moisture sometimes exudes from the leaves in such abundance as to convey the idea of an animal having been slain under the branches. It has the smell of carraways and is agreeably sweet. “How it would delight Bessy and Hannah,” (his young sisters, then quite children), he says, “to go into the woods, picking up comfits under the trees!”

He then speaks of the blacks in that district; of their habits and ideas; but expresses a low opinion of their intellectual powers, and thinks little can be done with them. In May, he wrote to his mother and myself conjointly, fearing his former communications might not have reached us, and briefly recapitulating their purport. I afterwards heard at Deniliquin that he had successfully performed a surgical operation. A shearer had run the point of his shears into the neck of a sheep, and opened the carotid artery. My son having a small pocket case of instruments, secured the vessel and saved the animal. I remember when it was considered a triumph in practice to effect this on a human subject. The letter I am now alluding to concludes by hoping that we were all as comfortable at home as he and his brother were in the bush. He never tired of expatiating on the beauties of Australia and its climate. His next, in August, gave a more extended account of local peculiarities and features. Deniliquin is at this time (1862) a place of considerable importance, with a thriving population. The island on which my sons shepherded their rams is formed by two branches of the Edward River, which is itself a branch of the Murray.

CHAPTER 3.

I arrive in Australia.
Join my two Sons at their Sheep-station.
Return to Melbourne and Remove to Ballaarat.
Visit to Mr. Skene.
My son studies Surveying.
His rapid proficiency.
Appointed to take charge of a Party.
Letters on various Subjects to his Mother and Brother at Home.

In the month of August, 1853, I reached Melbourne, after a good voyage, having obtained an appointment as superintending surgeon of a government emigrant ship, commanded by Captain Young, a perfect sailor, and a gentleman I shall always remember with pleasurable feelings. More than two months elapsed before I could

discover where my sons were. Having, at length, ascertained their locality, I purchased a horse and performed the journey in four days, resting one day on the road, at the station of Mr. Jefferies, on the Campaspe. I started at daylight, and made my fifty miles before halting, as I generally did about two P.M. I arrived at the shepherds' hut at five o'clock on a beautiful summer's evening, having remained two hours at the hotel at Deniliquin to refresh.

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Robberies on the road—stickings up as they are called—were rife at this period. Thefts also were common at the resting-houses. A gentleman who arrived at this hotel, not long before I was there, took the saddle off his horse, and placed it under the verandah: when he returned, after leading his animal to a paddock hard by, he missed the saddle, which he supposed had been removed by some person belonging to the house, and threw down his bridle on the same place. After taking something to drink with the landlord he said, “You have got my saddle.”—“No.” “I left it under the verandah, where I have just placed my bridle.” On going out to show the spot, the bridle also had disappeared: both stolen. A good saddle and bridle at that time would fetch twenty pounds readily.

At the station I took a native black for my guide. He brought me to a place where my horse had nearly to swim across the creek, pointed to a dry path, exclaimed, “There,” then turned his own animal and rode off. I followed the track for about three miles, and found myself in front of the hut. My sons were both at home. Tom called the attention of his brother to my approach. They appeared as much astonished as he describes the blacks near the Gulf of Carpentaria to have been at sight of himself and companions. Presently came the recognition, a shout of joy, and a greeting such as may readily be imagined, on the part of two boys on seeing the father they had not long before supposed to be separated from them by some sixteen thousand miles.

A few days after, we all left Deniliquin, each mounted on a horse, my sons having first disinterred their money, buried at the foot of a gum tree on a hillock which they considered as a safe bank of deposit. It was their intention to have made a present of the greatest part, 100 pounds, to their mother, on the first eligible opportunity of forwarding it. On our way back we paid a visit to the Bendigo diggings. William here evinced his skill as an explorer by leading us, with the aid of his compass, through a trackless bush, by which we saved a circuit of several miles. At Matthison’s hotel, on the Campaspe river, where we halted for the night, an amusing conversation occurred. In the evening there was a great gathering of all nations in the parlour. I undertook to tell the different parties of English, by their dialect, from what particular quarter they came. A person present, who articulated with much difficulty from having nearly lost the roof of his mouth, declared that he would defy any one to identify him by his speech. We all agreed that it exceeded our powers, when he informed us with a great effort that he was “a Kashman,” meaning Scotchman.

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On our return to Melbourne, we made preparations for a removal to Ballaarat. William remained with me at the latter place for twelve months, attending to any patient that might come in my absence. He also opened a gold office adjoining my tent and did very well. Here he perfected a plan of his own for weighing specimens containing quartz and gold, in water, so as to find the quantity of each component. But he was ever pining for the bush. The “busy haunts of men” had no attraction for him. He preferred the society of a few to that of many, but the study of nature was his passion. His love was fixed on animals, plants, and the starry firmament. With regard to medicine, he used to say that it was not clear and defined in practice. He wanted to measure the scope of a disease, and to supply the remedies by mathematical rule. He saw, too, that medical men were less valued for their real worth than for their tact in winning confidence through the credulity of the public. This was particularly exemplified in a gold-field, where the greatest impostors obtained credit for a time. His thoughts and conversation also constantly reverted to the interior, and to the hope that he would one day undertake the journey to the Gulf of Carpentaria. He was anxiously looking out for a movement in that direction, then often talked of.

About this period he made a pedestrian excursion to the Wannon, to sojourn for a short time with a Mr. Skene, a most worthy gentleman, now no more. He was actively employed at that place, and wrote to me frequently, describing the family, to which he was much attached, the whimsicalities of his landlord—a thorough old Scotian, who amused himself by waking the echoes of the wilderness with the bagpipes,—the noble fern trees and the fine black cockatoos. He also continued his practice in surgery, but I believe he made no charge, as, not being duly licensed, he considered he had no right to do so. He returned to Ballaarat in consequence of a communication through me, from an American gentleman named Catherwood. On receipt of my letter he lost not an hour, shouldered his swag (blankets, kit, *etc*.), took leave of Mr. Skene and family, and walked to Ballaarat, sleeping one night in the bush, by the way. On the 22nd of April, 1855, he wrote thus to his mother:

My dear mother,

I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you a fortnight since. I was at Moora Moora then, as you will see by a letter I wrote just before I came down here, in the hope of joining a party that is spoken of as about to explore the interior of the country, which you appear to have such a dread of. It seems uncertain whether they will go at all. As to what you say about people being starved to death in the bush, no doubt it would be rather disagreeable. But when you talk of being killed in battle, I am almost ashamed to read it. If every one had such ideas we should have no one going to sea for fear of being drowned; no travellers by railway for fear the engine should burst; and all would live in the open air for fear of the houses falling in. I wish you would read Coombe’s Constitution of Man. As regards some remarks of yours on people’s religious opinions, it is a subject on which so many differ, that I am inclined to Pope’s conclusion who says:—

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For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right;

and I think we cannot have a better guide to our actions than

'to do unto others as we would be done by.'

Ever your affectionate son,

W.J. *Wills*.

P.S. If I go, I will write again before starting.

. . .

The expedition he here speaks of turned out a mere venture to obtain cash, and nothing came of it. He remained but a short time at Ballaarat, and never idle. In a month he completed a wooden addition to my residence, building the sides, and shingling the roof in a most workmanlike manner. It was perfectly weatherproof, and stood good for some years, being only taken down when an alteration in the line of the street rendered its removal necessary. He now wished to study surveying. My acquaintance with Mr. Taylor, district surveyor at Ballaarat, obtained for him an admission as an amateur into his office. He there set to work with his characteristic industry to perfect himself in trigonometry and Euclid; drawing and mapping in the office by day, and working hard in his own room by night. On rising from bed in the morning, I have found him sitting as I had left him, working out his point, for he never deserted anything he had once taken up until he mastered it. At the expiration of a few months, Mr. Taylor promised me to introduce him to a gentleman in the survey department named Byerly, with a view to reciprocal services. On the 20th of August, 1856, he speaks for himself in a letter to his mother from Glendaruel:

My dear mother,

I have at length found time to write to you. You will no doubt expect a long letter after so much delay, but I am afraid you will be disappointed, as long letters are not my forte. In your last, you asked me to send Bessy any information I could. I can assure you I shall be most happy to do so, and to encourage her taste for knowledge as much as lies in my power. I send her Bonwick's Geography of Australia, which is a very useful little book, and in most instances correct.

You must not look upon it as infallible. For instance, he says Lake Burrambeet is in the Pyrenees, whereas it is more than twenty miles from those mountains. But this may be a misprint. I would recommend you to let the children learn drawing. I do not mean merely sketching, but perspective drawing, with scale and compasses. It is a very nice amusement, and may some day be found extremely useful. There is another thing

would do them much good, if they should happen to have a taste for it: this is Euclid. Not to learn by heart, but to read so as to understand it. Mathematics generally, and Euclid, and Algebra in particular, are the best studies young people can undertake, for they are the only things we can depend on as true, (of course I leave the Bible out of the question). Christian and Heathen, Mahometan and

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Mormon, no matter what their religious faith may be, agree in mathematics, if in nothing else. But I must now tell you something of your undutiful son. I am learning surveying under Mr. F. Byerly, a very superior man indeed. In fact I could not have had a better master had he been made to order, for he is a first-rate surveyor, and we are exactly suited to each other in our general ideas; and this, to tell the truth, is a rare chance for me.

I am getting 150 pounds per annum, and rations, but I hope in twelve months to have a party of my own. It is just the sort of life for me, nearly always in the bush marking out land for sale, or laying down unknown parts. It is quite a different thing from surveying in England. Glendaruel is fifteen miles from Ballaarat. I saw the Doctor and Tom a few days since. They were quite well; I hope you are so also. Love to all.

Your affectionate son,

W.J. *Wills*.

. . .

He was appointed to the charge of a field party before the time he expected. I was anxious to give him a set of surveying instruments, and requested him to send me a list and an order to the best London maker for such as he wanted. He transmitted the following letter, which marks the progress of his knowledge, to be forwarded to Messrs. Troughton and Sims, Fleet Street. I obtained it very recently from that house.

March 20th, 1857.

Sirs,

I shall be much obliged by your executing the following order as quickly as possible, and at your most reasonable prices.

1. One four-inch theodolite, best construction: 21 pounds.

2. One of Troughton's best reflecting circles, eight-inch radius, divided on silver: 23 pounds.

3. One prismatic compass, three and a-half inch, with silver ring: 5 pounds 5 shillings.

4. One six-inch semicircular protractor, with Vernier: 3 pounds 3 shillings.

5. One glass plane artificial horizon, ordnance pattern: 4 pounds 4 shillings.

6. One brass rolling parallel ruler, two feet long; must not weigh less than five pounds.

7. One twelve-inch brass sector: 1 pound.

8. One set of six-inch ivory plotting-scales, with offset scales complete: 4 pounds.

9. Two steel straight-edges, three feet each.

10. Four sixty feet land chains.

11. One small compact case of good sector-jointed, drawing instruments with ivory parallel ruler: 3 pounds 3 shillings.

12. One very small achromatic telescope of the strongest make, not to exceed six inches in length, when closed: 1 pound.

13. A small chemical blowpipe with ivory mouthpiece, and two platina tips; also some platina foil and wire.

14. Two Nautical Almanacs, 1858 and 1859.

Leather cases and straps for theodolite, circle, and prismatic compass. A catalogue of instruments with prices.

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N.B. I should wish the theodolite and circles to be packed very differently from the usual way, as many instruments are seriously injured by the box warping either inwards or outwards; in the one case pressing too much on the instruments, and in the other, which is worse, leaving them too much space, so that they shake about whenever the box is carried. The consequence is that the screws loosen, the glasses fall out of the telescopes, and the instruments become unfit for use just when they are most wanted. I think these evils may be avoided by having the parts of the box which touch any instrument well padded with the most elastic materials, and for it to be supported entirely on steel springs, strong enough to keep it firmly in its place, and with sufficient play to allow the box to warp without injury to any of the contents. I also wish an improvement in the stand of the theodolite, which ought not to be smaller than that of the five-inch one, and the joints made of the metals least likely to sustain damage from friction. The cap-piece should be nearly twice the depth, vertically, and cut out of one solid piece of metal. I subjoin a sketch of it, with the dimensions. It may be made of whatever metal you think proper. There is no harm in having iron about it, because we seldom require to use the needle. My reason for wanting this improvement is, that the legs get loose so quickly from the wearing away of brass, and that the many small surfaces in contact are too disproportionate to their length. Strength and durability are of far more consequence than lightness, as we have not the facilities for getting things repaired here that you have in England. The figures I have placed opposite to the instruments described are not supposed to be the exact prices, but merely suggested as guides. I hope you will do the best you can with the improvements mentioned, especially in the mode of packing the larger articles. Please also to insure them to the full value.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

W.J. *Wills*.

. . .

He then in a postscript makes some suggestions as to the graduation of the scales. The instruments were sent out in the shortest possible time and gave great satisfaction. On departing for his last fatal expedition, he requested me, should he not return, to give all his remaining instruments to his friend Mr. Byerly, for whom his high estimation never abated. This injunction I fulfilled as far as in my power. Any person who may happen to be in charge of some that I had not, will I trust deliver them to their lawful owner, Frederick Byerly, Esquire, Surveyor, Melbourne.

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About the time I am now referring to, I was often congratulated by gentlemen of the Surveying Department, who were acquainted with my son, on his rapid progress in the difficult branches of the science. One, in particular, said: "I consider it wonderful that your son should have mastered this business almost by his own exertions, whilst I have cost my father nearly a thousand pounds in England, under first-rate teachers, and am glad to go to him for information on many points." Mr. Byerly too, who is not given to flatter, when I thanked him for having so ably instructed and brought my son forward in so short a time, replied: "Don't thank me; I really believe he has taught me quite as much as I have taught him." In my own experience, his queries and suggestions led me to investigate many things, which I had slightly considered, without thoroughly understanding them. He had a rare gift of ascertaining in a very short time the use of any instrument put into his hands, and could detect at a glance its defects, if such existed. In the early part of 1858, a gentleman who had made errors in his surveys asked him to look over some of his instruments. William, on taking one into his hand, said at once, with a smile: "If you work with this, you will find many errors." "That is why I asked you," replied the owner. "I have been surveying with it, and have committed nothing but mistakes." So much were people in the habit of praising him, that it carried my thoughts back to my Latin Grammar, and the quotation from Terence:—

> Omnes omnia
> Bona dicere et laudare fortunas meas,
> Qui gnatum haberem tali ingenio praeditum.

For himself, he was perpetually lamenting to me that at school he had not received more mathematical instruction; that the time spent in classics exclusively, was, for many, time thrown away. But I must do his late master the justice of saying, that when he first received him under his tuition, he showed little fondness for mathematics in general, although he had a taste for algebra. The two following letters, to his brother and mother, bearing the same date, in the spring of 1858, were despatched from the out-station where he was engaged in a survey.

St. Arnaud, April 10th, 1858.

Dear Charley,

I do not think you have written a letter to me since we have been out here. It gave me much pleasure to see yours to the Doctor. I wish you could be here, instead of working for 40 or 50 pounds a year at home, out of which you can save very little. Here you might be getting at least 100 pounds, and nothing to find yourself but clothes. But it will not do for you to come until the Doctor goes home. I want you to write and tell me if you have any taste for any particular profession, and if you have been making good use of your spare time, in reading useful works. You should remember never to waste a minute; always be doing something. Try and find

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out what things you have most taste for, as they are what you should study most; but get a general knowledge of all the sciences. Whatever else you learn, don't forget mathematics and the sciences more immediately deduced from them, (at the head of which stands astronomy,) if you have any love of truth—and if you have not, you have none of your mother's blood in you. Mathematics are the foundation of all truth as regards practical science in this world; they are the only things that can be demonstrably proved; no one can dispute them. In geology, chemistry, and even in astronomy, there is more or less of mere matter of opinion. For instance, in astronomy we do not know for certain what the sun or stars are made of, or what the spots are on the sun, and a few details of that kind; but the main mathematical principles cannot be disputed. The distance and size of the sun or of any of the planets can be proved; the length of their days and years, and even the weight of the matter of which they are composed. Such things will probably appear to you impossible, if you have read nothing of them; especially when you hear that the sun is ninety-five millions of miles off, and that the planet Neptune, which is the farthest known planet from the sun, is at such a distance that the light of the sun takes about five hours to reach it; that is, the sun is actually five hours above the horizon before the people there see it rise. Its distance is 2850 millions of miles, and the sun as seen by them is not larger than Venus appears to us when an evening star. And although this planet is so distant that it can only be seen with large telescopes, they can not only compute its distance and size, but also the mass of matter of which it is composed. But you will find all this thrown into the shade by the way in which it was discovered. As I may be telling you what you know already, I will merely state, that from observed perturbations in the course of the planet Uranus, it was supposed that another planet was in existence beyond it; and two competitors set to work to calculate its size, situation, *etc*. The result was, the discovery of this other planet within a few minutes of the place pointed out by them, and its size, *etc*., not very different from what they estimated it at. But besides this, astronomy includes matters more intimately mixed up with our everyday affairs. In the Nautical Almanacs, which are constructed for several years in advance, the situations and nearly everything connected with the different planets are calculated for every day in the year, and can be found, if required, for any minute in any day you please, for 10,000 years to come. Also the eclipses of the sun or moon, with the exact moment at which they will commence or end, at any spot on the earth; the exact portion eclipsed, or, in fact, anything about it you like to mention for any given number of years in advance. Not only this, but you can find the eclipses of Jupiter's

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moons with the same precision. Now is there anything to be compared with this? But if astronomy led to no other end than the mere gaining of knowledge, or the assistance of commerce, it would take a far lower stand than it is really entitled to. As the great object of the science is the correction of error and the investigation of truth, it necessarily leads all those that feel an interest in it to a higher appreciation and desire for truth; and you will easily perceive that a man having a knowledge of all these vast worlds, so much more extensive than our own, must be capable of forming a far higher estimate of that Almighty Being who created all these wonders, than one who knows nothing more than the comparatively trifling things that surround us on earth.

I send you 3 pounds, with which you are to get the following books for yourself and the girls:

Dr. Lardner's Museum of Science and Art, in six double volumes: 1 pound 1 shilling.

Chambers' Mathematics, Parts 1 and 2, and Chambers' Mathematical Tables, each: 3 shillings 6 pence.

A Nautical Almanac for next year: 2 shillings 6 pence.

The Art of Reasoning, or the Principles of Logic, by Samuel Niel: 4 shillings 6 pence.

Twelve planispheres, forming a guide to the stars for every night in the year, with an introduction: 6 shillings 6 pence.

Lardner's Museum of Science and Art is one of the best books that has ever been written. It includes a general knowledge of nearly everything you can think of; and will be as useful to Bessy and Hannah as to you.

Chambers' Mathematics, contain all that you are likely to require in that branch, with the exception of Euclid and Algebra, both of which you must get, unless you have them. You will need some one to assist you and explain points in the mathematics and algebra, otherwise your progress will be very slow. But remember that whenever you have puzzled over a problem for some time, and cannot understand it, do not give it up altogether, but leave it for a few days or weeks and then try it again. It will then, very likely, appear quite simple, and you will be astonished that you did not make it out before. You will find the Nautical Almanac very useful, not only in giving you an idea of astronomical problems, but also for ascertaining the particulars of any strange stars you may see, or where to look for the different planets, *etc*. With the help of the twelve maps you will soon be acquainted with all the principal fixed stars.

You should carefully study the Art of Reasoning, as it is what most people are very deficient in, and I know few things more disagreeable than to argue, or even converse with a man who has no idea of inductive and deductive philosophy. After getting the

books I have mentioned, you may spend the balance in any others you please, but remember, they must be scientific ones. If you write to Walton and Maberley, 27

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Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, they will send you a catalogue of books published by them, in which you will find descriptions of nearly all that I have mentioned and plenty of others. You can order those you want direct from them, or get them through a local stationer. I expect you to acquire some practice at printing, and ornamental writing, in the Bank. If you have a steady hand, you should exercise yourself at it as much as possible, and learn mechanical drawing at the same time. Draftsmen get well paid out here, and are greatly in demand. Being able to print neatly and evenly is the main point: all the rest is easily learned. My hand is very unsteady, as you may see by my writing; I do not think I shall ever be able to write a decent hand. One other piece of advice I must give you before I shut up; that is, never try to show off your knowledge, especially in scientific matters. It is a sin that certain persons we know have been guilty of. The first step is to learn your own ignorance, and if ever you feel inclined to make a display, you may be sure that you have as yet learned nothing. I think I must write to mamma next time. Give my love to her, the girls, old Anne, Aunt M., Miss R., *etc*., and when you write, tell me what has become of Farwell, and any others of our schoolmates you may know about.

Your affectionate brother,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

St. Arnaud, April 10th, 1858.

My dear mother,

It is all very well to say write about anything, but it is easier said than done. You will find that I have written Charley a long letter, and I had no idea of doing so when I began, as you see I commenced on note paper. But what would be the use of my writing to you on such subjects, and all others are soon disposed of? (You would not think I was a surveyor, to look at the parallelism of these lines.) You tell me in one of your letters to write about myself. That is a very poor subject, and one that a mother should not recommend to a son. My father sent me a letter of yours a few weeks ago, and I cannot say whether it most amused or pained me to see the extraordinary way in which you rush to conclusions. Your argument appears to be this: J. is acquainted with a Mr. T. another Mr. T. has taken out some Miss G. G.'s, about whom there are scandalous reports (which are as likely to be false as true): therefore J. is sure to fall in love with one of the Miss G. G.'s. As it happens, J. has not had the pleasure of meeting any of the Miss G. G.'s, and it is quite probable that he never may, as Australia is not a little place like Totnes; and I do not think he would have any wish to connect himself with the G. family, or with any family in marriage, at present. There is another thing, my dear mother, in that letter. You talk about high and low people; I presume you use the words in a very different sense from that in which I understand them. I consider nothing low

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but ignorance, vice, and meanness, characteristics generally found where the animal propensities predominate over the higher sentiments. I have yet to learn that there is anything high about the T.'s. Mr. T. is a jolly little man, and lives more like a gentleman than most of the people about the bush; but he has rather a tendency to the animal development than otherwise, which makes it probable that there may be some truth in the reports alluded to.

From what I can judge of this dear son of yours he is not likely, I think, to do anything very rashly; and as for getting married, he will not be in a position to think of that for several years; and if ever he does, I hope it will be to some one at least equal to himself in education. Give my love to Bessy and Hannah. I do not think it would do them any harm to write a letter sometimes. I expect Bessy was tired long ago of the algebra you were talking so much about.

Does it ever enter your head that it would be a good thing for all of you to come out here in a few years, when the girls have finished their education? This country is undergoing great changes for the better. Now the rush to the diggings is over, people are beginning to live like civilized human beings. In a few years everything will be as settled as in England, and we shall be able to live much cheaper.

Believe me ever, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

From a letter to myself of the 6th of June, which was rather a long one, I give only the following extracts:—

"What you say about this world I do not quite agree with; I think it a very good world, and only requires a person to be reasonable in his expectations, and not to trust too much to others. It appears to be almost equally divided into three principal classes—-honest fools, foolish rogues, and honest rational beings. Some may add another class, but there are so few belonging to it—scarcely one in ten thousand—that I think it should be ranked amongst the phenomena of nature. I mean, the successful rogues—men who do things neatly, and escape being found out. The first and second are often useful to each other; the third benefit by the first and second, inasmuch as they learn by their experience, without paying for it themselves." He then cautions me against certain money speculations. Another paragraph says: "I find I am likely to change my station, but have no instructions as yet. I do not care if they keep me here another month. I have first-rate neighbours, a Mr. and Mrs. M., who live just across the creek; very nice people, and no humbug. Mr. M. resembles you in many ways." He then mentions a colt

he had reared, called Nelly; says she goes in and out of the tent as if she had been born in it, shakes hands with any one as soon as asked, and carries Mr. M.'s little boy Willie on her back with perfect gentleness. On his way back to Melbourne, he taught a colt of mine, in two or three days, to be equally docile, until it became the pet of the community. It was reared by hand, and I fear I lost it through the kindly-meant attention of one of my neighbours.

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In the summer of 1858 he went down to Melbourne in consequence of a disagreement between Mr. Byerly and the Chief Commissioner of Land and Works at that time, Mr. Duffy. He was not then employed in the regular survey, but took occasional contracts, under Mr. Hodgkinson, Deputy Surveyor General, who always expressed his admiration of his character. A letter to his mother at this date says:—

Melbourne, August 15th, 1858.

My dear mother,

I have again to plead guilty of the sin of omitting to write. It is many months since I have heard from you, and as for Charley and the girls, they do not write at all. I have just left the bush and am living, for the present, in town. The change is pleasant, after being so long in the bush. Melbourne is wonderfully altered since I last saw it. There are some very fair buildings in it now, and things are a little cheaper than they used to be. I am, of course, living in lodgings, and am fortunate in getting into a comfortable house; a private family with no other lodgers, and Mrs. H. takes almost as much care of me as you would. It is quite strange, and at the same time amusing to me, to see her anxiety about my eating, drinking, catching cold, and all that sort of thing, as I have been so long unaccustomed to these little attentions. I am sure if some of you who have never been away from home were to see how we live in the bush, you would not expect us to survive more than a few weeks, and yet it does us no harm whatever. I passed through Ballaarat on my way down, and spent a few days with my father. He was looking better than he used to be, very healthy, and not so stout. It is astonishing how little he eats, and yet is always complaining of having eaten too much. I expect it will be the same with me. I have as good an appetite as ever, but I can live on much less food than other people can. I hope Charley has the books I told him to get. I send you with this a Victoria News Letter, which will save me the trouble of writing what I suppose you will care little to hear, so I have no more news to tell you; and with best love to—etc. *etc*.,

Believe me, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

As I shall have occasion to allude to this letter in a subsequent portion of my narrative, I wish the latter part of it, with regard to eating, may be borne in mind.

CHAPTER 4.

My Son is appointed to the Magnetic Observatory at Melbourne, under Professor Neumayer. His Rapid Advance in the Study of Magnetism and Mineralogy. Letters to his Relatives at Home, descriptive of his Pursuits, Wishes, and Sentiments. First suggestions of his Probable Employment on the Exploring Expedition.

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In November, 1858, my son received an appointment in the Magnetic Observatory at Melbourne, then recently established under Professor Neumayer, on the recommendation of Mr. Ligar, the Surveyor-General. This gentleman had his eye on him, as he told me himself, to succeed the professor, in the event of his returning to his native country, Germany; and also with the view of his being employed, on attaining a thorough knowledge of magnetic science, in the geodetic survey of the colony. Such was the progress he made, that Mr. Ellery, superintendent of the astronomical observatory at Williamstown, tried to dissuade him from engaging in the exploratory expedition, when formed. But notwithstanding the prospect of double pay and less danger, he yielded to his long-cherished desire of being one of the first to reach the Gulf of Carpentaria overland by a direct route, north from Melbourne; and therefore resolved to “set his life upon a cast, and stand the hazard of the die.”

I now give a series of extracts from his letters to his mother, sisters, and brother, written during his residence at the Observatory. They indicate his character, sentiments, and occupations more distinctly than I could do by rendering them in my own words. He and his chief boarded together; a great advantage, as it gave him the opportunity, even at table, of conversing on his favourite subjects, astronomy and magnetism. At times, he feared that he should lose this position. One cause of apprehension was, that the local parliament would discontinue the grant for the Observatory; another, that superior interest might wrest it from him, as he had not been regularly appointed to the staff by Government, but by Mr. Ligar himself, who had seen, by intercourse with him during the survey, that he was putting “the right man in the right place.” In a letter to me, December, 1858, he says: “I hope I shall not have to go into the bush again, I like Melbourne and my present occupation so much. But everything must be uncertain until after Christmas, as all depends on Parliament voting money for the Observatory. Should they not allow the necessary sum, I must return to surveying once more.”

. . .

Magnetic Observatory, Melbourne, March 16th, 1859.

My dear mother,

It gave me much pleasure to receive a letter from you by the last mail; but I can assure you that I am always so busy, and the time passes so quickly, that I had almost forgotten to write to you until it was too late, as the mail closes early to-morrow morning. I am now living at the Observatory, Professor Neumayer having kindly given me a room here, which is a great advantage in many ways. I hope that Charley will take every opportunity of learning the things I mentioned in a letter to him some time ago, more especially mathematical drawing: and that I shall see in the next letter I receive from him that he has changed his mind as regards the profession

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he said he had a taste for. I wish he would find out for me whether there is a translation into English of Colonel Savage's Practical Astronomy. It is a Russian work, and the place to inquire is of some of the booksellers in London who confine themselves to foreign publications. I like my present employment more and more every day. My only trouble is the want of time. I hope you all find your time pass as easily as I do; if the girls do not, they may as well kill some of it by writing letters. I have so much to do that I must conclude, with love to all.

Ever, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Magnetic Observatory, June 17th, 1859.

My dear mother,

It was my intention to have sent you a stereoscopic photograph of your dear son by this mail; but owing to pressure of business I have been unable to get it done in time. I must therefore leave it until next month. I received a letter from Ballaarat a day or two ago, containing one from you to my father; you say something in it about not hearing from me. I do not understand how that is, as I have been wonderfully regular lately, and have sent a letter every month to one of you. I am sorry to hear that the winter has been so mild, for I fear that may cause much damage from frost in the spring. We have had a considerable quantity of rain here already, which is a great benefit to the country generally, but makes it rather unpleasant in Melbourne. Wonderful improvements have been made in our public library lately. It is now really a splendid one; in fact there are very few better anywhere. I enclose a News Letter, which is a great convenience to lazy fellows, or to those who have too much work. Give my love to all, and

Believe me, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Magnetic Observatory, Melbourne, June 17th, 1859.

My dear Bessy,

I must write a few lines to you, more especially as I wrote to Hannah by the last mail; but mind, I must have a long answer by return of post. I want to know whether Charles got the maps of the stars that I told him to get some time ago. If so, he should begin at once to keep a register of meteors. In the first place, let him get a book—a good copybook would do—and rule it according to the following form, to which I have attached an example:—

Column 1: Number (Name) of Meteor.
Column 2: Day of Month.
Column 3: Hour of Day.
Column 4: Altitude. At commencement.
Column 5: Altitude. At end.
Column 6: Azimuth. At commencement.
Column 7: Azimuth. At end.
Column 8: Description of its situation with respect to certain Stars. At commencement.
Column 9: Description of its situation with respect to certain Stars. At end.

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1 : June 1 : 8 P.M. : 35 degrees : 20 degrees : north-east : east by south : 2 or 3 degrees below Spice. : To Anthers.

Column 1: Size of Meteor.
Column 2: Length of Tail.
Column 3: Colour of Meteor.
Column 4: Duration of Meteor.
Column 5: Duration of Tail.
Column 6: *Remarks*.
Column 7: Observer.

May 2 : 5 degrees : Yellow : 1 second : 3 seconds : Small, but very bright. : west.

The time should be very carefully noted. If there is anything in the form that he does not understand he must ask me about it when he writes. The altitude and azimuths will only be approximate, but the main thing is to see how the shooting stars are situated with reference to the fixed stars. It is of great importance to note these meteors, even the small ones, as very little is yet known of them; and every observation, if carefully made, will some day help to show what they are. The object in noting the stars they pass by is this: that if two or more observers see the same meteor from places several miles from one another, the comparison of their observations will generally give a means of ascertaining the distance of the meteor from the earth. But it is getting late, and I will write to Charley more about it by next mail; only tell him to make himself well acquainted with the stars. Give my love to him and Hannah, your aunt M., and old Anne; and tell me in your next how the latter is getting on: and do not forget to let me know all about Charley and how he spends his time. I am afraid that you little girls take him out walking too much, and make him read pretty stories instead of the books he ought to be studying.

Your affectionate brother,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Magnetic Observatory, Melbourne, July 14th, 1859.

My dear mother,

The news by the last mail has put us all in a state of excitement about our defenses, in the event of England being involved in the continental war. Melbourne is badly situated in case of an invasion. There is at present not the least protection; and unless the home government sends us out two or three good war steamers, we shall most certainly

get a good thrashing some day. The French have possession of the island of New Caledonia, which is not very far from here, and is a convenient place of rendezvous for them. I see by your letter to my father that you are rather afraid the French may invade England. For my part I believe they have more sense. It is the most hopeless thing they can attempt. I send you two or three photographs; they are very poor, and not stereoscopic as I intended. The artist made a failure of the matter and gave me these. He is going to try it again some day with a better camera; but as that would be too late for the mail I must send you these now, and you may expect better next time. I find that the mail is to close this

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afternoon instead of Monday morning, but if a supplementary bag should be made up on Monday I will write again. I hope that in future you will direct my letters to Melbourne instead of Ballaarat, for I seldom get them until the return mail is about to start. We have had some rather cold weather lately; that is, the thermometer has been below thirty-two degrees once or twice, which is cold for us. I am glad to hear that Charley has been appointed to the Bank, as it is a good thing for all parties at present. I fear that I shall be unable to send you a News Letter this time. I wish you would tell me whether you find anything of interest in them; also whether you would like to have the Argus sometimes. Adieu for the present, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

August 6th, 1859.

My dear mother,

You see I have sent you the News Letter for this month, with a long account of an unfortunate shipwreck that happened on the coast last month. It is a wonder how those passengers that were saved managed to exist so long without food. The only reasonable explanation that has been offered is, that as they were continually wet, from the sea breaking over them, a large quantity of moisture must have been absorbed by the skin, otherwise they could never have lived so long without fresh water. It must have been an awkward situation to be in. I fancy I would rather have been drowned at once; but it is not easy to judge how we should feel under the circumstances, unless we had tried it. As Pope says, 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast; man never is,' *etc*. (of course you know the rest). It strikes me that the height of happiness is, to hope everything and expect nothing, because you have all the satisfaction of hope, and if you get nothing you are not disappointed; but if you obtain what you want, you are agreeably surprised.

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Flagstaff Observatory, Melbourne, August 15th, 1859.

My dear mother,

I am glad to be able to acknowledge the receipt by this mail of the first letter that you have sent to me direct since I have been in Melbourne. It is satisfactory to know that you are pleased with the News Letters; I must endeavour to send them regularly. I had a letter from my father to-day. He has received yours, which we feared was lost, as he saw nothing of it for some days after the mail was in; but he found it at Bath's Hotel. One must make some little allowance for a mother's partiality in your account of B. and H.; I hope your prejudice against novels does not prevent their reading those of Thackeray and Dickens, every one of whose works, especially the former, should be read by them, for they contain some of the best things, both in a moral and literary point of view, that we have in the English language. I shall be more careful in future about the postage; and now, my dear mother, with love to yourself and all,

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I remain,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Flagstaff Observatory, Melbourne, September 15th, 1859.

My dear mother,

I was rather disappointed at not receiving a letter from any one by the last mail. I have not heard from my father since it arrived. I conclude he has not sent me your letters to him, thinking that I have received some myself. I suppose you are all glad that the war has ended so unexpectedly. It is to be hoped that the peace will be a permanent one, although people here generally appear to think that it will not prove so. The election of members for our lower house will soon terminate. Judging from the results already known, we are likely to have a curious Parliament this time. Our winter is nearly over. Last night there was a festival held in honour of Alexander von Humboldt. It was unfortunately a very wet evening, which prevented a great many from attending who would otherwise have been there. I hope you are all in good health. It would have pleased you much to have seen the two splendid auroras, of which I have sent Charley a description. At one time it was light enough to read a newspaper out of doors, after the moon went down. I must now say adieu. With much love to all,

Believe me, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Melbourne, September 15th, 1859.

My dear Charley,

I send you by this mail two accounts of auroras, which we have had the pleasure of observing here, one on the 28th ultimo, and the other on the 2nd instant. I would recommend you to take care of these papers, as you may find it very interesting to refer to them at some future period. You will perhaps be so good as to let me know by return of post whether anything of the kind was observed in England about the same time; and be careful to state the dates and hours, *etc*., as exactly as possible. You will find much, in the reports I have sent you, to object to, in the manner of expression and the words

used; but you must make due allowance for their having been written by a German (Professor Neumayer). I have corrected some of the most prominent errors in the second. I wish you would look out for every description of auroras that may appear in the newspapers, as well as for the phenomena themselves. You might always cut out the paragraphs, and put them in a letter; and in the event of your seeing one yourself, you might write a description, being particular to note the time of the different phases as nearly as you can. By just taking this small amount of trouble you will be rendering a much greater service to the science of magnetism than you imagine; for one of the most important points is to establish or prove the existence of a simultaneity in the Northern and Southern Lights.

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If you have yet obtained those books that I told you some time ago to get, you will find some elementary information on the subject in them, particularly in Lardner's Museum of Science and Art.

I suppose I shall hear by the next mail whether you have been able to obtain for me Savage's Practical Astronomy. I want to trouble you with another commission of the same kind, namely, to find out whether there is a translation from the German into English of Professor Carl Kreil's Introduction to Magnetic Observations, 2nd edition, Vienna, 1858. I fear you will have some trouble in getting this book for me, but it is of great importance that I should have it if possible. It may not be translated yet, but it certainly will be before long. Whenever you get any catalogues of scientific books from the publishers in London, you might send them to me in a letter; or if they are too bulky, you have only to put a strip of paper round, and send it as a book, without letter or writing. The postage is sixpence for four ounces, and threepence for every two ounces more, up to three pounds, which is the greatest weight that may be sent in one parcel; its dimensions must not exceed two feet in any direction.

They have just succeeded in raising the two thousand pounds here, by subscription, that was wanted towards an exploration fund, for fitting out an expedition, that will probably start for the interior of our continent next March. Camels have been sent for, to be used in places where horses cannot go. You would be astonished at the number of applications that are being made by people anxious to join the expedition. Nine-tenths of them would wish themselves home again before they had been out three months. Give my love to the two girls, and believe me, my dear Charley,

Your affectionate brother,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Flagstaff Observatory, Melbourne, November 18th, 1859.

My dear mother,

The homeward mail closes in about half an hour, so that I have very little time to write. The mail did not arrive here until a few days ago, being more than a week after time. I was glad to receive your short letter. We have had a very pleasant spring this year; not so many hot winds as usual. I have mentioned in my letter to B—that it is probable I shall be going up the country again in a few months, but that need not make any difference in the address of my letters, as Professor Neumayer will have the best opportunities of forwarding them to me. We have lately had a visit from Dr. Hochstelter, a German professor, who came out in the Novara, an Austrian frigate, sent by the Austrian government to make a scientific tour round the world. Dr. Hochstelter is a

geologist, and has made a geological survey of New Zealand. He exhibited a few evenings ago at our philosophical institute a great number of maps which he has compiled during the short time he remained

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on the island, and stated many very interesting facts connected with them. From what he says, there is no place in the world, except Iceland, where boiling springs and geysers are so large and plentiful. The doctor goes home by this mail, and I suppose there will soon be a good work published by him, giving a description of all he has seen. I hope to visit New Zealand as soon as I return from the interior of this country.

Ever your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

It will be perceived by the foregoing letters how diligently and anxiously he corresponded with his mother, sisters, and brother in England, and how anxiously he desired the mental improvement of the latter. In his next communications he prepares them for the probability of his being one of the exploring party. Yet he wrote on the subject as he had done to me, with reserve, until the matter should be finally settled. He knew the anxiety it would occasion, and in the event of his not obtaining the appointment he so earnestly sought for, he wished to avoid creating that anxiety unnecessarily.

The same mail which bore his letter of the 18th of November to his mother, carried also the following to his sister:

My dear Bessy,

I do not mean to bother you with such a long letter this time as I did last month, and which I hope reached you. I rather expected to have received the photograph I wrote to you for by the last mail. I wish you would indite some good long letters by return of post, as it will probably be the last, or very nearly so, that I shall get from you for many months. It seems very likely that I shall be leaving Melbourne in March, to accompany the expedition for the exploration of the interior of this continent. It is calculated that we shall be away for about three years. It may be more, but it is not likely to be much less. *It is not yet certain* that I shall go. In fact, nothing is decided, not even who will be the leader; but I thought it would be as well to mention it to you now, as your answer to this cannot reach me until March. But remember that my going away need not prevent your writing frequently; for it is likely there will be occasional means of communication with Melbourne for the first six months, and Professor Neumayer will take every opportunity of forwarding my letters. It is quite possible that I may not go, but it is more likely that I shall, as Professor N. is very anxious that I should, to make magnetic and meteorological observations, and he is on the Exploration Committee. If you have not been able to get the books I wrote for, for myself, you may as well leave them for the present. I have been indulging greatly in operas lately. I can understand that sort of music better than high-flown oratorios. The operatic company at the Theatre Royal is

not first-rate, but as good as we can expect to have in a new colony like this. The pieces they have given are Il Trovatore, Lucia di Lammermoor, Lucrezia Borgia, and La Sonnambula; the latter is a delightful one, but they cannot manage it satisfactorily, some of the songs are so difficult of execution.

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Please to give my love, *etc*., *etc*.

Your affectionate brother,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

The following reply to his mother alludes to the circumstance, which she had mentioned, of an aurora borealis, having appeared in England. This completes his letters for 1859.

Flagstaff Observatory, December 18th, 1859.

My dear mother,

Your letter of the 17th of October arrived here by the Columbian only three or four days after time, which is a wonderful piece of punctuality for that miserable old tub. I am glad that you were so much pleased with the sketch of the Observatory that I sent you. I now forward a photograph made by a friend of mine, which will convey a better idea than the other of the appearance of our habitation, *etc*. You will find an explanation of the various parts of the picture written in pencil on the back of each respectively. You had better have it mounted on a piece of cardboard by some one who is accustomed to mounting photographs; when nicely done it looks twice as well. It was intended that we should all have been taken in this picture, but owing to some mismanagement, no notice was given, so no one was outside at the time. Your remarks about the aurora borealis of the 12th of October were very interesting and valuable. We knew that there was an aurora there, but of course could not tell where it was visible. You little thought that while you were looking at the vibrations of those beautiful streamers of red and white light, I was watching sympathetic oscillations of little steel magnets, which we suspended by silk threads, in the underground magnetic house that you see the top of in the foreground of the picture. The magnets were sometimes moving about so rapidly that I could scarcely read them; and although the aurora was with you nearly at an end probably about ten o'clock, yet the magnets did not resume their normal position for nearly twenty-four hours after. You will see from this the advantage to be derived from noting all particulars with regard to these phenomena, whenever one has an opportunity of seeing them; for we must always consider the possibility of their not being visible at places where there are observatories, on account of clouds and other causes. One great point that has yet to be satisfactorily determined is, whether the effect on a magnet at one end of the world is simultaneous with the auroral discharge at the other; or whether a certain time is required for the effect to be communicated through the earth. I had a letter from my father yesterday, enclosing the one you sent him. By-the-by, this day week is Christmas-day; and, if I am not mistaken, your birthday as well as Hannah's is near about this time. She must be thirteen or fourteen; but, upon my honour, I do not certainly know my own age. Was I born in January 1834 or 1835? I

wish you all may have a merry Christmas and many returns of the same. Please to give my love as usual, and

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Believe me, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

CHAPTER 5.

Postponement of the Exploring Expedition projected at the beginning of 1860. My Son's Letter to his Sister on going into Society. Mr. Birnie's Opinion of him, and Extract from his Lecture. Letter from William to his Mother on Religious Views and Definitions of Faith. His last Communications to his family at Home, before the Departure of the Expedition.

I *omit* my son's letters of January and February, 1860, as they contain nothing on scientific matters, or on the subject of Australia, although interesting in other respects. They mark the habitual tone of his feelings and principles, his constant habit of self-examination, his study of his fellow-men, and how strongly he was impressed with the truth of Pope's grand conclusion, that

> "Virtue alone is happiness below."

"You will be glad to learn," he says, writing to his mother on the 17th of March, "that the Exploring Expedition is postponed for six months, for want of a suitable leader, as none of the candidates who offered their services were thought qualified in a scientific point of view. [Footnote: Oddly enough, Mr. Burke, who was afterwards chosen, with many requisites of a high order, was deficient in this, which, indeed, he never for a moment pretended to possess.] You need not work yourself up to such a state of excitement at the bare idea of my going, but should rather rejoice that the opportunity presents itself. The actual danger is nothing, and the positive advantages very great. Besides, my dear mother, what avails your faith if you terrify yourself about such trifles? Were we born, think you, to be locked up in comfortable rooms, and never to incur the hazard of a mishap? If things were at the worst, I trust I could meet death with as much resignation as others, even if it came to-night. I am often disgusted at hearing young people I know, declare that they are afraid of doing this or that, because they *might* be killed. Were I in some of their shoes I should be glad to hail the chance of departing this life fairly in the execution of an honourable duty."

The following selections from his numerous letters at this time are little more than extracts, and form but a small portion of the whole. All speak his admiration of a great and beneficent Creator, derived from the study of his works. He had a great distaste for sectarianism, and for a too slavish devotion to forms and conventionalities, whether in

religious or social practice, fearing lest these extremes might savour of untruthfulness or hypocrisy.

Magnetic Observatory, Melbourne, April 18th, 1860.

My dear Bessy,

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The mail was to have closed to-morrow, but the Emeu has met with an accident which will delay it for another week, so that I hope to treat you to a long letter. I was much disappointed at receiving nothing from you this month. It would be a first-rate plan to do what a friend of mine was recommending to me only this evening, namely to commence an epistle at the beginning of each month, and add a little daily, adopting as your motto the Latin proverb, “Nulla dies sine linea,” which means, No day without a line. You might at least favour me with a few monthly. It would be as much for your own benefit as for my pleasure. Pray don’t send a poor excuse again about waiting for an answer to a former letter.

I must now return to the subject of my last. I hope you have carefully considered the remarks contained therein; and I wish to draw your attention to other matters not so immediately connected with religion, but which may seriously affect your prosperity and happiness in this world. I fear that mamma is too much inclined to discourage your going into society. If so, with all due deference to my dear mother’s experience and judgment, she has adopted a mistaken view. You will perhaps say, you do not care for society. So much the worse; that proves the evil of seclusion. I had the same ideas once, and greatly to my disadvantage in a general sense, although in one point they may have been beneficial, by making me devote more time to my studies. But I am doubtful even about that. At any rate, girls are differently situated. Having no need of deep scientific knowledge, their education is confined more to the ordinary things of the world, the study of the fine arts, and of the manners and dispositions of people. It is often asserted that women are much sharper than men in estimating character. Whether that be the case or not, is more than I can say, but I think it ought to be, because women have better opportunities and more leisure than we have for noticing little peculiarities and the natural expression of the features. Now, my advice would be, to go as much as you can into quiet, good society, and moderately into gay; not to make it the business of life, as some do, who care for little beyond frivolous amusements, and that merely for the sake of killing time. But go to these places, even if you do not like them, as a duty you owe to yourself and others, even as you used to go to school, when you would rather have remained at home.

You should cultivate, as much as possible, the acquaintance of ladies from other parts of the country, especially of those who have travelled much. This is the best way of rubbing off provincialisms, *etc*. Perhaps you think you have none; nevertheless I shall be prepared for some whenever I have the felicity of seeing you. You cannot think how disagreeable the sound of the Devonshire drawl is to me now, and all people of the county that I meet have it more or less. You will, no doubt, wonder how I have

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become so changed, and what has induced me to adopt social views so different from those I formerly held. The fact is, that since I have been here, I have been thrown into every variety of companionship, from the highest to the lowest, from the educated gentleman and scholar to the uncultivated boor. The first effect was, a disposition to admire the freedom and bluntness of the uncivilized; but more personal experience showed me the dark as well as the bright side, and brought out in their due prominence the advantages of the conventionalities of good society. While in the bush, this conviction only impressed itself partially, but a return to town extended and confirmed it. When we are in daily contact and intercourse with an immense number of persons, some of whom we like, while we dislike or feel indifferent about many others, we find a difficulty in avoiding one man's acquaintance without offending him, or of keeping another at a distance without an insult. It is not easy to treat your superiors with respect void of sycophancy, or to be friendly with those you prefer, and at the same time to steer clear of undue familiarity, adapting yourself to circumstances and persons, and, in fact, doing always the right thing at the proper time and in the best possible manner. I used to be rather proud of saying that it was necessary for strangers to know me for some time before they liked me. I am almost ashamed now not to have had sense enough to see that this arose from sheer awkwardness and stupidity on my part; from the absence of address, and a careless disregard of the rules of society, which necessarily induce a want of self-confidence, a bashful reserve, annoying to sensible people and certainly not compensated for by the possession of substantial acquirements, hidden, but not developed, and unavailable when wanted. I find now that I can get into the good graces of any one with whom I associate better in half an hour than I could have done in a week two years ago. I know no one who puts these matters in a better light than Lord Chesterfield in his Letters to his Son, which you most probably have read.

Since I wrote to you last, I have received some light on the subject of *faith*, which I was not at that time aware of. In a discussion with a gentleman on religious matters, some remarks were made upon faith and charity, which led to an analysis of the original Greek word used to express the former by St. Paul, which has been translated "faith," and is generally accepted in the ordinary sense we attach to that word in English; namely, an implicit trust in what you are told, without question or doubt. But this friend of mine, who is a splendid Greek scholar, called my attention to the fact that the Greek word, for which we have no exact equivalent, means an openness to conviction, or a willingness to receive after proper proof; not a determination to believe without investigation. He also pointed out to me what I was less prepared to hear, that the charity spoken of does not mean, as I supposed it to express, conscientiousness, but love and good fellowship, in action and speech; in fact, more in accordance with the sense in which the word is commonly understood. This will show you the evil of coming to conclusions on insufficient data. Depend upon it, you must always hear both sides of a story before you can get at the truth.

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I am going out to dinner this evening expressly to meet two of the finest girls in Melbourne. Some of my cautious friends say that I am running a great risk, and that I shall never recover from the effects. I cannot say that I feel much frightened. If anything serious should happen, and the consequences are not immediately fatal, I shall add a few lines to-morrow. Look sharp about photographs. I begin to suspect you are ashamed to show your faces in this remote region. Give my love to H., C., *etc*., and accept the same from

Your ever affectionate brother,

William J. *Wills*.

P.S. 19th.—The elements interposed to save me from the danger I wilfully determined not to avoid. It rained so heavily last evening that the syrens stayed at home.

. . .

In the month of May 1860, I went to Melbourne for a few days, and spent many pleasant hours with my son. I found him contented and happy. His appointment to the Exploring Expedition, so long the yearning desire of his heart, he appeared to consider as a fait accompli. He was in comfortable lodgings, and had established an intimacy with a gentleman of superior literary acquirements, personally acquainted with many London celebrities of our day. I remember the delight with which he came to my hotel and said: "You must dine with me to-day; I want to introduce you to a person you will much like. His greatest fault is one you possess yourself, a turn for satire, which sometimes makes him enemies." On the same morning he had announced to his friend with beaming eyes, "My father is here;" and when the next day that same friend wished to engage him to an evening party, he replied: "You forget that I have a wild young father to take care of." Alluding again to this, in a letter to his mother, on the 17th of May, he says: "You must excuse a brief epistle this time. The Doctor has been in town for a few days lately, and of course seduced me into all sorts of wild habits. He is looking well, in good condition, but not so fat as he was two years ago." At that time I had been living very frequently on little more than one hard egg per day. Milk and coffee in the morning, and half a pound of meat twice a week. In another letter to his mother, shortly after the above date, he says: "I have not heard from my father for the last fortnight. I am in very good lodgings, at a boarding-house, not working hard, and have time to cultivate some agreeable society. The landlady is all that can be desired and more than could be expected—the company far above the average. There is Mr. B., a barrister and Cambridge man, first rate; and a nice old lady, Mrs. F., very intelligent and good-natured. We three are great friends. Taking it altogether, the house is so comfortable, that I did not go to the theatre once last month." The mutual good opinion may be estimated by the following introduction from the gentleman alluded to above, to the Colonial Secretary at Perth, in the event of his explorations leading my son to Western Australia:

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“I pray your hospitality for Mr. W. J. Wills, for whom I have a very high esteem and friendship. He makes me happy beyond flattery by permitting me to think that I add something to his life. You cannot fail to like him. He is a thorough Englishman, self-relying and self-contained; a well-bred gentleman without a jot of effeminacy. Plucky as a mastiff, high-blooded as a racer, enterprising but reflective, cool, keen, and as composed as daring. Few men talk less; few by manner and conduct suggest more. One fault you will pardon, a tendency to overrate the writer of this letter.”

This gentleman, Mr. Birnie, is a son of the late Sir Richard Birnie, so long an eminent police magistrate in London. At the close of a lecture which he gave at Ballaarat on the 24th of May, 1862, subsequent to the disastrous intelligence of my son’s death, he introduced the following remarks, as reported in a colonial paper:—

If amusement and gravity might be held compatible, they would bear with him in pronouncing the name of William John Wills. (Cheers.) The lecturer, when first in Melbourne, lived at a boarding-house, and there he met Wills. Their friendship soon grew and strengthened, in spite of the difference of their ages. Of the man as a public explorer, everybody knew as well as he did. Professor Neumayer said that Wills’s passion for astronomy was astonishing, and that his nights were consumed in the study. Yet his days also were spent in enlarging his literary attainments. But with all this labour, Wills never disregarded the commoner duties and virtues of life. Even at the breakfast-table he was as neat and clean as a woman. At the ball, of which he was as fond as a child, he was scrupulously temperate, and in speech pure as a lady. Wills read Sharon Turner, Hazlitt, Pope, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and commented on all. Of Tennyson’s In Memoriam he said it was wonderful for its frequent bordering on faults without ever reaching them. He was a student of literature as well as of astronomy and science. Much intercourse they had had, and when the lecturer heard of his death he felt glad that nothing existed for recrimination or self condemnation. Wills was a great admirer of Shakespeare, and his remarks on that author were original and striking. This tribute the lecturer would lay upon his friend’s bust, and humble though the offering was he felt it would be accepted. The lecturer with much feeling concluded a peroration of eloquent eulogy upon his deceased friend, amid the loud and prolonged applause of the audience, who had cheered him at frequent intervals throughout the whole of his discourse.

Mr. McDowall moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer, seconded by Mr. Dimant, both gentlemen highly complimenting Mr. Birnie for his kindness in giving his services on the occasion.

The vote was carried by acclamation, and Mr. Birnie, in acknowledging it, implored the audience not to let the movement die away. The proposed monument could not be too good for the fame of the heroic explorers, and particularly as commemorating the patient, pious, unselfish manliness of Wills to the latest moment of his life. (Cheers.)

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The proceedings then closed.

. . .

In his ordinary letters to me, and in his journals of the Expedition, which he knew were likely to become public documents, my son seldom or never touched upon the all-important subject of religion. This has given rise to an opinion broadly hinted in Australia by some, and of course believed by more, that he was either a sceptic or a downright infidel. Nothing could be further from the truth. His mother's love had instructed him early and zealously in the doctrines of Christianity, and prepared his mind for a conviction of their divine truth when he reached an age which would enable him to exercise his own judgment. As I have already mentioned, even in childhood he had an inquiring mind and a disposition to take nothing for granted without investigation. Hence the questions which sometimes surprised and puzzled his instructress. The tendency grew with his growth, and displayed itself in his mode of dealing with every branch of knowledge comprised in his education. If a new fact in science or an improvement in a mathematical or surgical instrument came under his observation, he closely examined their bearing and use before he adopted them or subscribed to their truth or utility. Those who question before they believe are not unfrequently pronounced unbelievers because they question; an inverted mode of reasoning equally uncharitable and illogical. My son had an undisguised dislike to any ostentatious display of religious sentiment and phraseology, particularly on the part of those who were not teachers by calling. He sometimes suspected more cant than sincerity in the practice, and thought these matters better suited for inward communication between man and his Maker than for public exhibition on common occasions. With my wife's permission I insert the following letter, now for the first time placed in my hands:—

Flagstaff Observatory, Melbourne, June 17th, 1860.

My dear mother,

The mail arrived here only two or three days ago, being nearly a fortnight behind time. I have received your letter of the 13th of April, and one from Bessy. Your endeavours to show that my remarks on religion were wrong, have tended to convince me more clearly that I was right, and that you, partially at least, misunderstood what I said. I did not charge you with being openly uncharitable or of plainly condemning any one; nor do I blame you for believing you are right. We all think we are right, or we should not believe as we do. But I do blame those who pronounce everybody wrong but themselves; for as far as we can judge, one may be as near the truth as another. How often we hear *very* religious people, compassionately remarking upon a neighbour's death: "Ah, poor dear fellow, he was such a good sort of man! I hope and trust he died in the faith!" meaning, of course, their own peculiar tenets, and obliquely implying that, in spite of all his estimable qualities, they have great doubts of his salvation. For my part, I consider this as bad as the outspoken uncharitableness of bigots and persecutors in the olden

days. The inference may be true, but it is not we who have a right to think, much less to utter it.

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But I must now come to the more precise point on which we differ—the meaning of a single expression, which I think I have named in a former letter. I allude to the word *faith*, which, as I was always taught to interpret it, appeared to my apprehension analogous to *credulity*, or a blind belief without question;—an explanation which went against my conscience and conviction whenever it occurred to me from time to time. As I grew older I felt it to be wrong, although I was not sufficiently informed to explain it differently. What perplexed me was that St. Paul should advocate such a servile submission of the intellectual faculties which God has bestowed upon man; such an apparent degradation of the human mind to the level of the lower creation as to call upon us to lay aside our peculiar attributes of reason, common sense, and reflection, and to receive without inquiry any doctrine that may be offered to us. On this principle, we should be as likely to believe in the impostor as in the true saint, and having yielded up our birthright of judgment, become incapable of distinguishing between them. I have thought much on the subject with the assistance of better authorities and scholars than myself, and will now endeavour to explain what I consider St. Paul meant by *faith*, or rather by the Greek word Piotis, which has been so translated. After you have read my explanation, and carefully examined your own mind, will it be too much to expect an admission that of the three great elements of Christianity, faith, hope, and charity, you have hitherto had more of hope than of the other two? The Greek word used by St. Paul signifies something more than faith, or implicit belief, as many render it. It means a self-reliant confidence arising from conviction after investigation and study—the faith that Paley advocates when he says, “He that never doubted never half believed.” It implies, in the first place, an unprejudiced mind, an openness to conviction, and a readiness to receive instruction; and then a desire to judge for ourselves. This must be followed by a patient investigation of evidence pro and con, an impartial summing up, and a conclusion fairly and confidently deduced. If we are thus convinced, then we have acquired faith—a real, unshakeable faith, for we have carefully examined the title deeds and know that they are sound. You will surely see that faith in this sense, and credulity, a belief without inquiry, are the very reverse of each other, and how much superior is the former to the latter. Credulity is a mere feather, liable to be blown about with every veering wind of doctrine. Faith, as St. Paul means it, is as firm as a castle on a rock, where the foundations have been carefully examined and tested, before the building was proceeded with.

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In collateral evidence of what I have just said, I may instance the often-repeated injunction to accept things as little children; which cannot mean with the ignorance and helpless submission of infancy, but with minds free from bigotry, bias, or prejudice, like those of little children, and with an inclination, like them, to receive instruction. At what period of life do any of us learn so rapidly and eagerly as in childhood? We acquire new ideas every time we open our eyes; we are ever attracted by something we have not observed before; every moment adds to our knowledge. If you give a child something to eat it has not been accustomed to, does it swallow it at once without examination? Does it not rather look at, smell, feel, and then taste it? And if disagreeable, will it eat merely because the new food was given to it for that purpose? On the contrary, it is more inclined to reject the gift until influenced by your eating some yourself, or by other modes of persuasion. Let us then, in like manner, examine all that is offered to our belief, and test it by the faculties with which the great God has endowed us. These rare senses and powers of reasoning were given to be used freely, but not audaciously, to discover, not to pervert the truth. Why were so many things presented as through a veil, unless to stimulate our efforts to clear away the veil, and penetrate to the light? I think it is plain that St. Paul, while he calls upon us to believe, never intended that we should be passively credulous. [Footnote: My son might have further enforced his view by a passage from St. Paul, 1 Thessalonians, chapter 5 verse 21, had it occurred to him: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." By this the apostle implies, according to Archbishop Secker's commentary, all things which may be right or wrong according to conscience. And by "proving them" he means, not that we should try them by experience, which would be an absurd and pernicious direction, but that we should examine them by our faculty of judgment, which is a wise and useful exhortation.] Credulity was one of the most prominent engines of the Romish Church, but there was a trace of sense in their application of it. They taught that the ignorant and uneducated should have faith in the doctrines introduced to them by their betters, and those who had found time to investigate the matter; but some, in the present day, support the monstrous delusion that enlightened and well-trained intellects, the most glorious of all the earthly gifts of God, should bow to canting and illiterate fanaticism. . .

Adieu for the present, my dear mother, and believe me ever your affectionate, and I hope unbigoted son,

W.J. *Wills*.

. . .

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This letter was the last but two he ever addressed to his mother, and I have not transcribed the whole. It is long and discursive, considering how much he had on his hands at that time, and how completely he was occupied with the pending expedition. In his next he refers to some apprehensions expressed by maternal solicitude that his religious convictions might be altered by a friend who entertained extremely different views. "I intended, my dear mother," he says, "to have replied at length to one of the remarks in your last, but I fear I must be very brief. Your idea that I am influenced by—-'s notions of religion is amusingly erroneous. I never imagined that I could have written anything to warrant such an impression; but it shows how careful we should be to make clear statements so as to avoid being misunderstood. Mr.—'s religion is to my mind supremely ridiculous; I can only find two points in its favour, namely, its charity and moral principles. But these, although admirable in themselves, do not go far towards proving the truth of the theological notions entertained by its adherents. I can assure you that such ideas of religion are quite as far removed from mine as yours can be." His final letter announces the certainty of his being about to start on the enterprise so long projected. He had hitherto withheld the fact, from a wish not to distress his mother unnecessarily while there was a chance that any unforeseen obstacle might create further delay.

Flagstaff Observatory, Melbourne, July 25th, 1860.

My dear mother,

I am glad to be able to inform you of a matter that you perhaps will not much like, although I do not know why you should object to it. It is that we expect to start on this exploration trip in a few weeks. You will find some particulars on the subject in the Argus that I have sent to Charles. I fancy we shall not be away so long as was at first intended; probably not more than twelve or eighteen months. I anticipate being able to send you a letter sometimes, as well as to receive yours to me, as they propose keeping up a communication with Cooper's Creek. Professor Neumayer will probably accompany us as far as the Darling River, taking an opportunity, at the same time, to prosecute the magnetic survey. This will make matters very pleasant, as well as being of great advantage to me in many respects. We shall be travelling through the country in the most favourable and pleasant season, when there is plenty of water, and everything fresh and green. It will take us about two months to get to Cooper's Creek. I do not give up my position in the Observatory, having obtained leave of absence for the time during which we may be engaged in the exploration. I am sorry I cannot give you more particulars respecting our projected tour, but you will hear enough about it by-and-by. I received a letter from my father a day or two since, in which he speaks of coming down

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before I start. I do not expect to have time to go to Ballaarat before we leave. I sent you by the last mail one or two small photographs of myself, and a locket for Bessy, which she asked me for some time ago. I hope they arrived safely. There was also a photograph of my father on paper. I have to thank some one, name unknown, for the Totnes papers that I received by the last mail. They appear to be well edited, and are decidedly a credit to the town. I had heard of the paper before, but did not expect to find it so good as it is. I suppose you have had a favourable view of the comet that has made its appearance lately. It was visible here for about a week: at first it was of a good size, but being so low down in the west, at sunset it could only be seen for a short time, and then it was comparatively dim, owing to the twilight. Since then it has rapidly disappeared, moving in an east-south-easterly direction. With you it was probably very fine. With kind love, *etc*., *etc*.,

Believe me, my dear mother,

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

CHAPTER 6.

THE EXPEDITION.

How the Expedition originated.
Appointment of the Leader, Officers, and Party.
Mr. Robert O'Hara Burke, Mr. G.J. Landells, Mr. W.J. Wills,
Dr. Herman Beckler, Dr. Ludwig Becker, *etc*.
The Expedition starts from Melbourne on the 20th of August, 1860.
Progress to Swan Hill.
Discharge of Mr. Ferguson, the Foreman.
Advance to Menindie.
Resignation of Mr. Landells and Dr. Herman Beckler.
Mr. Wills promoted to second in Command, and Mr. Wright to third.

The Exploring Expedition of 1860 originated thus. A gentleman, whose name is still concealed, offered one thousand pounds as an inducement to the Government and other parties to come forward and raise funds for an exploration of the island continent, now known as Australia, but formerly as New Holland; the vast interior of which had been supposed to be a desert, an inland sea, or anything that a poetical imagination might suggest. Attempts had been made, but always with insufficient means, and on too contracted a scale, to solve the problem. It was now for Victoria to take up the question in earnest. The 1000 pounds of the unknown contributor, increased to 2200 pounds by private subscriptions, with 6000 pounds voted by the colonial legislature,

supplied in all a sum of above 9000 pounds for the prosecution of this great national enterprise. Let Victoria, then, receive the honour so justly her due, for an undertaking only on a par with her characteristic spirit of advancement. Any stranger who visits Melbourne, a place but of yesterday, must be struck by the magnificent scale and number of the public buildings. Let him look at the Churches, Library, House of Parliament, University and Museum, Railways and Parks, Banks, Hotels, Theatres, Botanical Gardens, [Footnote: Under the charge of that noble father of industry, Dr. Mueller.] *etc*., and then call to mind that all this is the growth of less than a quarter of a century, and that the existence of the colony dates from a period subsequent to the accession of our beloved Queen.

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The arrangements for the expedition were in progress from 1858 to 1860, under Mr. O'Shannassy, a man far above the common order, who now fills the superior office of Chief Colonial Secretary. He entered into the object with his own peculiar zeal. On his personal responsibility, Mr. Landells, who figures in this narrative, as also in a preceding one, with little credit, was despatched to India to procure camels, those ships of the desert, whose aid in traversing the unknown interior was expected to prove invaluable. "The camels are come!" was the cry when these new and interesting immigrants made their first appearance in Melbourne. All the people were en the qui vive. "What was to be done next? Who was to be the leader? When would the party start?" Mr. Nicholson had by this time taken the place of Mr. O'Shannassy, and he hit on the unfortunate expedient of delegating to the Royal Society of Melbourne the direction of this important expedition. I say unfortunate, because, by this arrangement, the opinions to be consulted were too numerous to expect unanimity. It is true they elected a special committee, which included some who were well qualified for the duty, and others who were less so; but, good or bad, the old adage of "too many cooks" was verified in this instance. Had they all been excellent judges, the course was still objectionable, as divided responsibility falls on no one.

The first point to be settled was the choice of a leader. Meeting after meeting was held, and I must do them the justice to say that, on the whole, no thoroughly unexceptionable candidate offered himself. The necessary combination of physical and scientific requisites was not readily found. The question therefore fell into abeyance for a time on that account. But at length, and after a considerable delay, Robert O'Hara Burke, Esquire, police inspector at the Beechworth district, and afterwards at Castlemaine, was appointed to the post. He was in his fortieth year, experienced, active, and well-connected, of one of the old Galway families, and had held a commission as lieutenant in the Austrian army; on quitting which service, he procured an appointment in the Irish constabulary. There he was so beloved by his men, that several resigned when he left for Australia and accompanied him, in the hope of still serving under their favourite commander. He was a brave and true man, covetous of honour, but careless of profit; one who would have sought reputation "even in the cannon's mouth." With his name that of my poor son is indelibly conjoined. From all I have since collected from King, their only surviving companion, Mr. Burke loved my son as a brother; and William, writing of him, says: "The more I see of Mr. Burke the more I like him;" and he wrote with caution, adopted no hasty opinions, and seldom changed them when once formed.

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Mr. Burke's appointment called forth discussions and strong comments in the Melbourne papers. Gentlemen who considered their own qualifications as superior to his, and their friends who thought with them, expressed their opinions with more ardour than justice or delicacy in their respective organs. The committee of management, selected originally from the "Royal Society of Melbourne," now became united to another body called "The Exploration Fund Committee." The board comprised the following members:—Chairman, the Honourable Sir William Stawell, one of the Justices of Victoria; Vice-Chairman, the Honourable John Hodgson, M.L.C.; Treasurer, the Honourable Dr. Wilkie; Secretary, the Honourable Dr. Macadam; Dr. Embling;—Ligar, Esquire, Surveyor General; James Smith, Esquire; Professor McCoy; Dr. McKenna; Professor Neumayer; Sizar Elliott, Esquire; Dr. Mueller; Dr. Iffla; Captain Cadell; Angus McMillan, Esquire; A. Selwyn, Esquire; John Watson, Esquire; Reverend Mr. Blensdale; Dr. Eades; Dr. Gilbee, Deputy-Surveyor; and—Hodgkinson, Esquire The commander being appointed, the next step was to name the second. This choice, by a sad mistake, fell on Mr. G.J. Landells, who owed his preferment to the circumstance of his having been employed to bring the camels from India. His services, therefore, were considered indispensable for their management in Australia. Having convinced the committee of this, he demanded a salary considerably exceeding that of the leader, or refused to go. When Mr. Burke found that this point was to be discussed at the next meeting, he, with his usual high and liberal spirit, requested that no obstacle might be raised on that account. We shall presently see how Mr. Landells repaid his leader, and proved himself worthy of this disinterestedness. My son tendered his services as astronomer and guide, not at the moment thinking of or desiring any distinct post of command, his object being exclusively scientific. He had been for some time assistant to Professor Neumayer at the Magnetic Observatory, was a seasoned bushman, with great powers of endurance, and felt that he could discharge the duties he wished to undertake. He was not aware, until I informed him on his going into the Society's room to sign the contract, that any command had been allotted to him, neither did he stipulate for salary; but in consequence of Dr. Ludwig Becker demanding an advance of pay, on the sum first fixed, my son's was raised from 250 to 300 pounds per annum. The next appointments were Dr. Ludwig Becker, as naturalist and artist, and Dr. Herman Beckler as botanist and medical adviser to the expedition. These were scarcely more fortunate than that of Mr. Landells. The first named of these gentlemen was physically deficient, advanced in years, and his mode of life in Melbourne had not been such as to make up for his want of youth. I do not mean to imply by this that he indulged in irregular or dissipated habits. He possessed a happy gift of delineating natural objects with the

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pencil, but died before passing the boundaries of civilization, from causes unconnected with want or fatigue. Dr. Herman Beckler, who has since returned to his native country, was neither a man of courage, energy, nor of medical experience. He resigned when Mr. Landells did, and, as will be seen, for a very poor reason. His place should have been immediately supplied; for had any one worth a straw been sent, by his position he must have been third in command instead of Wright, a more ignorant being than whom could not have been extracted from the bush. He was scarcely able to write his name.

The following is a copy of the memorandum of agreement, to which all the members of the Exploration party attached their signatures: —

Memorandum of agreement,

Made the eighteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty, between the Honourable David Elliott Wilkie, as treasurer of the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society, Melbourne, of the one part, and the several other persons whose names are hereto subscribed, of the other part. The said persons forming an expedition about to explore the interior of Australia under Robert O'Hara Burke, hereby agree with the said David Elliott Wilkie faithfully to discharge the special duties described opposite to their respective names, and also generally to perform whatever in the opinion of the said Robert O'Hara Burke, as leader, or in the event of his death, in the opinion of the leader for the time being, may be necessary to promote the success of the expedition: and they hereby further agree to place themselves unreservedly under the orders of the leader, recognising George James Landells as second; and William John Wills as third; and their right of succession in the order thus stated. In consideration of the above services being efficiently discharged, the said David Elliott Wilkie, as treasurer, and on behalf of the said committee, hereby agrees to pay the said persons the salaries, at the respective rates set opposite their names; such salaries to be paid by monthly instalments, not exceeding one-half the amount then due, on a certificate from the leader that the services have been efficiently performed up to the date; and the remainder on and rateably up to the day of the return of the expedition to Melbourne, and no more. And each of the said persons hereby lastly agrees, on failure on his part fully to perform this agreement, that his salary shall be forfeited, and that he shall abide all consequences, the power of discharge vesting with the leader, and the power of dismissal and forfeiture of salary resting on the recommendation of the leader with the said David Elliott Wilkie, acting with the consent of the said committee. In witness whereof the said parties have hereunto set their hands the day and year above written.

George James Landells—in charge of camels, second in command.

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William John Wills—as surveyor and astronomical observer, third in command.

Herman Beckler—medical officer and botanist.

Ludwig Becker—artist, naturalist, and geologist.

Charles J. Ferguson—foreman.

Thomas F. McDonagh—assistant.

William Paton—assistant.

Patrick Langan—assistant.

Owen Cowan—assistant.

William Brake—assistant.

Robert Fletcher—assistant.

John King—assistant.

Henry Creher—assistant.

John Dickford—assistant.

And three sepoys.

Signed by all the above in the presence of

John Macadam, M.D.

Robert Dickson.

Monday, the 20th of August, 1860, will be a memorable day in the annals of Melbourne, as recording the commencement of the expedition. It was not a false start but a bona-fide departure. Nearly the whole population suspended ordinary business and turned out to witness the imposing spectacle. The camels were a great attraction. The Melbourne Herald of the 21st gave the annexed description of the proceedings:—

Tom Campbell, in a tender moment, sang a sweet hymn to a “Name Unknown,” and many an ardent youth in and since his time, has borrowed inspiration from the dulcet numbers of the familiar bard, and allowed his imagination to run riot in “castle-building” upon this simple theme. Had we the poet’s gift, our enthusiasm might, doubtless, prompt us to extol in more lofty strain the praises of the “great unknown”—the donor of the handsome instalment of one thousand pounds towards the organization of an

expedition to explore the terra incognita of interior Australia. But in the absence of the favour of the Muses, dull prose must serve the purpose we have in view. If the "unknown" were present yesterday in the Royal Park, his heart must have leaped for very joy, as did with one accord the hearts of the "ten thousand" or more of our good citizens, who there assembled to witness the departure of the Exploring Expedition. Never have we seen such a manifestation of heartfelt interest in any public undertaking of the kind as on this occasion. The oldest dwellers in Australia have experienced nothing to equal it.

At an early hour crowds of eager holiday folks, pedestrian and equestrian, were to be seen hieing along the dusty ways to the pleasant glades and umbrageous shade (a warm breeze; the first of the season, was blowing from the north-east) of the Royal Park. A busy scene was there presented. Men, horses, camels, drays, and goods, were scattered here and there amongst the tents, in the sheds, and on the greensward, in picturesque confusion;—everything premised a departure—the caravansery was to be deserted. Hour after hour passed in the preparations for starting. By-and-by, however, the drays were loaded—though not before a burden of three hundred-weight for each

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camel at starting was objected to, and extra vehicles had to be procured—the horses and the camels were securely packed, and their loads properly adjusted. Artists, reporters, and favoured visitors were all the time hurrying and scurrying hither and thither to sketch this, to take a note of that, and to ask a question concerning t'other. It is needless to say, that occasionally ludicrous replies were given to serious questions, and in the bustle of hurried arrangements, some very amusing contretemps occurred. One of the most laughable was the breaking loose of a cantankerous camel, and the startling and upsetting in the "scatter" of a popular limb of the law. The gentleman referred to is of large mould, and until we saw his tumbling feat yesterday, we had no idea that he was such a sprightly gymnast. His down-going and up-rising were greeted with shouts of laughter, in which he good-naturedly joined. The erring camel went helter-skelter through the crowd, and was not secured until he showed to admiration how speedily can go "the ship of the desert."

It was exactly a quarter to four o'clock when the expedition got into marching order. A lane was opened through the crowd, and in this the line was formed; Mr. Burke on his pretty little grey at the head. The Exploration Committee of the Royal Society, together with a distinguished circle of visitors, amongst whom were several of our most respectable colonists and their families, took up a position in front.

The *Mayor of Melbourne* then mounted one of the drays, and said: Mr. Burke—I am fully aware that the grand assemblage, this day, while it has impeded your movements in starting, is at the same time a source of much gratification to you. It assures you of the most sincere sympathy of the citizens. (Hear, hear.) I will not detain you; but for this great crowd, and on behalf of the colony at large, I say—God speed, you! (Cheers.) His Worship then called for "three cheers for Mr. Burke," "three cheers for Mr. Landells," and "three cheers for the party itself," which, it is needless to say, were responded to with all the energy and enthusiasm that are the characteristics of popular assemblages. He then concluded with again saying, "God speed and bless you!"

Mr. *Burke* (uncovered) said, in a clear earnest voice that was heard all over the crowd:

Mr. Mayor,—On behalf of myself and the Expedition I beg to return you my most sincere thanks. No expedition has ever started under such favourable circumstances as this. The people, the Government, the committee—all have done heartily what they could do. It is now our turn; and we shall never do well till we justify what you have done in showing what we can do. (Cheers.)

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The party at once got into motion. Following the leader were several pack horses, led by some of the assistants on foot. Then came Mr. Landells, on a camel, next Dr. Becker, similarly mounted, and these were succeeded by two European assistants, riding on camels—one leading the ambulance camel, and the other leading two animals loaded with provisions. Sepoys on foot led the remainder of the camels, four and five in hand, variously loaded, and the caravan was closed by one mounted sepoy. Altogether twenty-seven camels go with the expedition. Two new waggons, heavily loaded, followed at a good distance. These were built expressly for the expedition, and one of them is so constructed, that at a very short notice it can be taken off the wheels, and put to all the uses of a river punt, carrying an immense load high and dry on the water. If it be necessary to swim the camels, air bags are provided to be lashed under their jowls, so as to keep their heads clear when crossing deep streams. Two or three hired waggons and one of the new ones, were detained in the park till nearly dusk, in charge of the astronomer, Mr. W.J. Wills, and the foreman, who had to look to the careful packing of instruments, specimen cases, *etc*. The hired waggons will proceed as far as Swan Hill only. Issuing from the south gate of the park, the party went down behind the manure depot, and thence on to the Sydney road, and the whole camped last night near the village of Essendon.

. . .

The first day's march scarcely exceeded seven miles, the camping ground for the night being on an open space of greensward near the church at Essendon. Here I saw my son for the last time. It was with a feeling of great misgiving that I took leave of him. On shaking hands with Mr. Burke, I said frankly, "If it were in my power, I would even now prevent his going." I then added, "If he knew what I am about to say, he would not, I think, be well pleased; but if you ever happen to want my son's advice or opinion, you must ask it, for he will not offer it unasked. No matter what course you may adopt, he will follow without remonstrance or murmur." Mr. Burke shook me warmly by the hand in return, and replied: "There is nothing you can say will raise him higher in my estimation than he stands at present; I will do as you desire." There were some photographers present to take likenesses. My son refused to be taken. "Should it ever be worth while," he said, "my father has an excellent one, which you can copy from." Alas! it has been copied very often since.

The progress of the party was slow through the enclosed districts, until they reached Swan Hill on the Murray, which, properly speaking, is the northern boundary of the colony of Victoria. My son's first letter was dated August 26th.

My dear father,

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We are now at the Mia-Mia, lying between McIvor and Castlemaine (a roadside public-house). We are all right enough, except as regards cleanliness, and everything has gone well, barring the necessary break-downs, and wet weather. We have to travel slowly, on account of the camels. I suppose Professor Neumayer will overtake us in a day or two. I have been agreeably disappointed in my idea of the camels. They are far from unpleasant to ride; in fact, it is much less fatiguing than riding on horseback, and even with the little practice I have yet had, I find it shakes me less. I shall write to you from Swan Hill, if not before.

Your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

From Terrick Terrick, he writes, on the 31st of August, to his friend Mr. Byerly: "Riding on camels is a much more pleasant process than I anticipated, and for my work I find it much better than riding on horseback. The saddles, as you are aware, are double, so I sit on the back portion behind the hump, and pack my instruments in front, I can thus ride on, keeping my journal and making calculations; and need only stop the camel when I want to take any bearings carefully; but the barometers can be read and registered without halting. The animals are very quiet, and easily managed, much more so than horses."

His next letter to me is dated from Swan Hill, September 8th:—

My dear father,

We arrived here on Saturday last, early in the afternoon. I had not time to write by the last post, which closed on the same evening. We are all in good health and spirits. The road we are about to take is not that which I had anticipated, namely, down the side of the Lower Darling, as we hear there is literally nothing for the horses to eat; so that we are going right across the country to the Darling, passing the Murray at this place. We leave Swan Hill about the middle of next week, and shall then be out of the colony of Victoria. We are expecting Professor Neumayer up shortly,—a scrap of paper to-day by the postman says to-morrow. I am rather disappointed at not having yet an assistant surveyor, but I hope he will arrive shortly. Letters in future had better be directed to the care of Dr. Macadam, the secretary, as they will have to go by sea.

. . .

On the 17th of September he writes to his mother:—

Balranald, September 17th, 1860.

My dear mother,

As I have an opportunity of sending a few lines by this mail, I have determined to take advantage of the chance, because I know how glad you will be to receive them; but I have not time sufficient to give you any account of our journey. We are now at the last township at which we shall touch on our way towards the interior of the continent. It is an out-of-the-way place, situated on the lower part of the Murrumbidgee River. Our journey so far

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has been very satisfactory: we are most fortunate as regards the season, for there has been more rain this winter than has been known for the last four or five years. In fact, it seems probable that we shall finish our work in a much shorter period than was anticipated; very likely in ten or twelve months. The country up here is beautiful; everything green and pleasant; and if you saw it now, you would not believe that in two months' time it could have such a parched and barren appearance as it will then assume. I hope to be able, either from the Darling or from Cooper's Creek, to send you some details of our proceedings. Please to remember me to all, and

Believe me, ever your affectionate son,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

At Balranald, beyond the Murray, Mr. Burke found it impossible to get on further with his foreman, Ferguson, and discharged him in consequence. It required no deep penetration to discover that this would occur. Before they left the Royal Park, I made a remark to one of the committee on Ferguson's appearance and general demeanour: the gentleman I addressed replied, "I have just told Burke he will have to shoot him yet."

When Ferguson returned to Melbourne, he published his own account of the affair; and after the melancholy catastrophe of the expedition became known, he brought his action against the committee, and obtained a verdict for a considerable sum on the ground of unjust dismissal, proving his own statement in the absence of counter-evidence. Those who could or might have refuted it were dead.

Mr. Burke had no sooner rid himself of his troublesome foreman, than his second began to exhibit insubordination in an unmistakable manner. This reached a crisis by the time they had proceeded as far as Menindie, on the Darling. Whatever Mr. Landells' merits may have been as a manager of camels, his post of second in command had evidently affected the equilibrium of his intellects. He mistook his position, as also the character of his superior. His conduct was so manifestly unjustifiable that no one took his part, or defended him in the slightest degree. What his real motive was, whether to escape from danger when danger was likely to commence, or to obtain the leadership of the expedition himself, is difficult to determine. He had been sowing dissension in the camp from an early period. My son was so much engaged in his scientific avocations that he knew little of what was going on; but when Mr. Landells was ill-judged enough to talk plain sedition to him, he saw at once, and clearly, the state of affairs. Mr. Burke was of a generous and unsuspecting nature; he trusted every one until practical experience opened his eyes, and then he naturally became angry, almost to violence. The following correspondence, which was published at the time, explains the affair exactly as it happened. Mr. Selwyn laid before the committee the letter from Professor Neumayer,

enclosing my son's to him. The professor had been lost in the bush, and had to cut his way through the scrub for a distance of six miles.

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Youngera, November 8.

My dear sir,

Bad news from the expedition since I left them at McPherson's. I really do not know what to think of it. I send you herewith a letter from Mr. Wills, descriptive of the whole affair, and give you authority to do with it according to your views. I am right in the bush, and have just met with Captain Cadell, who is so kind as to take this to you, in order that you might have a chance of hearing both sides of the question. Landells I spoke to last night; and, according to his statement, of course he is in the right.

I shall be in town in three or four weeks. Excuse my writing.

Sincerely yours,

Neumayer.

Alfred Selwyn, Esquire, Government Geologist.

. . .

Menindie, October 16, 1860.

My dear professor,

I suppose you are by this time safe in town again. Great things have occurred since you left; in fact, I have so much to tell you that I do not know where to begin.

That Mr. Landells has resigned, and gives over his things to-morrow, is news at which you will not be much surprised; but that Dr. Beckler has been foolish enough to follow his example, for no better reason than that he did not like the way in which Mr. Burke spoke to Mr. Landells, will I think rather astonish you. I shall now give you a full account of the whole matter, so that you may be in a position to make any statement that you may deem necessary in explanation of the proceedings.

It will be necessary for me to remind you that when you left Kornpany, Mr. Landells was there with the camels, for the purpose of bringing on some of the heavy goods to lighten the waggons. This he did, and reached the camp at Bilbarka on Tuesday, the 2nd instant, with about three tons, whilst Mr. Burke went round by the lower road with the waggons and horses; he was obliged to take the latter with him, greatly to their disadvantage, because Mr. Landells would not assume the responsibility of bringing them with the camels. In bringing the things from Kornpany, one of Coppin's camels fell, having at the time on his back a load of upwards of 4 hundred-weight. The result of this fall was, *according to Mr. Landells' report*, a dislocation of the shoulder, for which he said nothing could be done, so that the camel has been left behind a perfect cripple. I

have dashed the above words because I myself do not believe it to be a dislocation, but only a strain; but that's merely my idea; Mr. L. ought to know best. Certain it is that the poor brute hobbled nearly twenty miles after us on Thursday last, and I think that is rather a good pull for one with a dislocation of the shoulder joint.

On Thursday, the 4th instant, our own two waggons came up to McPherson's, and in the evening Mr. Landells and I went down to the station to post some letters. On the way, Mr. L. made many remarks about Mr. Burke and his arrangements that were quite uncalled for. He told me, amongst other things, that Mr. B. had no right to interfere about the camels; that he had agreements with the committee of which he believed Mr. B. was ignorant; that everything was mismanaged; and, in fact, that if Mr. Burke had his way everything would go to the devil.

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On Friday the other waggons came up, and it was intended that some of the camels should fetch up what things we required, and that the remainder should be stored at McPherson's; but the camels were not to be found until late at night. On Saturday morning Mr. Landells and the Doctor went down with seventeen camels to the station, a distance of five miles, and, greatly to Mr. Burke's disgust, did not return until after dark. In the meantime the nine remaining camels had travelled off, and could not be found anywhere.

On Sunday morning, McPherson sent a note to Mr. Burke, requesting him to come down, as all the shearers were drunk on some of the camels' rum, which they had obtained from the waggons. Mr. Burke hereupon expressed his determination, which he had previously mentioned to me, that he would leave the rum behind. Mr. Landells objected to this, and insisted on the necessity of taking it on, and told Mr. Burke, who was firm in his resolve, that he would not be responsible for the camels. Mr. B. said he should do as he pleased, and left the camp; and as soon as he was gone, Mr. L. called me to take delivery of the Government things in charge, as he intended to leave for Melbourne at once. He said that Mr. B. was mad, and he was frightened to stay in the tent with him. He then went off, telling me that he should deliver over the camels as soon as he could find them. It appears that he went down to the station, and on meeting the waggon-drivers on the road, told them that he was about to leave, so that every one in the camp knew it in a very short time. I should mention that everything was being got ready for a start; and on my mentioning to Mr. Burke what had passed, he said that he should take no notice of it until it was brought officially before him. When Mr. Landells returned, he asked Mr. Burke in my presence to dismiss him, which Mr. B. refused to do, but said that he would forward his resignation if he wished it, with a recommendation that he should receive his pay up to that time. This did not exactly satisfy Mr. L., who wished to appear before the public as the injured individual. He, nevertheless, expressed to me several times his fixed determination to stay no longer. He took an opportunity in the evening, in his tent, to give expression to opinions of his, which would not tend, if listened to, to raise a leader in the estimation of his officers. He said that Mr. B. was a rash, mad man; that he did not know what he was doing; that he would make a mess of the whole thing, and ruin all of us; that he was frightened at him; that he did not consider himself safe in the tent with him, and many other things. Some of this was said in the presence of the Doctor and Mr. Becker; but the most severe remarks were to me alone after they were gone. On Monday, Mr. Landells asked Hodgkinson to write out for him his resignation, and then in a private conversation, told Hodgkinson several things, which the latter thought it best to make a note of at once.

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Hodgkinson's statement is this—that Mr. Landells having asked him whether he could keep a secret, told him, after extracting a sort of promise about holding his tongue, that Mr. Burke wanted an excuse for discharging him, and that he had sent him with the camels with an order to him (Mr. Landells) to find fault with him for that purpose. On hearing this, Hodgkinson wanted to go to Mr. Burke and speak to him about it at once; but Landells prevented this by reminding him of his promise. This all came out owing to some remarks that Hodgkinson had made to me, and which I considered myself in duty bound to tell Mr. Burke. On Monday evening Mr. Landells was speaking to me about the best and quickest way of getting to town, when I suggested to him that he might be placing himself in a disagreeable position by leaving in such a hurry without giving any notice. He replied that he did not care, but that he meant to propose certain terms to Mr. Burke, which he read to me from his pocket-book, and on these terms only he would go:—"That Mr. Burke should give him a written agreement that he, Mr. L., should have full and unqualified charge of the camels, and that from that time Mr. B. should not interfere with them in any way; that they should travel no further nor faster than Mr. L. chose, and that he should be allowed to carry provisions for them to the amount of four camels' burthen." Just after this, Mr. B. came up and called Mr. L. aside, and, as the former told me, read to him a letter that he had written to accompany the resignation. The contents of this letter had a considerable effect on Mr. L., who said that it was a pity they should have had any quarrel, and so acted on Mr. B.'s feelings, that he allowed him to withdraw his resignation. I believe that the information which had arrived about a steamer being on its way up the river had had a great influence in making Mr. Landells desirous to withdraw his resignation; but the chief reason was, no doubt, that he feared, from the concluding sentence of Mr. Burke's letter, that the committee would refuse him his pay.

After this, everything appeared to be healed for a day or two; but on Wednesday, from various matters that had occurred, I considered it my duty to mention to Mr. Burke about Hodgkinson and some things that Mr. Landells had said to me; whereupon it came out that Mr. L. had been playing a fine game, trying to set us all together by the ears. To Mr. Burke he has been abusing and finding fault with all of us; so much so, that Mr. B. tells me that Landells positively hates me. We have, apparently, been the best of friends. To me, he has been abusing Mr. Burke, and has always spoken as if he hated the Doctor and Mr. Becker; whereas with them he has been all milk and honey. There is scarcely a man in the party whom he has not urged Mr. Burke to dismiss.

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Mr. Burke went ahead with the horses from Bilbarka, partly because he wanted to be here sooner than the rest, and partly in order to avoid a collision with Mr. Landells. He asked Dr. Beckler to accompany him, for we both expected that Mr. Landells would be tampering with him, as we found he had been with others; but the Doctor said that he preferred going with the camels, so that after the first day, when we found that Dr. Beckler would not go on with the horses, Mr. Burke took Mr. Becker and myself with him. We crossed the horses at a very good crossing at Kinchica, six miles below Menindie. Mr. Burke sent me up from there in the steamer, whilst he took the horses up. On our arrival, we found that Mr. Landells had ridden up also, having left the camels at Kinchica; he objected to making them swim the river, and wanted the steamer's barge to cross them over. This Mr. Burke refused, because the captain and every one else said that it would be a very dangerous experiment, from the difficulty of getting them on or off, which is no easy matter to do safely, even on a punt arranged for the purpose; and as for the barge, it can scarcely be brought within six feet of the bank; so Mr. Burke insisted on their swimming the river at Kinchica. After dinner we went down to assist in crossing them, but Mr. Landells said it was too late, and that he would cross them at ten o'clock next morning. On his remarking that there was no rope here, I mentioned that we had just brought one across with us, when he wanted to know what business I had to say anything. Altogether he made a great fool of himself before several of the men; and a Mr. Wright, the manager of the Kinchica station. For this Mr. Burke gave him an overhauling, and told him that if his officers misconducted themselves, he (Mr. B.) was the person to blow them up. Mr. Burke then told me, before Mr. Landells, that he wished me to be present at the crossing of the camels, at ten o'clock to-morrow.

Mr. Landells then jumped up in a rage, asking Mr. Burke whether he intended that I should superintend him, and what he meant by desiring me to be present. Mr. Burke answered him that if he knew his place he would not ask such a question; that he had no right to ask it, and that he (Mr. B.) should give what orders he thought proper to his officers without considering himself responsible to Mr. L.; that Mr. Landells' conduct was insolent and improper, and that he would have no more of it. This was on Monday.

On Tuesday morning Mr. L. sent in his resignation, and in the course of the day, Dr. Beckler followed his example, giving as his reason that he did not like the manner in which Mr. Burke spoke to Mr. Landells, and that he did not consider that the party was safe without Mr. Landells to manage the camels. Now there is no mistake, Dr. Beckler is an honest little fellow, and well-intentioned enough, but he is nothing of a bushman, although he has had so much travelling. Landells has taken advantage of his diffidence for his own purposes; and at the same time that he hates him, he has put on such a smooth exterior, that he has humbugged and hoodwinked him into the belief that no one can manage the camels but himself.

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The upshot was that the committee accepted the resignations of Mr. Landells and Dr. Beckler, and expressed their entire approbation of the conduct of Mr. Burke.

The following extract from the Melbourne leading journal, the “Argus,”—and with the view therein expressed all the other newspapers coincided—shows pretty clearly the state of public opinion on the question:—

Whatever may be the interest attached to the communications respecting the Victorian Exploring Expedition, as read before the committee of the Royal Society, there can be little doubt but that the judgment pronounced on Mr. Landells remains unaltered. He deserted his leader on the eve of the fight; and such an act, so subversive of all discipline, and so far from the thoughts of the smallest drummer-boy, renders all explanations contemptible. In the present instance, Mr. Landells’ explanations make his act the more inexcusable. He is still of opinion that the camels are indispensable to the safety of the party, and that he is indispensable to the safety of the camels. The inference is, therefore, that he knowingly left the party to perish. Indeed, we should not at all enter into an examination of Mr. Landells’ letter, but that it may enable us to form some opinion as to the prospects of the expedition itself, and as to the suitability of Mr. Burke for its leadership.

The charges brought against Mr. Burke by his late lieutenant, comprise almost everything that a commander should not be guilty of. His acts of commission and omission comprehend everything that a bad general could possibly commit or omit, and Mr. Landells winds up his bad qualities by asserting that he “cultivates the spy system,” and treats his men like a parcel of “convicts.” Not only is he “ungentlemanly” to his officers and “interfering with the best interests of the party”—not only has he “displayed such a want of judgment, candour, and decision;” but he has also shown, in addition to these and many other shortcomings, “such an entire absence of any and every quality which should characterize him as its leader, as has led to the conviction in my own mind that under his leadership the expedition will be attended by the most disastrous results.”

But in this matter we are not left to decide between Mr. Landells’ account and Mr. Burke’s account. Mr. Wills, the third officer, may be taken as an impartial observer, and his statement, a private communication to the head of the department to which he lately belonged, Professor Neumayer, is free from any suspicion of toadyism. From it we may find abundant reason for the conduct which Mr. Landells calls “strange.” If Mr. Burke was restless at nights, hasty in the day, and apparently undecided what course to pursue, we have from this account of the matter only to wonder that he managed to bear with Mr. Landells so long as he did. Here the rage is all on Mr. Landells’ side. “Mr. Landells then jumped up in a

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rage, asking Mr. Burke whether he intended that I should superintend him?" To talk, touch, or mention anything about his favourites, the camels, was sure to bring on "a scene." "On his remarking that there was no rope here, I mentioned that we had just brought one across with us, when he wanted to know what business I had to say anything. Altogether, he made a great fool of himself before several of the men, and a Mr. Wright, the manager of the Kinchica Station." These camels, under Mr. Landells' spoiling, appear to have become the plague of the expedition. They were to have rum —solely, as it now appears, because Mr. Landells "knew of an officer who took two camels through a two years' campaign in Cabul, the Punjab, and Scinde, by allowing them arrack." They were to carry more stores for themselves than they were worth. They were not to make long journeys, nor to travel in bad weather, nor to be subject to any one's direction, or opinion, or advice. In fine, the chief difficulty of exploring Australia seemed to consist in humouring the camels. We may imagine the feelings of a leader with such a drag as this encumbering him. Mr. Pickwick could never have viewed with such disgust the horse which he was obliged to lead about as Mr. Burke must have regarded his camels. When to this it is added that the leader observed various intrigues carried on, we cannot wonder that he determined to come to an open rupture before Mr. Landells and the camels had completely disorganized the expedition. "Whereupon it came out," writes Mr. Wills, "that Mr. Landells has been playing a fine game, trying to set us all together by the ears. There is scarcely a man in the party whom he has not urged Mr. Burke to dismiss." Under such a state of things, the leader of the expedition must have been painfully aware that his party was in no fit state of organization to enter on a most perilous undertaking, and that while such continued, both he and his men were going to inevitable destruction. If his conduct appeared to Mr. Landells restless and uncertain, we may wonder how, under the circumstances, it could be otherwise. We find it impossible to believe that the Exploring Committee of the Royal Society could have secretly informed Mr. Landells that he held independent command, for such a thing would be a burlesque on discipline. He claims the sole management of the camels; and perhaps the committee may have defined his duty as such. But so also has a private soldier the sole management of his musket, but it is under the directions of his officer. Profound as may be Mr. Landells' knowledge of camels, it would be worse than useless unless subject to the direction of his commanding officer.

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Mr. Burke, on the resignation of Mr. Landells, immediately promoted my son to the post he had vacated, which appointment the committee confirmed. Here there was perfect union and reciprocal understanding. Neither had petty jealousies or reserved views. The success of the expedition was their object, and personal glory their aim. The leader had every confidence in his second, and the second was proud of his leader. But Mr. Burke committed an error in the selection of Mr. Wright for the third position in command, without any previous knowledge or experience of his capabilities. In this he acted from his impulsive nature, and the consequences bore heavily on his own and my son's fate. To the misconduct of Mr. Wright, in the words of the report of the Committee of Inquiry, "are mainly attributable the whole of the disasters of the expedition, with the exception of the death of Gray." In appearance and acquirements, there was nothing to recommend him. The gentleman suggested by Mr. Burke as a substitute for Dr. Beckler, most unjustly, according to general opinion, desired to supplant my son. This the majority of the committee refused to accede to, and Mr. Nicholson, the chief secretary, agreed with their decision. Others, including myself, offered to go; and a dispute, or rather a discussion arose on the matter, which produced delay, so that no one was sent at all. Another fatal mistake. It will be a source of sorrow and strong regret to me as long as I exist, that I did not, of my own will, push on to Menindie, where I might have been instrumental in saving one for whom I would willingly have risked my life. But no one then foresaw or expected the errors which caused the surviving travelers to perish on their return.

But the actual cause of what might appear to be neglect on the part of the committee, in procrastinating the medical appointment, or other matters that were delayed, arose from the want of funds. The sum subscribed had been expended, and when Mr. Hodgkinson arrived at Melbourne, with Wright's despatch (written, however, by Hodgkinson), asking for cash, and a confirmation of his appointment as third in command, the committee had no balance at their disposal. His Excellency, Sir Henry Barkly, to prevent any misfortune on that ground, came forward on his personal guarantee, and became responsible until Parliament should again meet. The funds asked for by Wright, and even more, were granted; but I believe it would puzzle the committee, to this day, to find what became of them. One of the avowed objects was to purchase sheep; this, at least, was neglected. Hodgkinson fulfilled his mission zealously, and returned to Wright within as short a time as possible. But Wright lingered inactively at Menindie, allowed the proper time for following out the track of Mr. Burke to glide away and disgracefully broke faith with one who had too generously trusted him.

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One word more with respect to Mr. Landells. His assertion, believed by no rational person at the time, and emphatically denounced by Mr. Burke in his despatch as “false,” that he had private instructions from the committee, rendering him in some respects independent of his leader, was utterly disproved by the evidence of Dr. Macadam, Honorary Secretary, related before the Royal Commission, who said in reply to Question 110: “We gave Mr. Landells no private instructions whatever; that has been answered over and over again.”

CHAPTER 7.

From Menindie on the Darling to Torowoto. Mr. Burke’s Despatch, and Mr. Wills’s Report from Torowoto. Mr. Wright’s unaccountable delay at Menindie. The Expedition proceeds onwards to Cooper’s Creek. Exploring Trips in that Neighbourhood. Loss of Three Camels. Mr. Wills’s Letter to his Sister, December 6th and 15th. Incorrectness of McDonough’s Statements.

The incapables being happily disposed of, Mr. Burke and his party left Menindie on the 19th of October. The committee having decided on Cooper’s Creek as the basis of his operations, he pushed on in that direction, and reached Torowoto on the 29th of the same month. From the latter encampment he forwarded the following despatch, including my son’s surveying report.

Torowoto, October 29, 1860.

Sir,

I have the honour to report, that I left Menindie on the 19th instant with the following party:—

Messrs. Burke, Wills, Brahe, Patten, McDonough, King, Gray, Dost Mahomet, fifteen horses and sixteen camels, and Mr. Wright, who had kindly volunteered to show me a practical route towards Cooper’s Creek, for a distance of a hundred miles from the Darling; and he has more than fulfilled his promise, for we have now travelled for upwards of 200 miles, generally through a fine sheep-grazing country; and we have not had any difficulty about water, as we found creeks, or waterholes, many of them having every appearance of permanent water, at distances never exceeding twenty miles. Mr. Wills’s report, herewith forwarded, gives all the necessary details. Although travelling at the rate of twenty miles a day, the horses and camels have all improved in condition, and the country improves as we go on. Yesterday, from Wanominta to Paldrumata Creek, we travelled over a splendid grazing country, and to-day, we are encamped on a creek or swamp, the banks of which are very well grassed, and good feed all the way from our last camp (44), except for two miles, where the ground was barren and swampy. Of course it is impossible for me to say what effect an unusually dry summer

would produce throughout this country, or whether we are now travelling in an unusually favourable season or not. I describe things as I find them.

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Mr. Wright returns from here to Menindie. I informed him that I should consider him third officer of the expedition, subject to the approval of the committee, from the day of our departure from Menindie, and I hope that they will confirm the appointment. In the mean time I have instructed him to follow me up with the remainder of the camels to Cooper's Creek, to take steps to procure a supply of jerked meat, and I have written to the doctor to inform him that I have accepted his resignation, as, although I was anxious to await the decision of the committee, the circumstances will not admit of delay, and he has positively refused to leave the settled districts. I am willing to admit that he did his best until his fears for the safety of the party overcame him; but these fears, I think, clearly show how unfit he is for his post. If Mr. Wright is allowed to follow out the instructions I have given him, I am confident that the result will be satisfactory; and if the committee think proper to make inquiries with regard to him they will find that he is well qualified for the post, and that he bears the very highest character. I shall proceed on from here to Cooper's Creek. I may, or may not, be able to send back from there until we are followed up. Perhaps it would not be prudent to divide the party; the natives here have told Mr. Wright that we shall meet with opposition on our way there. Perhaps I might find it advisable to leave a depot at Cooper's Creek, and to go on with a small party to examine the country beyond it.

Under any circumstances it is desirable that we should soon be followed up. I consider myself very fortunate in having Mr. Wills as my second in command. He is a capital officer, zealous and untiring in the performance of his duties, and I trust that he will remain my second as long as I am in charge of the expedition.

The men all conduct themselves admirably, and they are all most anxious to go on; but the committee may rely upon it that I shall go on steadily and carefully, and that I shall endeavour not to lose a chance or to run any unnecessary risk.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R. O'HARA *Burke*, Leader.,

P.S.—The two blacks and four horses go back with Mr. Wright.

The following is a list of the camps from Menindie to this place:—

October 19. Totoynya, a waterhole on the plains. . .Camp 35.

October 20. Kokriega, well in the Scope Ranges. . .Camp 36.

October 21. Bilpa Creek, do. . .Camp 37.

October 22. Botoja Clay-pans. . .Camp 38.

October 23. Langawirra Gully; Mount Doubeny Range. . .Camp 39.

October 24. Bengora Creek, Mount Doubeny Range. . .Camp 40.

October 25. Naudtherungee Creek. . .Camp 41.

October 26. Teltawongee Creek. . .Camp 42.

October 27. Wonominta Creek. . .Camp 43.

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October 28. A clay-pan on the plains. . .Camp 44.

October 29. Torowoto Swamp...Camp 45.
Latitude, 30 degrees 1 minute 30 seconds south;
longitude, 142 degrees 27 minutes east.

. . .

October 30, 1860. Forwarded.

R. O'HARA *Burke*, Leader.

Dr. Macadam, Secretary, Exploring Expedition.

. . .

From Mr. *Wills*, *second in command*, *astronomer and surveyor of* THEPARTY.

Surveyor's report.

The country, Bilbarka and Tolarno, in the immediate vicinity of the eastern bank of the River Darling, presents the most barren and miserable appearance of any land that we have yet met with. It consists chiefly of mud flats, covered with polygonum bushes, box timber, and a few salsolaceous plants, of inferior quality. Above Tolarno there is a slight improvement, and between Kinchica and Menindie there is some fair grazing country. All agree in saying that there is fine grazing land back from the river; but the want of water will probably prevent its being occupied, except in a very partial manner, for many years; and I fear that the high sand ridges, twenty to forty feet, and in some cases more than sixty feet above the level of the river banks, will form almost insuperable barriers in the way of any one who may attempt to conduct water from the river by means of canals. It appears to me, from the information that I have been able to obtain, that the difficulties with which settlers have here to contend arise not so much from the absorbent nature of the soil as from the want of anything to absorb. This last season is said to have been the most rainy that they have had for several years; yet everything looked so parched up that I should have imagined it had been an exceedingly dry one.

Gales.—I noticed that the forests for about 30 miles below Menindie had been subjected to severe gales from west-north-west. This was so striking, that I at first thought it was the effect of a hurricane; but I could find no indications of a whirling force, all the trees and branches lying in the same direction; besides which, they seemed to have been torn down at various times, from the different stages of decay in which they were found; and Mr. Wright has subsequently informed me that almost every spring they have a gale from west-north-west, which lasts but a short time, but carries everything

before it. It is this same strip of country which is said to be more favoured with rain than that lower down.

Sand Drifting.—One can perceive everywhere in the neighbourhood of Menindie, the effect of the winds in shifting the sand, by the numerous logs in various stages of inhumation.

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The Darling Pea.—It appears to be a disputed question, even on the river, as to the effect of the Darling pea on horses, some asserting that they become cranky simply from eating that herb, and others that it is starvation that makes them mad. I could get no satisfactory information even as to the symptoms, which seem to vary considerably; but this I had from a reliable source, that horses will eat the pea in large quantities without being injuriously affected, provided they can obtain other food as well; but that when they are on portions of the river where they can get nothing else to eat, then they soon get an attack of madness.

Menindie to Scrope Ranges.—The country between Menindie and Kokriega, in the Scrope Ranges, a distance of thirty-six miles in a northerly direction, is a fine open tract of country, well grassed, but having no permanent water. At Kokriega there is a well which may be relied on for a small supply, but would be of no use in watering cattle in large numbers. The ranges are composed of ferruginous sandstone and quartz conglomerate, and as to vegetation are of a very uninviting aspect. The plain to the south is covered with quartz and sandstone pebbles. About five miles to the north-east of the Kokriega is a spot where the schist rock crops out from under the sandstone, and the rises here have somewhat of an auriferous character.

North of the Scrope Range.—To the north of the Scrope Range the country has much the same appearance, except that there are more trees, and no stones until one reaches the Mount Doubeny Ranges, a distance of nearly forty miles. At a spot half way, named Botoga, there are some flats well calculated for collecting and retaining rain water.

Mount Doubeny Range.—In this range there are, no doubt, many places where permanent water may be found in considerable quantities. Two places I may mention where the water is certainly permanent—Mutwongee, a gully midway between camps 39 and 40; and Bengora Creek, the latter camp.

Country North of Mount Doubeny.—From these ranges up to our present position we have passed over as good grazing country as one would wish to see; salt bushes of every kind, grass in abundance, and plenty of water. Amongst the ranges we found kangaroo grass as high as our shoulders, and on the plains the spear grass up to our knees.

Naudtherungee Creek.—At this creek, which takes its rise near Mount Lyell, and probably flows into the McFarlane's Creek of Sturt, we found a small shallow pond of water, in the sandy bed of the creek. This did not look very promising, but on digging I found that the whole bed of the creek was a mass of loose sand, through which the water freely permeated, and that the waterhole we found was only a spot where, the level of the surface of the sand being below that of the water, the latter oozed through. I am informed by Mr. Wright, who was here in January last, that the creek contained much more water then than now.

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Country North of Naudtherungee Creek.—For a few miles to the north of this creek the ground is very sandy, and timbered with pines, acacias, and several descriptions of trees with which I am unacquainted. There are two very handsome trees that I have never seen in any other part of the country—the leopard tree (called so from its spotted bark), and a tree which in general appearance much resembles the poplar. On these sandhills the grass is very coarse, but in the flats there is good feed. Beyond the sand rises the country becomes more open again; and at about twelve or thirteen miles one comes to quartz rises, from which there is a fine view to the east, north, and west. Two creeks are distinctly visible by the lines of gum timber; they take their rise near some hills to the eastward, and passing around towards the north, join at a point about three miles north-west, from whence the resulting creek continues in a west-north-westerly direction, as far as the eye can reach. The hills are composed of an argillaceous schist. On several of the lower rises, quartz reefs crop out, and some of the quartz which I examined had every appearance of being auriferous, except the main one—the colour of the gold. There are some fine waterholes in the first creek (Teltawongee), but I cannot say for certain that the water is permanent. The whole of the country from here to our next camp, a distance of twenty six miles, is the finest I have seen for collecting and retaining water; and the only question as to a permanent supply of that essential liquid is, whether this part of the country is subject to long-continued droughts; for the waterholes that we have met with are not large enough to last for any great length of time, in the event of the country being stocked. At ten miles from Teltawongee, we came to the Wonominta—a creek having all the characteristics of water-courses that take their rise in hills of schistoze formation. At first, the numberless small waterholes, without the trace of a creek connecting them, then the deep-cut narrow channel, with every here and there a fine waterhole. The banks of the creek are clothed with high grass and marshmallows. The latter grow to an immense size on nearly all the creeks out here.

The Wonominta Ranges are high, bare-looking hills, lying to the eastward of the creek; the highest peaks must be between two and three thousand feet above the sea. The blacks say that there is no water in them—an assertion that I can scarcely credit. They say, however, that there is a fine creek, with permanent water, to the east of the ranges, flowing northwards. At the point of the Wonominta Creek where we camped there is a continuous waterhole of more than a mile long, which, they say, is never dry. It is from fifteen to twenty feet broad, and averages about five feet in depth, as near as I could ascertain. From this point, Camp 43, the creek turns to the north-west and around to north, where it enters a swamp, named Wannoggin; it must

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be the same that Sturt crossed in coming across from Evelyn Plains. In going over to Wannoggin, a distance of fourteen miles, I found the plains everywhere intersected by small creeks, most of them containing water, which was sheltered from the sun by the overhanging branches of drooping shrubs, tall marshmallows, and luxuriant salt bushes; and at some of them were hundreds of ducks and waterhens. When crossing some flats of light-coloured clay soil, near Wannoggin, and which were covered with box timber, one might almost fancy himself in another planet, they were so arid and barren. The Wannoggin Swamp is at present dry, but I believe it is generally a fine place for water. Birds are very numerous about there, and I noticed that by far the greater portion of the muslka trees (a species of acacia) contained nests, either old or new.

At about twenty miles from Wonominta, in a north-north-easterly direction, there is a fine creek, with a waterhole about a mile long, which we passed; and Mr. Wright tells me there is a larger one further up the creek.

The land in the neighbourhood of the Torowoto Swamp is very fine for pastoral purposes. It is rather low and swampy, and therefore better for cattle than for sheep. There appears to be a gradual fall in the land from Totoynya to this place, amounting to about 500 feet. This swamp can scarcely be more than 600 feet above the sea, if so much. The highest ground over which we have passed has been in the Mount Doubeny Ranges, from Langawirra to Bengora, and that appears to be about 1000 feet above the sea. Mount Bengora is, by barometrical observation, about 300 feet above the camp at Bengora, but it is not the highest peak in the range by perhaps fifty or sixty feet; and I think we may assume that the highest peak does not exceed 1,500 feet above the sea.

Meteorogical.—We have been very fortunate up to the present time as regards the weather, both in having had plenty of water and moderate temperatures. The thermometer has never risen above 88.5 degrees in the shade, and has seldom been below 50 degrees, the average daily range having been from 58 to 80 degrees. During our stay on the Darling, the temperature of the water varied very slightly, being always between 65 and 67 degrees. The winds have generally been light, frequently going all round the compass in the course of the day; but in any case it has almost invariably fallen calm after sunset. Cirri and cirrostratus clouds have been very prevalent during the day, and cumulostratus during the night.

Wells and Creeks.—The temperature of the water in the well at Kokriega, at ten A.M. October 21, was 58.5 degrees, being exactly the same as the temperature of the air. That of the water between the rocks, at Bilpa, at five P.M. on the same day, was 64 degrees, the temperature of air being 75 degrees. The temperature of the water in the sand at Naudtherungee, at seven A.M. on the 26th, was 59.5 degrees, that of the air being 62 degrees. At five A.M. October 28, the temperature of the water in Wonominta Creek was 63. 5 degrees, that of the air being 62 degrees.

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Note.—The temperature of the water is always taken within six inches of the surface.

. . .

The Royal Commission of Inquiry censured Mr. Burke for the appointment of Mr. Wright, without personal knowledge of him; and, judging by the lamentable results, a grave mistake it was. But Mr. Burke was placed in great difficulty by the resignation of Mr. Landells and Dr. Beckler, and acted to the best of his judgment under the circumstances, with the means at his disposal. His confidence, too hastily bestowed, was repaid by ingratitude and contumely. Wright never spoke of his commander without using terms of disparagement, and dwelling on his incapacity. "He was gone to destruction," he said, "and would lose all who were with him." He repeated these words to me, and others even stronger, both in Melbourne and in Adelaide. McDonough, in his evidence before the Royal Commission, was asked, "What did you say as to Mr. Wright's desponding?" He answered (436): "He always gave Mr. Burke up as lost; said he was neither gone to Queensland nor anywhere else; the man has rushed madly on, depending upon surface water, and is lost in the desert. He never gave us any hope for him; in fact, so much so, that I offered to make a bet that he would be found at Queensland, or turn up somewhere."

It has been seen by Mr. Burke's despatch of the 29th of October, that he gave orders to Mr. Wright to follow him up to Cooper's Creek with the remainder of the camels and supplies, without unnecessary delay. McDonough states (Answer 197) that Mr. Burke said to him, on the 15th of December, "I expect Mr. Wright up in a few days—a fortnight at farthest. I left him *positive instructions* to follow me." King states (Answer 693) "that on the 16th of December, Mr. Burke told the party 'he then expected Mr. Wright daily.'" Wright himself states in his evidence (Answer 1235), "I gave Mr. Burke my word that I would take the remainder of the party out, as soon as I returned to Menindie."

A circumstance happened about this time, (December 1860), which delayed him, but not even that necessarily. Information reached Melbourne that Mr. Stuart had nearly penetrated to the Gulf of Carpentaria, more to the westward; that he had been driven back by the natives, but would start again immediately. The Committee thought it advisable to forward the intelligence to Mr. Burke. This was done by a despatch to Swan Hill, where Mr. Foster was superintendent of police. He accordingly sent on a trooper named Lyons, who followed in the track of the party, and arrived at Menindie just as Wright returned with his two natives, after escorting the expedition to Torowoto. Lyons refused to give up the despatch, as he had been ordered to place it in Mr. Burke's own hands. Here was a plausible excuse for Wright, no doubt, so he sent McPherson, a saddler by trade, who had been engaged en route by Mr. Burke, accompanied by Dick, a native, to assist Lyons in his pursuit of the leader.

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Had he put himself and the whole party in motion at once, the subsequent misfortunes would have been averted. Lyons and McPherson lost their way, being quite unable to overtake Mr. Burke, who had eight days' start, travelling at the rate of twenty miles a day. Neither had they ingenuity enough to find Mr. Burke's tracks, although accompanied by a native, which is inexplicable, if they trusted to Dick, who had both intelligence and energy of purpose. He found his way back to Wright, however, and was thus the means of saving the lives of the trooper and McPherson.

Hodgkinson, we have seen, was despatched by Wright to Melbourne, from Menindie, on the 19th of December, with letters assuming to be written by himself, but, in fact, by Hodgkinson. Whether the committee knew this does not appear: if they did not, here was one reason for confirming Wright's appointment. Hodgkinson reached Melbourne on the morning of the 30th, riding nearly four hundred miles in eleven days. A meeting of the committee was called on Monday, the 31st, at which his Excellency attended, and Hodgkinson started on his return the same evening. This certainly was business. Nearly double the sum that he had asked was allowed to Wright, in cash. From the 5th of November, he lingered at Menindie, until the 19th of December, doing nothing. He says he was waiting for an answer to a letter he had previously sent. Dr. Macadam, the Secretary, denies that he ever received such a letter. Wright is here unworthy of credit, for he could not write. This was extracted from himself, after considerable fencing, in his examination before the Commission on the 12th of December, 1861:—

Mr. *Wm*. *Wright* further examined.

Question 1565. There is evidently some discrepancy between the statement that you wrote yourself on the 5th of November, when you came back, and the statement of Dr. Macadam that no such letter was ever received. This letter of yours of the 19th of December, is it written by yourself?—The one I sent myself?

1566. The one of the 19th of December, is it in your own handwriting?—The one that is missing?

1567. No; this one [handing a paper to the witness]?—No, it is not; Hodgkinson did all the writing.

1568. Did he write the one that is stated to be missing?—No, he did not.

1569. You wrote that one?—I wrote that with my own hand. I just wrote a few words.

1570. Could your memory serve you sufficiently to write the purport of that letter that is missing?—It would not.

1571. Nothing approaching to it?—I never thought for a moment of keeping a copy of it, or of giving it to Hodgkinson to keep a copy.

1572. Have you no recollection of the general purport of it?—I just mentioned that Mr. Burke had appointed me to take the party out and take the command; that is about the heads of it.

1573. Have you any objection to write a letter similar to that one, as nearly as you can remember it?—No. I write a very indifferent hand.

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1574. Which was the reason, it is to be presumed, why you got some one to write the letter of the 19th?—Yes.

Hodgkinson arrived at Menindie on the 9th of January, 1861, and immediately placed in Wright's hands the following letter:—

Melbourne, December 31st.

Sir,

Your despatch of the 19th instant, forwarded per Mr. Hodgkinson, was laid before a meeting of the members of the Exploration Committee held this day, when the following resolutions were carried unanimously:

1. That a letter be forwarded to Mr. Wright, informing him that his appointment as third in command of the Victorian Expedition, by Mr. Burke, has been approved of and confirmed by this committee.

2. That Mr. Wright, third officer of the Victorian Expedition, be empowered to procure a number of horses (not more than ten), and the necessary accoutrements; and also one hundred and fifty (say 150) sheep, and be authorized to draw on the treasurer, the Honourable David E. Wilkie, M.D., M.L.C., for an amount not exceeding four hundred (say 400) pounds sterling, for their purchase, and other necessary incidental expenses.

I have further to inform you that Mr. Hodgkinson, who returns as the bearer of this despatch, will hand you an order from Mr. Superintendent Foster, of Swan Hill, to obtain from trooper Lyons the despatches for the leader, now in the possession of that officer, and which it is desired you should hand to Mr. Burke.

It is hoped by the committee, that trooper Lyons and saddler Macpherson have safely returned to the camp, and you will kindly report as to the manner in which the former has endeavoured to carry out the duty committed to his charge.

The medal for Dick, the aboriginal guide, bearing a suitable inscription, is forwarded with this despatch, and the committee leave in your hands the bestowal of such additional reward as you may deem proper—not exceeding five guineas (say 5 pounds 5 shillings.)

Captain Cadell informed the committee to-day that his store at Menindie would be at your service for depositing any articles you may find it inconvenient to remove to Cooper's Creek at present.

You will endeavour to secure, if possible, twelve pommel pack-saddles, now arrived, it is believed, on the Darling. These were forwarded via Adelaide, and will no doubt be of great use to the main party.

The committee desire that on your meeting with Mr. Burke, you will show him, and deposit with him, this despatch, as also a copy of yours of the 19th instant, together with copies of all despatches you may forward to the committee during Mr. Burke's absence; and the committee expect that you will communicate under such circumstances as frequently as possible.

Mr. Hodgkinson bears letters for the leader and Mr. Wills.

In conclusion, it is hoped that your endeavours to remove the stores from your present depot to Cooper's Creek will be early and successfully accomplished.

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I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) *John Macadam*, M.D., Secretary.

To Mr. Wright, third in command, temporary depot, Plurarmora Creek,
Darling River, New South Wales.

. . .

Nothing can be clearer than the instructions herein conveyed; yet in the face of them, Wright made no start until the 26th of January. His answers to the Royal Commission were full of contradictions, but to the main question of his delay he gave no answer at all. From my own inquiries I never could make out that any one at Menindie thought him fit for the post, or undertook to recommend him. Captain Cadell did to the committee, but with Mr. Burke, Captain Cadell was not on speaking terms.

Mr. Burke and my son proceeded onwards, accompanied by the reduced party, consisting of Brahe, King, Gray, Patten, McDonough, and Dost Mahomet, fifteen horses and sixteen camels, on the 29th of September, 1860, and reached Cooper's Creek on the 11th of November, a distance of about 250 miles. Here my son went out occasionally, taking a man with him, to explore the country, far and near. His great desire was to reach Carpentaria by the shortest practicable cut, and he inclined to a direct northern course, or to the eastward of north. The committee represented afterwards, as prominently as they could put it, that Mr. Burke was left unshackled on this point, but still suggestions were offered, which a leader naturally considers he is expected to listen to. One of these was, that on leaving Cooper's Creek they should proceed towards Eyre's Creek and Sturt's Farthest (September, 1845); for which I refer the reader to the map. My son could not see the wisdom of this, as Sturt had declared that beyond that point he saw nothing but an impenetrable desert. McDouall Stuart's return to Adelaide was also reported, and that he was about to start again: it therefore became a rival race as to who should reach the goal first.

With reference to my son's exploration trips during the halt at Cooper's Creek, Mr. Brahe, on his examination before the Royal Commission, gave the following particulars: —

We travelled down the creek; our first camp on Cooper's Creek was Camp 57; from some of the first camps Mr. Wills went out exploring the creek.

Question 148. How long did you remain at the first camp?—One night; at the second camp, two days; and at the third camp, two days; and from each camp Mr. Wills went down tracing the creek.

149. And you remained two days at each camp for three camps down the creek?—Yes.

150. Was the third camp the final camp formed on the creek?—No, at the 63rd camp the first depot was formed. We remained there a fortnight.

151. At the 63rd camp?—Yes, that would be the fifth or sixth camp on the creek.

152. What were you doing that fortnight?—Mr. Wills was exploring the country to the north; Mr. Burke was out with him once; Mr. Burke was out with me first, and we could not go far enough with horses, not finding any water away from the camp.

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153. How far did you go?—About twenty-five miles straight; the weather being very hot we could not go further: we had to return the second day to the camp.

151. Then Mr. Wills went out by himself?—He went ninety miles; he took McDonough with him and three camels.

155. And he lost one of his camels, did he not?—He lost the three and returned on foot.

156. Was he much weakened by that journey?—Not Mr. Wills.

157. But McDonough was?—Rather.

158. Did they suffer from want of food as well as want of water? —No, only from want of water.

159. How long did you remain after that before there was a final start again?—I believe we started two or three days after that. Mr. Wills went out a second time from that camp with King and only two camels to bring down those things that he had left where he lost the camels.

160. How far was that from the creek?—Ninety miles.

161. And he went out with King and two camels for the things that he had left behind when he lost his camels and brought them back? —Yes; and on the same day, or the day after, when Mr. Wills went out on that second journey, Mr. Burke removed the depot to the lower place.

162. Did those camels lost by Mr. Wills ever turn up?—I believe two of them have been found near Adelaide.

163. In the meantime you went down to the last depot?—Yes.

164. How long did you remain there?—Mr. Burke started from there about five or six days after Mr. Wills returned from that second journey.

. . .

My son gives his own account of the exploration when the camels were lost, in the following letter to his sister:—

Cooper's Creek, December 6th, 1860. Latitude 27 degrees 36 minutes, Longitude 141 degrees 30 seconds.

My dear Bessy,

You must excuse my writing with a pencil; ink dries so rapidly that it is a nuisance to use it. We have been here now about three weeks, and shall, I expect, make a start northwards in about a fortnight. Our journey to this point has been interesting, but not in any particular that you will care much about. Our party here consists of eight men, sixteen camels, and fourteen horses. We expect the rest of the men and camels up in a few weeks. Everything has been very comfortable so far; in fact, more like a picnic party than a serious exploration: but I suppose we shall have some little difficulties to contend with soon. I had an intimation of something of the kind a few days ago, having been out reconnoitring the country to the north for three days, with one man and three camels, and had found no water, so that the animals were very thirsty, and on the third night managed to get away from us, leaving us about eighty miles from the main camp, without hay or water, except what remained of that which we had brought with us; so here was nothing for it, but to walk home as soon

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as we could, carrying as much water as possible, to be drunk on the way. After searching about in order to be sure that the camels had gone home, we started at about half-past seven, and were lucky enough to find a creek with some water in it about ten miles on, where we remained until evening; for it is dry work travelling in the middle of the day, with the thermometer varying from 90 to 105 degrees in the shade, and about 140 degrees in the sun. Well, we started again in the evening and walked until between nine and ten P.M.; and again at three A.M. and pushed on until midday. We then went on from five P.M., as before, until nine P.M.; and then from two A.M., and reached the camp at nine A.M., having walked more than eighty miles in rather less than fifty hours, including sleeping, feeding, and all stoppages. We found no water all the way, except what I have mentioned above, so that, as you may imagine, we ran rather short towards the end of our journey, having not quite half a pint left between us. When we stopped to rest the second night, it had been blowing a hot wind all day, with the thermometer at 107 degrees in the shade. This made us require more water than usual. I can assure you there is nothing like a walk of this sort to make one appreciate the value of a drink of cold water. We feel no inclination for anything else, and smack our lips over a drop such as you would not think of tasting, with as much relish as ever any one did over the best sherry or champagne. I have enjoyed myself so far. It is now nearly four months since we left Melbourne, and you will see by the map that we are about half-way across the continent. I hope by the time that this reaches you we shall not only have been entirely across, but back here again, and possibly on our way to Melbourne. There is no probability of the expedition lasting two or three years. I expect to be in town again within twelve months from the time of starting. I enclose a few chrysanthemums from the Australian desert. I know you will highly prize them. To give you an idea of Cooper's Creek, fancy extensive flat, sandy plains, covered with herbs dried like hay, and imagine a creek or river, somewhat similar in appearance and size to the Dart above the Weir, winding its way through these flats, having its banks densely clothed with gum trees and other evergreens:—so far there appears to be a considerable resemblance, but now for the difference. The water of Cooper's Creek is the colour of flood-water in the Dart; the latter is a continuous running stream; Cooper's Creek is only a number of waterholes. In some places it entirely disappears, the water in flood-time spreading all over the flats and forming no regular channel. The flies are very numerous, so that one can do nothing without having a veil on; and whilst eating the only plan is to wear goggles.

. . .

His next letter is written with ink:—

December 15th.

Dear Bessy,

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Since scribbling the above, I have been up to the place from whence I had the walk I mentioned. The camels did not get away this time. We have shifted our quarters to a better place, about twenty miles down the creek. To-morrow we start for Eyre's Creek, about two hundred miles towards the Una. There have been heavy thunderstorms towards the north, and I hope we shall find plenty of water. If so, I shall soon be able to send you a good long letter without resorting to the use of a pencil. I wish I could send mamma a few lines, but she must read yours and fancy it written to her: I have not even time to send a line to my father. Tell mamma that I am getting into that robust state of health that I always enjoy when in the bush; a tremendous appetite, and can eat anything. One of our chief articles of consumption is horseflesh: it is very nice; you would scarcely know it from beef. Give my love to all, and

Believe me,

Ever your affectionate brother,

William J. *Wills*.

. . .

Here we find my son, between the 1st and 15th of December, travelling about five hundred miles, and walking from eighty to ninety. McDonough, in his examination, gave altogether a falsified account respecting the loss of the camels, as he also made a bombastic statement of his great intimacy with Mr. Burke. The real truth is, that McDonough was the least trustworthy of the party. He would not have been taken by my son, but in the morning Mr. Burke had volunteered to accompany him, so that McDonough would not have been left alone; but after travelling a short distance, Mr. Burke did not feel well, and returned. At the place mentioned by my son as having dismounted, he told McDonough that he wished to make some observations, and was going to a rising ground at a distance; that the camels should feed, but he was not to lose sight of them for an instant. Instead of attending to his instructions, McDonough set to work to light a fire and boil his pannikin. Perhaps he went to sleep; for he pointed out some stunted bushes in the distance and said they were the camels. My son then sent him to search for them, but they could not be found. King, the only survivor of the party, on his examination, said:—

Mr. Wills told me that the camels were lost through McDonough's neglect during the time he was writing and taking observations.

Question 1737. McDonough never disputed that, did he?—McDonough told me that it was while they were at supper in the evening; but I do not see how that could be, because they generally took supper, and ourselves, about six o'clock; and it was so dark that they could not see the camels, so that they were most likely lost when Mr. Wills was taking observations.

. . .

Mr. Burke, in his report from Cooper's Creek, dated December the 13th, says:—"Mr. Wills, upon one occasion, travelled ninety miles to the north, without finding water, when his camels escaped, and he and the man who accompanied him were obliged to return on foot, which they accomplished in forty-eight hours. Fortunately, upon their return they found a pool of water. The three camels have not yet been recovered. . .Mr. Wills co-operates cordially with me. He is a most zealous and efficient officer."

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King, in the course of his evidence stated as follows:—

Question 667. What did you do when you got to Cooper's Creek; did you go on any of these expeditions with Mr. Burke or Mr. Wills? —Yes; when Mr. Burke made our first depot at the creek, Mr. Burke, Mr. Wills, and McDonough started one morning to try and find water some distance to the north. Mr. Burke seemed not to be well, and returned after going a mile or so, and so McDonough and Mr. Wills continued, and were away some few days; I do not know the exact number of days; they lost the camels (three in number) and had to return to the depot on foot.

668. After a few days?—Yes; after a few days.

669. Did you go out yourself on that expedition?—Not then; a few days after, Mr. Burke, Mr. Wills, and myself went to a distance of about seventy miles north; we could not find water; Mr. Wills found water when he and McDonough went before.

670. Did you go the same track as they did?—Yes; but I do not know how Mr. Wills could not find it; he seemed not to recognize the place.

671. Did you lose any horses or camels then?—None; we just rested, and Mr. Wills and myself went the third time, and found the water at a distance of about ninety miles to the north, and we also had to bring the camel saddles, and riding saddles, which Mr. Burke intended to take with him across the continent.

CHAPTER 8.

Mr. Wills's Survey of the line of Country pursued by the Expedition, from Torowoto Swamp to Cooper's Creek.

The following reports, which were duly forwarded and published, contain interesting particulars of the country traversed, and the observations made between Torowoto and Cooper's Creek. They were accompanied by a tracing, which is shown on the map.

Camp 65, Depot, Cooper's Creek, December 15th, 1860.

Sir,

I have had the honour to place in the hands of our leader, for transmission to the committee, my third report, and a tracing, showing the country traversed since my last was written. I regret that I have been unable to devote as much attention to either as I could have desired; but I have no doubt the committee will make due allowance for my want of time, and the inconveniences attending the execution of such work in our present position.

I have, *etc*.

William J. *Wills*, Surveyor and Assistant Observer.

The Honorary Secretary of the Exploration Committee.

(Forwarded).

Depot, December 16, 1860.

As Mr. Wills's report, with which I fully concur, contains all the necessary details with regard to the state of the country through which we passed, I have not referred to the subject in mine.

R. O'HARA *Burke*, Leader.

The Honorary Secretary of the Exploration Committee.

The accompanying tracing will show the course taken by the expedition party from the Torowoto Swamp, in latitude 30 degrees 1 minute 30 seconds south, longitude 142 degrees 36 minutes east, to the depot on Cooper's Creek, Camp 65, latitude 27 degrees 37 minutes 8 seconds south, longitude 141 degrees 6 minutes east.

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Water supply between Torowoto and Wright's Creek.—The country traversed to the north of the Torowoto Swamp, and lying between that place and Wright's Creek, is neither so well grassed nor watered as that to the south of the Swamp; the land falls considerably as far as Cangapundy, and a great extent of it is subject to inundation. Nearly all the water met with was thick and muddy: it was met with in small clay pans, most of which would probably be dry in three weeks. This applies to all the places at which we found water, with the exception of Cannilta, Cangapundy, —and the four waterholes to the south of Wright's Creek.

Cannilta.—Cannilta is a waterhole of good clear water in a small rocky creek which runs out on the low mud flats and swampy ground lying between Altoka and Tangowoko: it is situated in latitude 29 degrees 26 minutes 42 seconds south, longitude 142 degrees 40 minutes east, by account, nearly a mile from the north-westernmost point of the swampy ground. This point may be distinguished by the growth of a coarse kind of reedy grass, which does not make its appearance on the southern portion of the swamp or lake. The water in the hole was only two or three feet deep, but is well shaded by box trees, and will probably last two or three months. The temperature of the surface of the water at seven A.M., 2nd of November, was 60.5 degrees; that of the air being at the same time 60 degrees.

The Cangapundy Swamp.—The Cangapundy Swamp is an extensive tract of low clay land, which bears the appearance, as regards the vegetation of its banks, of having a tolerably permanent supply of water; but, unless some portions of the swamp are much deeper than where we passed, the water could not last throughout a dry season. The banks of the swamp are densely clothed with grasses, marshmallows, polygonum bushes, and shrubs, which shelter numerous kinds of waterfowl and snakes.

Character of Land.—It will be seen by the tracing that a large proportion of the land between Torowoto and Wright's Creek is composed of low mud plains and clay flats, subject to inundation. Most of these are devoid of vegetation of any kind, and others carry some stunted salt bushes and coarse grasses, which appear to be struggling between life and death. Bounding the mud-flats are generally some stony rises well grassed and sometimes lightly timbered. The more elevated plains are sandy, and support a fine supply of healthy salt bushes, as well as here and there a few grasses. On the rises to the south-south-east of Cannilta may be seen great quantities of quartz rock, forming dykes in the schist rises: the latter in some places adjoin, and run into hills of loose stone, having the appearance of indurated clay. From Cangapundy to Wright's Creek the ground is light-coloured, and of a clayey nature: it forms a series of dry clay-pans, separated from one another by low sandy banks, on which the vegetation was fresh and green. At about seventeen

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miles from the former place are three large holes with water from two to three feet deep in the deepest part, and at six miles further another large one which might almost be termed a lake, being nearly 1000 links square. About these there were some lines of sandhills running about north-east and south-west; and in one of the flats between the sandhills I found several pieces of satin spar in lumps of the size of one's hand, partially buried in the ground, and all of them with the plane of cleavage nearly perpendicular with the surface to the ground.

Balloo, or Wright's Creek.—The lower portion of Wright's Creek, called by the natives "Balloo," is situated in latitude 28 degrees 48 minutes south, and longitude 142 degrees 53 minutes east by account. At this point, the creek, after breaking into several small channels, runs out on a grassy plain, the water running in a southerly direction, probably until it meets that from the Torrens and other creeks at the Cangapundy Swamp. There was plenty of water in this part of the creek when we passed, but I cannot speak to its permanence. The banks are well lined with box timber, as well as with marshmallows and wild spinach: the land on either side consists of well-grassed sandy rises. At four or five miles above this, the creek is a narrow, dry, sandy watercourse, winding through a grassy valley, which everywhere presents indications of the most violent floods. Beyond this is an extensive grassy plain; and for three or four miles scarcely a trace of the creek could be seen. We then came to a clump of trees, amongst which were two large waterholes surrounded by polygonum bushes, and containing great numbers of small fish. These holes appear to be permanent. We found about sixty blacks camped here. Above these waterholes, which are together about half a mile long, the creek again disappears on the plain. The land for the next ten or twelve miles in a north-north-easterly direction is very fine for pastoral purposes, being alternately grassy plains and ridges. At twelve or thirteen miles we crossed the creek where it has cut for itself a deep narrow channel, the banks of which are densely timbered and well grassed, but the waterholes are small, and contained very little water. For a distance of six miles the creek is of a very insignificant character. It appears to be divided into several branches, which traverse clay flats badly grassed. Here and there are some lines of low sandy rises, with plenty of feed on them. All the watercourses are distinctly marked by lines of box timber. At about nine miles from where we crossed the creek, and after traversing some loose polygonum ground, which was covered with mussel shells and a shell resembling a periwinkle, we came to a branch of the creek containing a splendid waterhole 150 links broad and about half a mile long. A little above this the creek again disappears for a short distance, and then there is a long narrow channel of undoubtedly permanent water,

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being nearly four feet deep in the shallowest places; it is only on an average about fifty links broad, and well sheltered by overhanging box trees. The temperature of the water on the morning of the 7th November, at six o'clock, was 68 degrees; the temperature of the air at the same time being 50.5 degrees. Our camp at this place is indicated by a box tree marked B over LII in square, the geographical position of which is by account 28 degrees 26 minutes 9 seconds south latitude, and longitude 143 degrees 0 minutes east. In proceeding from here in a north-north-easterly direction up the course of the creek, or rather of the water, for the creek is again lost on the plains for five or six miles, we passed the southernmost point of a prominent sandstone range, the nearest portion of which lay about a mile and a half to the westward. At about nine miles we again touched the creek, where it is about three chains broad. The banks are firm and shelving, from ten to twelve feet above the water, and lined with box, acacias, some large gums, gigantic marshmallows, polygonum, *etc*. In the creek there is abundance of fish, and the ducks and other waterfowl on it are numberless. From what we have seen of the blacks, I should say the population cannot be far short of 150, and it might be considerably more. From here we proceeded in an east-north-easterly direction along the west bank of this fine waterhole, and at two and a half miles found it begin rapidly to decrease in breadth, and a little further on there was nothing but a few small stony watercourses traversing a dense box forest: at this point there is a level bed of sandstone pebbles, close to and over a part of which the creek flows. The blacks have here gone to the trouble of making paths for themselves, along which we turned off from the creek on a north-north-easterly course, and at about three miles, coming on earthy plains, with no signs of water ahead, we again turned in to the creek and camped at a small waterhole. From here the line of river timber continues in a north-easterly direction. To the west and north-north-west is a line of sandstone ranges running off in the same direction. The land in the immediate vicinity of the creek on the west side is very poorly grassed all the way up from where we crossed it: that on the east side appeared to be better.

I think there can scarcely be a doubt but that this creek is the lower portion of the Warrego River, although I believe that its main supply of water is obtained from the adjoining ranges, which send down innumerable creeks into the flats through which it flows.

Some latitude observations at Camp 53, (the furthest point to which we traced the creek) placed us in 28 degrees 16 minutes 40 seconds south; our latitude, by account, being 28 degrees 17 minutes 8 seconds, and longitude, 143 degrees 18 minutes east. On Thursday, November 8th, we left Wright's Creek with the intention of crossing the ranges to Cooper's Creek. We found the land as we approached the hills well grassed, and in some places densely timbered: it is intersected by numerous watercourses with deep sandy channels, in most of which there seemed little chance of finding water. We camped at a waterhole in McDonagh's Creek; the spot is indicated by a gum tree marked B over LIV within square.

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De Rinsy's Tracks.—Near here we found the tracks of drays; there were four distinct tracks, two of which appeared to be those of heavy horse drays, the other two might have been made by light ones or ring carts; we were unable to make out the tracks of the horses or cattle. I cannot imagine what tracks these are, unless they may be those of De Rinsy, who, I believe, had some drays with him, and reported that he had been somewhere in this direction. From Camp 54 to Camp 55 we were obliged to take a very circuitous route on account of the rugged and stony nature of the ranges, which were more extensive than we had anticipated. They stretch away far to the north and north-north-west, and although we kept well out to the north-west we were unable to avoid the low stony rises which adjoin them.

On the north-west side of the hills we crossed two dry creeks which flow in a north-north-easterly direction; their banks are thinly lined with box trees, and the holes in them were quite dry. From this we took a west-north-westerly course, across an undulating country covered with sandstone, quartz, and (magnetic) ironstone pebbles, so densely and firmly set together in some places as to have the appearance of an old-fashioned pavement. At about three miles, we had to change our course to north-west, to avoid a spur of the high range on our left. At two miles further we came to a grassy flat through which ran a fine-looking creek, but the bed was sandy and quite dry; there were, however, a good many small birds about here, which would indicate that there must be water in the neighbourhood. We here again changed our course to west-north-west, and at six miles camped at a dry stony creek, having travelled about eight-and-twenty miles over the worst ground that we had yet met with. On the morning of the 10th we continued on a west-north-westerly course, across stony ground of the same nature as that passed during the previous day; but at a distance of five miles we turned to west quarter south, as the ranges appeared to be as low in that direction as in the other; and as they ran nearly north-north-west there seemed a chance of sooner getting out of them, which we did at a distance of about eight miles more.

From the point at which we emerged from these ranges the view was as follows:—From south-west nearly up to north-west were extensive plains, as far as the eye could reach, intersected by numerous lines of timber, the general direction of which was about north-north-west. Several columns of smoke were visible along these lines, some of which had the appearance of camp and others of bush fires. From north-west to north were lines of ranges running in a north-westerly direction, and in the valley between us and the first spur was a fine line of timber, indicating the course of what appeared to be a large creek, probably the recipient of all the small creeks that we had crossed during the morning; in every other direction there was nothing to be seen but timbered sandstone

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ranges. At noon we crossed a small creek running nearly north: the grass had been burnt on its banks. About half a mile beyond it was another creek of a more promising appearance, and as we approached it we saw several crows, as well as other birds, in the trees. We here found a small hole with the water fast drying up; it contained a lot of young fish about half an inch long, and just sufficient water to replenish our water bags and give the horses a drink; below it the creek took a north-north-westerly course, and was dry and sandy for a distance of two miles and a half, at which point we found some large but shallow holes of milky-looking water. On the plains near these holes we found large flocks of pigeons. The grass was very coarse and dry, and the water would probably not last more than a few weeks.

Horse Tracks.—On the plains to the east of the creek were the tracks of a single horse, which had evidently crossed when the ground was very soft, and gone in a south-westerly direction.

Position of Water.—The waterholes are situated in latitude 27 degrees 51 south, longitude 142 degrees 40 minutes east, by account from Camp 55. From here a course of west half south took us in a distance of about twenty miles to Cooper's Creek, which we first struck in latitude 27 degrees 49 minutes south, longitude 142 degrees 20 minutes east. The land through which we passed on the 11th was so low and wooded as to prevent me from seeing the direction of the ranges; the first five or six miles was tolerably open. We then came to a box forest, where the soil was loose and earthy, similar to polygonum ground; there were in every direction signs of heavy floods and frequent inundations. We crossed several small watercourses, in one of which there was a hole of rather creamy water, at which we halted for an hour. From the waterhole we quite unexpectedly obtained a rather fine fish, about eight inches long, of the same description as the young ones we had found in Brahe's Creek.

Cooper's Creek.—At the point at which we first struck Cooper's Creek it was rocky, sandy, and dry; but about half a mile further down we came to some good waterholes, where the bed of the creek was very boggy, and the banks richly grassed with kangaroo and other grasses. The general course is a little north of west, but it winds about very much between high sand hills. The waterholes are not large, but deep, and well shaded, both by the steep banks and the numerous box trees surrounding them. The logs and bushes high upon the forks of the trees, tell of the destructive floods to which this part of the country has been subjected, and that at no very distant period, as may be seen by the flood marks on trees of not more than five or six years' growth.

From Camp 57 we traced the creek in a west-north-westerly direction about six miles. It then runs out among the sand hills, the water flowing by various small channels in a south-westerly direction. The main channel, however, continues nearly south until it is lost on an extensive earthy plain covered with marshmallows and chrysanthemums.

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Creek.—In one of the valleys between the sand hills, at a distance of about ten miles in a south-westerly direction, we found a shallow waterhole where a creek is formed for a short distance, and is then lost again on the earthy plain beyond. West by north and west from here, about twelve miles, there are some splendid sheets of water, in some places two and three chains broad; the banks well timbered, but the land in the neighbourhood so loose and rotten that one can scarcely ride over it. I expect this is the reason why we saw no blacks about here, for it must be worse for them to walk over than the stony ground. From Camp 60 the general course of the creek is north-west, but it frequently disappears on the earthy plains for several miles, and then forms into waterholes again finer than before. At our first depot, Camp 63, in latitude 27 degrees 36 minutes 15 seconds south, longitude 141 degrees 30 minutes east, there is a fine hole about a mile long, and on an average one chain and a half broad. It exceeds five feet in depth everywhere that I tried it, except within three or four feet of the bank. Two or three miles above this camp we saw the first melaburus growing around the waterholes, some of them as large as a moderate size gum tree.

Earthy Flat.—The feed in the vicinity of Camp 63 is unexceptionable, both for horses and camels but the herbage on the creek generally down to this point is of a very inferior quality; the grasses are very coarse, and bear a very small proportion to the other plants. By far the chief portion of the herbage consists of chrysanthemums and marshmallows; the former, to judge from their dried-up powdery state, can contain very little nourishment, although some of the horses and camels eat them with great relish; the latter, I need hardly mention, are at this time of the year merely withered sticks. A few small salsolaceous plants are to be found on some of the flats, but they are scarcely worth mentioning. In some places where the bed of the creek is shallow and dry, there is an abundance of good grass and rushes of several kinds. The polygonum bushes are also fresh and good, in such places.

Stony Rises.—The stony rises are generally bare and barren; but some of those on the north side of the creek carry a fair crop of light grass.

Sand Hills.—Wherever there are sand banks or ridges the feed is almost invariably good; the salt bush is healthy and abundant, and there are a variety of plants on which cattle would do well. For camels, these hills are particularly well adapted, for there is scarcely a plant grows on them that they will not eat, with the exception of porcupine grass; but there is very little of that until one gets many miles back from the creek.

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Character of Ground.—I have mentioned three distinct kinds of ground—the earthy plains, the stony rises, and the sand ridges. The latter, which is by far the most agreeable whether for travelling on, for feed, or in respect to the freedom from flies, ants, musquitoes, and rats, is simply a series of hills composed of blown sand of a red colour, very fine, and so compactly set that the foot does not sink in it much. In some places the ridges have a uniform direction, in others the hills are scattered about without any regularity; the average direction of the ridges is north-north-east and south-south-west. In the valleys between the hills, are shallow clay plains, in which the water rapidly collects, even after slight showers; but when full they seldom exceed five or six inches in depth, so that in summer they are soon dry again.

Stony Rises.—The stony ground, in contradistinction to the sandstone ranges, appears to have been formed from the detritus of the latter, deposited in undulating beds of vast extent. The greater portion of this ground appears almost level when one is on it, but when viewed from a distance the undulations are very distinct; the stones are chiefly water-worn pebbles of sandstone, quartz, and iron-stone; in some places the rises approach more nearly to the nature of the sandstone ranges, and here the stones are less water-worn, and are mixed with large blocks of rock. I found the magnetic polarity to be very distinct in some of the ironstone pebbles on these rises.

Earthy Plains.—The earthy plains which are such an important geological feature in this part of the country, will, I fear, greatly interfere with its future occupation. When dry they are so intersected by chasms and cracks that it is in some places dangerous for animals to cross them, and when wet they would be quite impassable. Cattle would, perhaps, do well on them for some time after an inundation, and the ground might improve after having been stocked. The boggy nature of the banks of the creeks passing through this ground would be another impediment to settlers, from the losses of cattle that it would sometimes entail. To furnish an idea of the danger in that respect, I may mention that there are places where, for a distance of two or three miles, neither a bullock nor a horse could get to the water with safety, and it was with difficulty that we could approach it ourselves; the safest spots are at the lower end of the waterhole, where the creeks run out on the plains. A peculiar geological feature that I have never seen so strongly exhibited elsewhere is, that the watercourses on these plains have a strong tendency to work away to the south and south-west; the fall of the ground, as shown by the flow of the flood water, being to the west and north-west. I found that at almost every place where a portion of the creek ran out, the small branches into which it split before disappearing, struck off at nearly right angles to

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the creek, and that the flow of the water on the level plain was invariably in a west or north-westerly direction; whereas the creeks generally had a course considerably to the south and west, more especially before running out. The branch creeks and waterholes are always lined with box trees and polygonum bushes; they are generally situated between or near sandhills, and have doubtless been formed by the rush of water consequent on the interference of these hills by the general flow. In some places the direction of the sand ridges was the course of the creeks, trending to the southward; but I allude to the tendency as exhibited on the open plain, with no sand ridges near the creek.

Country to the north of Camp 63,—Cooper's.—During our stay at Camp 63, from which spot we found it necessary to remove for several reasons, but chiefly because the rats attacked our stores in such numbers that we could keep nothing from them, unless by suspending it in the trees, four excursions were made to the north of that place in search of a practicable route to the Gulf. The first attempt was made with horses, which were soon knocked up from the strong nature of the ground and the want of water; the others we made with camels, by the help of which the country was well examined to a distance of nearly ninety miles. Water was found at two places at distances of about seventy and seventy-three miles north of the creek, but it was fast drying up, and would not last beyond Christmas. No blacks were seen, but a column of smoke was observed to the north-north-east, at a distance of about fifteen miles, as ascertained by some bearings, from the point at which we turned back. The chief portion of the land traversed consists of land-dunes and flats of the same nature, the latter clothed with porcupine grass, the former with salt bushes, grasses, and a variety of shrubs, sometimes intermixed with mesembryanthemums and porcupine grass. The sandy ground is bounded on either side by sandstone ranges, from which numerous small creeks flow east and west until they are lost in small flats and clay pans amongst the sand hills. Their course is marked by an acacia, which is somewhat analogous in its general characteristics to the common wattle; a few are favoured with some box trees, but we only found water in one. The whole country has a most deplorably arid appearance; birds are very scarce, native dogs numerous. The paths of the blacks on the strong ground look as if they had been used many years. Anthills and beds are to be found everywhere in great numbers and of considerable size; the paths to and from them are better marked and more worn than any I have ever seen before; but nearly all of them are deserted, and those that are inhabited contain a small and weakly population that seems to be fast dying away. Neither about the flats nor the ranges did we see any signs of the heavy floods that have left such distinct marks in other parts, and the appearance of the whole country

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gave me the idea of a place that had been subjected to a long-continued drought. At the northernmost end of the eastern line of ranges, and on the west side of them, in latitude 26 degrees 30 minutes south, longitude 141 degrees 40 minutes east, is a low detached line of range about seven miles from north to south. On passing inside this range at its southern extremity, one enters a flat bounded to the south by high red sand hills to the west and north by the low range, and running up to the north-north-east, until it reaches the main range. On the lower part of the flat there is no creek, but on proceeding up it, at a mile and a half there are three waterholes with a few bushes growing around them; the water was fast drying up when we were there. There were some ducks, snipe, and pigeons about them: the former always returned to the holes after having been disturbed, so I imagine there is not much more water in the vicinity. In continuing up the flat, the main creek appears to be that along which the box timber grows, but the bed is sandy and quite dry. By keeping off a little to the left, at a mile above the waterholes, one comes on the bed of another creek, with only here and there a gum tree and a few bushes. Up this creek at a distance of three miles nearly north from the three holes, and where the creek emerges from the ranges, is a large hole well shaded by heavy box trees; it contained only a small quantity of water when we passed, but I fancy that in ordinary seasons the water would be permanent. This creek has been much frequented by blacks at one time, but not lately. Hundreds of hawks and a good many crows and magpies were in the trees near the waterhole.

Geographical position.—The geographical position of the three waterholes is by account from Cooper's Creek latitude 26 degrees 34 minutes south, longitude 140 degrees 43 minutes east.

Meteorological remarks.—It would be rather premature for me to offer any opinion on the climate of Cooper's Creek on so short a stay, and my other duties have prevented me from making any observations that would be worth forwarding in detail. I may mention, however, that neither on the creek, nor during the journey up, have we experienced any extreme temperatures: the heat, although considerably greater here than in Melbourne, as shown by a thermometer, is not felt more severely by us. The maximum daily temperatures since our arrival on Cooper's Creek have generally exceeded 100 degrees; the highest of all was registered on November 27th at Camp 63, when the thermometer stood at 109 degrees in the shade. There was at that time a strong wind from the north, which felt rather warm, but had not the peculiar characteristics of a hot wind. One of the most noticeable features in the weather has been the well-marked regularity in the course of the wind, which almost invariably blew lightly from the east or south-east soon after sunrise, went gradually round to north by two o'clock,

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sometimes blowing fresh from that quarter, followed the sun to west by sunset, and then died away or blew gently from the south throughout the night. A sudden change took place yesterday, December 14th; the day had been unusually hot, temperature of air at one P.M. 106 degrees, at which time cirrocumulus clouds began to cross the sky from north-west, and at two P.M. the wind sprang up in the south-west, blowing with great violence (force 6); it soon shifted to south, increasing in force to (7) and sometimes (8); it continued to blow from the same quarter all night, and has not yet much abated. Once during the night it lulled for about an hour, and then commenced again; it is now (four P.M.) blowing with a force of (5) from south by east, with a clear sky. Before the wind had sprung up the sky had become overcast, and we were threatened with a thunderstorm; rain was evidently falling in the west and north-west, but the sky partially cleared in the evening without our receiving any. Flashes of distant lightning were visible towards the north. During the night, the thunderstorm from the north approached sufficiently near for thunder to be distinctly heard; the flashes of lightning were painfully brilliant, although so far away. The storm passed to the south-east without reaching us; the sky remained overcast until between eight and nine A.M., since when it has been quite clear; the temperature of air, which at sunrise was as low as 72 degrees, has reached a maximum of 92 degrees: it is at present 89 degrees, and that of the surface of the water in the creek 78 degrees. Two other thunderstorms have passed over since we have been on the creek, from only one of which we have received any rain worth mentioning.

Mr. Brahe, who remains here in charge of the depot, and from whom I have received great assistance both in making meteorological observations and in the filling in of feature surveys, will keep a regular meteorological register. I have handed over to him for that purpose an aneroid barometer, Number 21,543, and four thermometers, two for dry and wet bulb observations, and the others for temperature of water, *etc*.

With regard to hot winds, the direction of the sand-ridges would seem to indicate a prevalence of east and west winds here rather than of northerly.

William J. *Wills*,

Surveyor and Astronomical Observer.

Cooper’s Creek, 15th December, 1860.

. . .

This concludes my son’s third report; the first, as far as I can ascertain, was never published. This last was accompanied by many observations taken with the sextant and other instruments, requiring long experience to understand and handle correctly. Brahe, a German, had been instructed by my son in their use, and had made some progress. Notwithstanding his fatal error in leaving the depot contrary to orders, he had,

in some respects, superior requisites to either of the others left with him. He was a good traveller, and a better bushman than Wright. Had he been associated with a single companion of nerve and energy, the consequent misfortunes might have been surmounted.

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CHAPTER 9.

Departure from Cooper's Creek for the Gulf of Carpentaria. Arrangements for the Continuance of the Depot at Cooper's Creek. Mr. Brahe left in Charge. Determination of Route. Progress and Incidents. Mr. Wills's Field Books, from the 16th of December, 1860, to the 30th of January, 1861, 1 to 9. Shores of Carpentaria.

During the halt at Cooper's Creek, it was reported through an Adelaide paper that Mr. McDouall Stuart had returned from his attempt to explore in a north-western direction, and was preparing to start again with Government aid, and no longer confined entirely to the private resources and enterprise of Mr. James Chambers. The Gulf of Carpentaria was not so much the immediate object of Stuart's efforts, as the opening of a commercial avenue with a view to future trade, in a direction more toward the north-west coast, and as far north as the 16 or 18 degrees of southern latitude. This line of exploration appeared preferable to the strong practical mind of Mr. Chambers, who had in view the quid pro quo. Stuart's object was therefore plain business, and the immediate advantage of the colony with which he was connected; whilst the Victorian Expedition included scientific discoveries, and the settlement of a great geographical problem. Stuart is again out, since August, 1861, and doubts are entertained for his safety. Mr. Chambers has died in the interim, and cannot know the result of the work he set afloat with so much spirit. Thus it is in all ages of discovery, that few of the early pioneers live to travel on the roads they open with so much difficulty and endurance.

Mr. Burke and my son, impatient of Wright's delay, and seeing the time slip by that could never return, determined to make a dash for the Gulf while the opportunity still remained to them. I was not aware, until after a communication with Mr. Brahe, on his first visit to Melbourne, subsequent to his desertion of his post at the depot, that my son had strongly advocated a direct course northward; but Mr. Burke hesitated to adopt this, unless he could feel confident in a supply of water; the committee having included something in his instructions as to proceeding north-west towards Eyre's Creek and Sturt's Furthest. In his excursions round the camp and the district of Cooper's Creek, with the all-important question of water in view, my son must have gone over little short of a thousand miles. When he lost his camels he had seen smoke in the direction of north by east, which he believed to be a native fire, but the disaster frustrated his attempts to ascertain the fact. Unable thoroughly to assure his leader on the point of water, the more western course was adopted at the commencement of the journey, for a day or two, after which they turned to the east, and scarcely deviated throughout from the 141st degree of eastern longitude.

The party left Cooper's Creek on the morning of the 16th of December, 1860. It consisted of Mr. Burke, Mr. Wills, King, and Gray, (or Charley as my son calls him in his journal); one horse, and six camels. It appears strange to me that they did not take

more horses. As they had been living on horseflesh so much they would have increased their available food, in addition to the facility of carrying burthens.

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Mr. Brahe remained at Cooper's Creek depot with Patten, McDonough, Dost Mahomet, an Indian, six camels, and twelve horses. He was left in charge until the arrival of Mr. Wright or some other person duly appointed by the committee to take command of the remainder of the expedition at Menindie. A surveyor also was expected to assist my son, and plenty of work was laid out for all, until Mr. Burke's return, had the authorities known how to employ the proper people and employed them in time.

There can be no doubt that Brahe received *most positive orders to remain at Cooper's creek until the return of the exploring party from the gulf of carpentaria*. Three and four months were named as the possible time of absence. Brahe did remain over four months; but even then it was in his power to have waited much longer, and he ought to have done so. But the man was over-weighted; the position was too much for him, and he gave way when a stronger mind might have stood firm. The worst point about him appears to be his want of consistency and miserable prevarication; but this may have been weakness rather than absolute absence of principle, or of any due sense of right or wrong. He was unfit to direct, but he might have been directed. Mr. Burke has been blamed for trusting Brahe; but he was the best of those who remained behind, and there were not many to choose from. King has since told me that it was by my son's advice Brahe was appointed, and that the arrival of the party from Menindie was considered so certain, that the appointment was looked upon only as a temporary affair. It has been also said that King might have been left behind in charge, and Brahe taken on. This arrangement, eligible in some respects, was open to objection in others. Brahe could travel by compass and observation, which King could not; and one so qualified might be wanted for a journey to Menindie.

The details of the journey are given as follows, in my son's Field Books, numbered from 1 to 7 consecutively, transcribed by Dr. Mueller, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Cooper. I was associated with them as a matter of personal delicacy to the memory of the deceased explorer.

Mr. *Wills's journal*.

Field book 1.

Cooper's creek to carpentaria.

[The omissions in this diary are supplied by the information contained in the maps, with the exception of the last two days on the shore of the Gulf.]

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Sunday, 16th December, 1860.—The horse having been shod and our reports finished, we started at 6.40 A.M. for Eyre's Creek, the party consisting of Mr. Burke, myself, King, and Charley, having with us six camels, one horse, and three months' provisions. We followed down the creek to the point where the sandstone ranges cross the creek, and were accompanied to that place by Brahe, who would return to take charge of the depot. Down to this point the banks of the creek are very rugged and stony, but there is a tolerable supply of grass and salt bush in the vicinity. A large tribe of blacks came pestering us to go to their camp and have a dance, which we declined. They were very troublesome, and nothing but the threat to shoot them will keep them away. They are, however, easily frightened; and, although fine-looking men, decidedly not of a warlike disposition. They show the greatest inclination to take whatever they can, but will run no unnecessary risk in so doing. They seldom carry any weapon, except a shield and a large kind of boomerang, which I believe they use for killing rats, *etc*. Sometimes, but very seldom, they have a large spear; reed spears seem to be quite unknown to them. They are undoubtedly a finer and better-looking race of men than the blacks on the Murray and Darling, and more peaceful; but in other respects I believe they will not compare favourably with them, for from the little we have seen of them, they appear to be mean-spirited and contemptible in every respect.

Monday, 17th December, 1860.—We continued to follow down the creek. Found its course very crooked, and the channel frequently dry for a considerable distance, and then forming into magnificent waterholes, abounding in water fowl of all kinds. The country on each side is more open than on the upper part of the creek. The soil on the plains is of a light earthy nature, supporting abundance of salt bush and grass. Most of the plains are lightly timbered, and the ground is finer and not cracked up as at the head of the creek. Left Camp 67 at ten minutes to six A.M., having breakfasted before leaving. We followed the creek along from point to point, at first in a direction west-north-west for about twelve miles, then about north-west. At about noon we passed the last water, a short distance beyond which the creek runs out on a polygonum flat [Footnote: Polygonum Cunninghami.]; but the timber was so large and dense that it deceived us into the belief that there was a continuation of the channel. On crossing the polygonum ground to where we expected to find the creek we became aware of our mistake. Not thinking it advisable to chance the existence of water ahead, we camped at the end of a large but shallow sheet of water in the sandy bed of the creek.

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The hole was about 150 links broad, and * [Footnote: Blank in original.] feet deep in most places. In many places the temperature of the water was almost incredibly high, which induced me to try it at several points. The mean of two on the shady side of the creek gave 97 4/10 degrees. As may be imagined this water tasted disagreeably warm, but we soon cooled some in water bags, and thinking that it would be interesting to know what we might call cool, I placed the thermometer in a pannikin containing some that appeared delightfully so, almost cold in fact; its temperature was, to our astonishment, 78 degrees. At half-past six, when a strong wind was blowing from south, and temperature of air had fallen to 80 degrees, the lowest temperature of water in the hose, that had been exposed to the full effect of evaporation for several hours was 72 degrees. This water for drinking appeared positively cold, and is too low a temperature to be pleasant under the circumstances. A remarkable southerly squall came on between five and six P.M., with every appearance of rain. The sky however soon cleared, but the wind continued to blow in a squally and irregular manner from the same quarter at evening.

Wednesday, 19th December, 1860.—Started at a quarter-past eight A. M., leaving what seemed to be the end of Cooper's Creek. We took a course a little to the north of west, intending to try and obtain water in some of the creeks that Sturt mentioned that he had crossed, and at the same time to see whether they were connected with Cooper's Creek, as appeared most probable from the direction in which we found the latter running, and from the manner in which it had been breaking up into small channels, flowing across the plains in a north and north-north-west direction. We left on our right the flooded flats on which this branch of the creek runs out, and soon came to a series of sand ridges, the directions of which were between north half-west and north-north-west. The country is well grassed and supports plenty of salt bush. Many of the valleys are liable to be inundated by the overflow of the main creek. They have watercourses and polygonum flats bordered with box trees, but we met with no holes fit to hold a supply of water. At about ten miles we crossed a large earthy flat lightly timbered with box and gum. The ground was very bad for travelling on, being much cracked up and intersected by innumerable channels, which continually carried off the water of a large creek. Some of the valleys beyond this were very pretty, the ground being sound and covered with fresh plants, which made them look beautifully green. At fifteen miles we halted, where two large plains joined. Our attention had been attracted by some red-breasted cockatoos, pigeons, a crow, and several other birds, whose presence made us feel sure that there was water not far off; but our hopes were soon destroyed by finding a claypan just drying up. It contained just sufficient liquid

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to make the clay boggy. At ten minutes to seven P.M., we moved on, steering straight for Eyre's Creek, north-west by north, intending to make a good night's journey and avoid the heat of the day; but at a mile and a half we came to a creek which looked so well that we followed it for a short distance, and finding two or three waterholes of good milky water we camped for the night. This enabled me to secure an observation of the eclipse of Jupiter's (I) satellite, as well as some latitude observations. The night was so calm that I used the water as an horizon; but I find it much more satisfactory to take the mercury for several reasons.

Thursday, 20th December.—We did not leave this camp until half-past eight, having delayed to refill the water-bags with the milky water, which all of us found to be a great treat again. It is certainly more pleasant to drink than the clear water, and at the same time more satisfying. Our course from here, north-west by north, took us through some pretty country, lightly timbered and well grassed. We could see the line of creek timber winding through the valley on our left. At a distance of five miles there was a bush fire on its banks, and beyond it the creek made a considerable bend to the south-west. At two miles farther we came in sight of a large lagoon bearing north by west, and at three miles more we camped on what would seem the same creek as last night, near where it enters the lagoon. The latter is of great extent and contains a large quantity of water, which swarms with wild fowl of every description. It is very shallow, but is surrounded by the most pleasing woodland scenery, and everything in the vicinity looks fresh and green. The creek near its junction with the lagoon contains some good waterholes five to six feet deep. They are found in a sandy alluvium which is very boggy when wet. There was a large camp of not less than forty or fifty blacks near where we stopped. They brought us presents of fish, for which we gave them some beads and matches. These fish we found to be a most valuable addition to our rations. They were of the same kind as we had found elsewhere, but finer, being from nine to ten inches long, and two to three inches deep, and in such good condition that they might have been fried in their own fat. It is a remarkable fact, that these were the first blacks who have offered us any fish since we reached Cooper's Creek.

Friday, 21st December.—We left Camp 70 at half-past five A.M., and tried to induce one or two of the blacks to go with us, but it was of no use. Keeping our former course we were pulled up at three miles by a fine lagoon, and then by the creek that flows into it; the latter being full of water, we were obliged to trace it a mile up before we could cross. I observed on its banks two wild plants of the gourd or melon tribe, one much resembling a stunted cucumber: the other, both in leaf and appearance of fruit, was very similar to a small model

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of a water melon. [Footnote: Probably Muckia micrantha.—F.M.] The latter plant I also found at Camp 68. On tasting the pulp of the newly-found fruit, which was about the size of a large pea, I found it to be so acrid that it was with difficulty that I removed the taste from my mouth. At eight or nine miles from where we crossed the creek we passed another large lagoon, leaving it two miles on our left, and shortly afterwards we saw one nearly as far on our right. This last we should have availed ourselves of, but that we expected to find water in a creek which we could see, by the timber lining its banks, flowed from the lagoon on our left and crossed our course a few miles ahead. We reached it at a distance of four or five miles farther, and found a splendid waterhole at which we camped. The creek at the point flows in a northerly direction through a large lightly timbered flat, on which it partially runs out. The ground is, however, sound and well clothed with grass and salsolaceous plants. Up to this point the country through which we have passed has been of the finest description for pastoral purposes. The grass and saltbush are everywhere abundant, and water is plentiful with every appearance of permanence. We met with porcupine grass, [Footnote: Triodia pungens. —Br.] and only two sand ridges before reaching Camp 71.

Field book 2.

Camp 72 *to* 78. *Latitude* 27 *to* 25 1/2 *degrees* S.L.

Saturday, 22nd December.—At five minutes to five A.M. we left one of the most delightful camps we have had in the journey, and proceeded on the same course as before, north-west by north, across some high ridges of loose sand, many of which were partially clothed with porcupine grass. We found the ground much worse to travel over than any we have yet met with, as the ridges were exceedingly abrupt and steep on their eastern side, and although sloping gradually towards the west, were so honeycombed in some places by the burrows of rats, that the camels were continually in danger of falling. At a distance of about six miles, we descended from these ridges to undulating country of open box forest, where everything was green and fresh. There is an abundance of grass and salt bushes, and lots of birds of all descriptions. Several flocks of pigeons passed over our heads, making for a point a little to our right, where there is no doubt plenty of water, but we did not go off our course to look for it. Beyond the box forest, which keeps away to the right, we again entered the sand ridges, and at a distance of six miles, passed close to a dry salt lagoon, the ridges in the vicinity of which are less regular in their form and direction, and contain nodules of limestone. The ground in the flats and claypans near, has that encrusted surface that cracks under the pressure of the foot, and is a sure indication of saline deposits. At a distance of eight miles from the lagoon, we camped at the foot

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of a sand ridge, jutting out on the stony desert. I was rather disappointed, but not altogether surprised, to find the latter nothing more nor less than the stony rises that we had before met with, only on a larger scale and not quite as undulating. During the afternoon several crows came to feed on the plain. They came from an east-north-east direction, no doubt from a portion of the creek that flows through the forest that we left on our right. In the morning, as we were loading, a duck passed over, but it was too dark to see which way it went.

Sunday, 23rd December.—At five A.M. we struck out across the desert in a west-north-west direction. At four and a-half miles we crossed a sand ridge, and then returned to our north-west by north course. We found the ground not nearly as bad for travelling on as that between Bulloo and Cooper's Creek. In fact I do not know whether it arose from our exaggerated anticipation of horrors or not, but we thought it far from bad travelling ground, and as to pasture it is only the actually stony ground that is bare, and many a sheep run is in fact worse grazing ground than that. At fifteen miles we crossed another sand ridge, for several miles round which there is plenty of grass and fine salt bush. After crossing this ridge we descended to an earthy plain, where the ground was rather heavy, being in some places like pieces of slaked lime, and intersected by small watercourses; flocks of pigeons rose from amongst the salt bushes and polygonum; but all the creeks were dry, although marked by lines of box timber. Several gunyahs of the blacks were situated near a waterhole that had apparently contained water very lately, and heaps of grass were lying about the plains, from which they had beaten the seeds. We pushed on, hoping to find the creeks assuming an improved appearance, but they did not, and at one o'clock we halted, intending to travel through part of the night. About sunset, three flocks of pigeons passed over us, all going in the same direction, due north by compass, and passing over a ridge of sand in that direction. Not to have taken notice of such an occurrence would have been little short of a sin, so we determined to go eight or ten miles in that direction. Starting at seven o'clock P.M., we, at six miles, crossed the ridge over which the birds had flown, and came on a flat, subject to inundation. The ground was at first hard and even like the bottom of a claypan, but at a mile or so, we came on cracked earthy ground, intersected by numberless small channels running in all directions. At nine miles we reached the bed of a creek running from east to west: it was only bordered by polygonum bushes, but as there was no timber visible on the plains, we thought it safer to halt until daylight, for fear we should miss the water. At daylight, when we had saddled, a small quantity of timber could be seen at the point of a sand ridge about a mile and a half or two miles to the west of us, and on going there we found a fine creek, with a splendid sheet of water more than a mile long, and averaging nearly three chains broad: it is, however, only two or three feet deep in most parts.

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Monday, 24th December, 1860.—We took a day of rest on Gray's Creek to celebrate Christmas. This was doubly pleasant, as we had never, in our most sanguine moments, anticipated finding such a delightful oasis in the desert. Our camp was really an agreeable place, for we had all the advantages of food and water, attending a position of a large creek or river, and were at the same time free from the annoyance of the numberless ants, flies, and mosquitoes that are invariably met with amongst timber or heavy scrub.

Tuesday, 25th December, 1860.—We left Gray's Creek at half-past four A.M. and proceeded to cross the earthy rotten plains in the direction of Eyre's Creek. At a distance of about nine miles we reached some lines of trees and bushes which were visible from the top of the sand ridge at Gray's Creek. We found them growing on the banks of several small creeks which trend to the north and north-north-west; at a mile and a half further we crossed a small creek north-north-east, and joining the ones above mentioned. This creek contained abundance of water in small detached holes from fifty to a hundred links long, well shaded by steep banks and overhanging bushes. The water had a suspiciously transparent colour and a slight trace of brackishness, but the latter was scarcely perceptible. Near where the creek joined the holes is a sandhill and a dense mass of fine timber. The smoke of a fire indicated the presence of blacks, who soon made their appearance and followed us for some distance, beckoning us away to the north-east. We however continued our course north-west by north, but at a distance of one mile and a half found that the creek did not come round as we expected, and that the fall of the water was in a direction nearly opposite to our course, or about west to east. We struck off north half west for a high sand ridge, from which we anticipated seeing whether it were worth while for us to follow the course of the creeks we had crossed. We were surprised to find all the watercourses on the plains trending rather to the south of east, and at a distance of three miles, after changing our course, and when we approached the sandhills towards which we had been steering, we were agreeably pulled up by a magnificent creek coming from the north-north-west, and running in the direction of the fire we had seen. We had now no choice but to change our course again, for we could not have crossed even if we had desired to do so. On following up the south bank of the creek we found it soon keeping a more northerly course than it had where we first struck it. This fact, together with its magnitude and general appearance, lessened the probability of its being Eyre's Creek, as seemed at first very likely from their relative positions and directions. The day being very hot and the camels tired from travelling over the earthy plains, which by-the-by are not nearly so bad as those at the head of Cooper's Creek, we camped at one P.M., having traced the creek up about five miles,

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not counting the bends. For the whole of this distance we found not a break or interruption of water, which appears to be very deep; the banks are from twenty to thirty feet above the water, and very steep; they are clothed near the water's edge with mint and other weeds, and on the top of each side there is a belt of box trees and various shrubs. The lower part of the creek is bounded towards the north by a high red sand ridge, and on the south side is an extensive plain, intersected by numerous watercourses, which drain off the water in flood-time. The greater portion of the plain is at present very bare, but the stalks of dry grass show that after rain or floods there will be a good crop on the harder and well drained portion; but I believe the loose earthy portion supports no vegetation at any time. The inclination of the ground from the edge of the creek-bank towards the plain is in many places very considerable; this I should take to indicate that the flooding is or has been at one time both frequent and regular.

Wednesday, 26th December, 1860.—We started at five A.M., following up the creek from point to point of the bends. Its general course was at first north-by-west, but at about six miles, the sand ridge on the west closed in on it, and at this point it takes a turn to the north-north-east for half a mile, and then comes around suddenly north-west. Up to this point it had been rather improving in appearance than otherwise, but in the bend to the north-west the channel is very broad. Its bed being limestone rock and indurated clay, is for a space of five or six chains quite dry; then commences another waterhole, the creek keeping a little more towards north. We crossed the creek here and struck across the plain in a due north course, for we could see the line of timber coming up to the sand ridges in that direction. For from seven to eight miles we did not touch the creek, and the eastern sand ridge seceded to a distance, in some places of nearly three miles, from our line, leaving an immense extent of grassy plain between it and the creek. The distinctly marked feature on the lower part of this creek is that whenever the main creek is on one side of a plain, there is always a fine billibong on the opposite side, each of them almost invariably sticking close to the respective sand ridges. Before coming to the next bend of the creek a view from the top of a sandhill showed me that the creek received a large tributary from the north-west at about two miles above where we had crossed it. A fine line of timber, running up to the north-west, joined an extensive tract of box forest, and the branch we were following was lost to view in a similar forest towards the north. The sand ridge was so abrupt when we came to the creek, that it was necessary to descend into its bed through one of the small ravines adjoining it. We found it partially run out, the bed being sand and strewed with nodules of lime, some of which were from one half to two feet long: they had apparently been formed in the sanddowns by infiltration.

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Field book 3.

Camps 78 *to* 85.* *Latitude south* 25 1/2 *to* 23 3/4 *degrees*. [* Footnote: This Field Book was mostly occupied by notes of astronomical observations, and surveyor's notes for mapping.]

Sunday, 30th December, 1860.—Finding that the creek was trending considerably towards the east without much likelihood of altering its course, we struck off from it, taking a ten days' supply of water, as there were ranges visible to the north, which had the appearance of being stony. A north-east by north course was first taken for about seven miles in order to avoid them. The whole of this distance was over alluvial earthy plains, the soil of which was firm, but the vegetation scanty.

Field book 4.

Camps 85 *to* 90. *Latitude* 23 3/4 *to* 22 1/4 *degrees*.

(Fine Country, Tropics.)

Saturday, 5th January, 1861.—On leaving Camp 84, we found slight but distinct indications of rain in the groves, and a few blades of grass and small weeds in the little depressions on the plain: these indications were, however, so slight, that, but for the fact of our having found surface-water in two holes near our camp, we should hardly have noticed them. At a distance of about two miles in a north-north-easterly direction, we came to a creek with a long broad shallow waterhole. The well-worn paths, the recent tracks of natives, and the heaps of shells, on the contents of which the latter had feasted, showed at once that this creek must be connected with some creek of considerable importance. The camels and horses being greatly in need of rest, we only moved up about half a mile, and camped for the day.

Sunday, 6th January, 1861.—Started at twenty minutes to six o'clock, intending to make an easy day's stage along the creek. As we proceeded up in a northerly direction, we found the waterhole to diminish in size very much, and at about two and a half miles the creek ran out in a lot of small watercourses. At the upper end of the creek we found in its bed what appeared to be an arrangement for catching fish: it consisted of a small oval mud paddock about twelve feet by eight feet, the sides of which were about nine inches above the bottom of the hole, and the top of the fence covered with long grass, so arranged that the ends of the blades overhung scantily by several inches the sides of the hole. As there was no sign of timber to the north, we struck off to north-west by north for a fine line that came up from south-west, and seemed to run parallel with the creek we were about to leave. At a distance of about three miles, we reached the bank of a fine creek containing a sheet of water two chains broad, and at least fifteen feet deep in the middle. The banks are shelving, sandy, and lightly clothed with box trees

and various shrubs. On starting to cross the plains towards this creek we were surprised

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at the bright green appearance of strips of land, which look in the distance like swamps. On approaching some of them, we found that there had been a considerable fall of rain in some places, which had raised a fine crop of grass and portulac [Footnote: Portulaca oleracea. L.] wherever the soil was of a sandy and light nature; but the amount of moisture had been insufficient to affect the hard clayey ground which constitutes the main portion of the plain. The sight of two native companions feeding here, added greatly to the encouraging prospects; they are the only specimens of that bird that I remember to have seen on that side of the Darling.

7th January, 1861.—We started at half-past four A.M. without water, thinking that we might safely rely on this creek for one day's journey. We, however, found the line of timber soon began to look small; at three miles the channel contained only a few pools of surface water. We continued across the plains on a due north course, frequently crossing small watercourses, which had been filled by the rain, but were fast drying up. Here and there, as we proceeded, dense lines of timber on our right showed that the creek came from the east of north; at a distance of thirteen miles we turned to the north-north-east towards a fine line of timber. We found a creek of considerable dimensions, that had only two or three small water-holes, but as there was more than sufficient for us, and very little feed for the beasts anywhere else, we camped. I should have liked this camp to have been in a more prominent and easily recognizable position, as it happens to be almost exactly on the tropic of Capricorn. The tremendous gale of wind that we had in the evening and night prevented me from taking a latitude observation, whereas I had some good ones at the last camp and at Camp 87. My reckoning cannot be far out. I found, on taking out my instruments, that one of the spare thermometers was broken, and the glass of my aneroid barometer cracked; the latter I believe not otherwise injured. This was done by the camel having taken it into his head to roll while the pack was on his back.

Tuesday, 8th January, 1861.—Started at a quarter past five A.M. with a load of water, determined to be independent of all creeks and watercourses. At a mile and a half, found surface water in a small creek, and at a mile farther, water in two or three places on the open plains. The country we crossed for the first ten miles consists of fine open plains of firm argillaceous soils, too stiff and hard to be affected by the small quantity of rain that has fallen as yet. They are subject to inundations from the overflow of a number of small creeks, which intersect them in a direction east-north-east to west-south-west. Nearly all the creeks are lined with box trees and shrubs in a tolerably healthy state; of the remains of dead trees there is only a fair proportion to the living ones. After traversing a plain of greater

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extent than the rest, we, at ten miles, reached the creek, proportionately large and important looking. The channel, however, at the point where we struck it, was deep, level, and dry; but I believe there is water in it not far off, for there were some red-breasted cockatoos in the trees, and native parrots on each side. On the north side there is a part bearing off to the north-north-west. The mirage on the plain to the south of the creek was stronger than I have before seen it. There appear to be sheets of water within a few yards of one, and it looks sufficiently smooth and glassy to be used for an artificial horizon. To the westward of the plains, some fine sandhills were visible, nearly in the direction in which the creek flowed. To the north of the creek the country undergoes a great change. At first there is a little earthy land subject to inundation. The soil then becomes more sandy, with stony pans in which water collects after rain; the whole country is slightly undulating, lightly timbered, and splendidly grassed. A number of small disconnected creeks are scattered about, many of which contained water protected from the sun and wind by luxuriant growth of fine grasses and small bushes. We passed one or two little rises of sand and pebbles, on which were growing some trees quite new to me; but for the seed pods I should have taken them for a species of Casuarina, although the leaf-stalks have not the jointed peculiarities of those plants. The trunks and branches are like the she oak, the leaves like those of a pine; they droop like a willow, and the seed is small, flat, in a large flat pod, about six inches by three-quarters of an inch. As we proceeded, the country improved at every step. Flocks of pigeons rose and flew off to the eastward, and fresh plants met our view on every rise; everything green and luxuriant. The horse licked his lips, and tried all he could to break his nose-string in order to get at the food. We camped at the foot of a sandy rise, where there was a large stony pan with plenty of water, and where the feed was equal in quality, and superior as to variety, to any that I have seen in Australia, excepting perhaps on some soils of volcanic origin.

Wednesday, 9th January, 1861.—Started at five minutes past five, without water, trusting to get a supply of water from the rain that fell during the thunderstorm. Traversed six miles of undulating plains covered with vegetation richer than ever. Several ducks rose from the little creeks as we passed, and flocks of pigeons were flying in all directions. The richness of the vegetation is evidently not suddenly arising from chance thunderstorms, for the trees and bushes on the open plain are everywhere healthy and fresh looking; very few dead ones are to be seen; besides which, the quantity of dead and rotten grass which at present almost overpowers in some places the young blades shows that this is not the first crop of the kind. The grasses are numerous and

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many of them unknown to me, but they only constitute a moderate portion of the herbage. Several kinds of spurious vetches and portulac, as well as salsolaceae, add to the luxuriance of the vegetation. At seven miles we found ourselves in an open forest country, where the feed was good, but not equal to what we had passed, neither had it been visited by yesterday's rain. We soon emerged again on open plains, but the soil being of a more clayish nature, they were not nearly so much advanced in vegetation as the others. We found surface water in several places, and at one spot disturbed a fine bustard which was feeding in the long grass; we did not see him until he flew up. I should have mentioned that one flew over our camp last evening in a northerly direction; this speaks well for the country and climate. At noon we came to a large creek the course of which was from east-north-east to west-south-west; the sight of the white gum trees in the distance had raised hopes, which were not at all damped on a close inspection of the channel. At the point where we struck it there was certainly no great quantity of water; the bed was broad and sandy, but its whole appearance was that of an important watercourse, and the large gums which line its banks, together with the improved appearance of the soil, and the abundance of feed in the vicinity, satisfied us as to the permanency of the water and the value of the discovery. Although it was so early in the day, and we were anxious to make a good march, yet we camped here, as it seemed to be almost a sin to leave such good quarters. The bed of the creek is loose sand, through which the water freely permeates; it is, however, sufficiently coarse not to be boggy, and animals can approach the water without any difficulty.

Thursday, 10th January, 1861.—At twenty minutes past five A.M., we left our camp with a full supply of water, determined to risk no reverses, and to make a good march. I should mention that last evening we had been nearly deafened by the noise of the cicadariae, and but for our large fires should have been kept awake all night by the mosquitoes. A walk of two miles across a well grassed plain brought us to a belt of timber, and we soon afterwards found ourselves pulled up by a large creek in which the water was broad and deep; we had to follow up the bank of the creek in a north-easterly direction for nearly a mile before we could cross, when to our joy we found that it was flowing; not a muddy stream from the effects of recent floods, but a small rivulet of pure water as clear as crystal. The bed of the river at this place is deep and rather narrow; the water flows over sand and pebbles, winding its way between clumps of melalema, and gum saplings. After leaving the river, we kept our old course due north, crossing, at a distance of one mile, three creeks with gum trees on their banks. The soil of the flats through which they flow is a red loam of fair quality and well grassed. Beyond the third creek is a large

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plain, parts of which are very stony, and this is bounded towards the east by a low stony rise, partly composed of decayed and honeycombed quartz rock in situ, and partly of waterworn pebbles and other alluvial deposits. At about two miles across this plain, we reached the first of a series of small creeks with deep waterholes: these creeks and holes have the characteristics peculiar to watercourses which are found in flats formed from the alluvial deposits of schistose rocks. The banks are on a level with the surrounding ground, and are irregularly marked by small trees, or only by tufts of long grass which overhang the channel and frequently hide it from one's view, even when within a few yards. At about five miles from where we crossed the river, we came to the main creek in these flats, Patten's Creek; it flows along at the foot of a stony range, and we had to trace it up nearly a mile in a north-north-easterly direction before we could cross it; as it happened, we might almost as well have followed its course up the flat, for at a little more than two miles we came to it again. We re-crossed it at a stony place just below a very large waterhole, and then continued our course over extensive plains, not so well grassed as those we had passed before, and very stony in some places. At eight miles from Patten's Creek, we came to another, running from south-west to south-east: there was plenty of water in it, but it was evidently the result of recent local rains. On the banks was an abundance of good feed but very little timber.

Friday, 11th January, 1861.—We started at five A.M., and in the excitement of exploring fine well-watered country, forgot all about the eclipse of the sun until the reduced temperature and peculiarly gloomy appearance of the sky drew our attention to the matter; it was then too late to remedy the deficiency, so we made a good day's journey, the moderation of the midday heat, which was only about 86 degrees, greatly assisting us. The country traversed has the most verdant and cheerful aspect; abundance of feed and water everywhere. All the creeks seen to-day have a course more or less to the east by south. The land improves in appearance at every mile. A quantity of rain has fallen here and to the south, and some of the flats are suitable for cultivation, if the regularity of the seasons will admit.

Field book 5.

Camps 92 *to* 95. *Latitude* 22 1/4 *to* 21 1/4 *degrees*.

(Standish Ranges.)

Saturday, 12th January, 1861.—We started at five A.M., and, keeping as nearly as possible a due north course, traversed for about eight miles a splendid flat, through which flow several fine well-watered creeks, lined with white gum trees. We then entered a series of slaty, low, sandstone ranges, amongst which were some well-grassed flats, and plenty of water in the main gullies. The more stony portions are, however, covered with porcupine grass, and here

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and there with mallee; large ant-hills are very numerous; they vary in height from two and a half to four feet. There was a continuous rise perceptible all the way in crossing the ranges, and from the highest portion, which we reached at a distance of about seven miles, we had a pretty good view of the country towards the north. As far as we could see in the distance, and bearing due north, was a large range, having somewhat the outline of a granite mountain. The east end of this range just comes up to the magnetic north; on the left of this, and bearing north-north-west, is a single conical peak, the top of which only is visible. Further to the west there were some broken ranges, apparently sandstone; to the east of north the tops of very distant and apparently higher ranges were seen, the outline of which was so indistinct that I can form no idea as to their character; the intermediate country below us appeared alternations of fine valleys and stony ranges, such as we had just been crossing. From here a descent of two miles brought us to a creek having a northern course, but on tracing it down for about a mile, we found it to turn to the south-east and join another from the north. We crossed over to the latter on a north-by-west course, and camped on the west bank. It has a broad sandy channel; the waterholes are large, but not deep; the banks are bordered with fine white gums, and are in some places very scrubby. There is abundance of rich green feed everywhere in the vicinity. We found here numerous indications of blacks having been here, but saw nothing of them. It seems remarkable that where their tracks are so plentiful, we should have seen none since we left King's Creek. I observed that the natives here climb trees as those on the Murray do, in search of some animal corresponding in habits to the opossum, which they get out of the hollow branches in a similar manner. I have not yet been able to ascertain what the animal is.

Sunday, 13th January, 1861.—We did not leave camp this morning until half-past seven, having delayed for the purpose of getting the camels' shoes on—a matter in which we were eminently unsuccessful. We took our breakfast before starting, for almost the first time since leaving the depot. Having crossed the creek, our course was due north as before, until, at about six miles, we came in sight of the range ahead, when we took a north-half-east direction for the purpose of clearing the eastern front of it. We found the ground more sandy than what we had before crossed, and a great deal of it even more richly grassed. Camp 93 is situate at the junction of three sandy creeks, in which there is abundance of water. The sand is loose, and the water permeates freely, so that the latter may be obtained delightfully cool and clear by sinking anywhere in the beds of the creeks.

Field book 6.

Camps 98 *to* 105. *Latitude* 21 1/4 *to* 20 1/4 *degrees*.

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(Upper part of Cloncurry.)

Saturday, 19th January, 1861.—Started from Camp 98 at 5.30 A.M., and passing to the north-west of Mount Forbes, across a fine and well-grassed plain, kept at first a north-by-east direction. At a distance of three miles, the plain became everywhere stony, being scattered over with quartz pebbles; and a little further on we came to low quartz ranges, the higher portions of which are covered with porcupine grass, but the valleys are well clothed with a variety of coarse and rank herbage. At about five miles we crossed a creek with a sandy bed, which has been named Green's Creek; there were blacks not far above where we crossed, but we did not disturb them. After crossing the creek, we took a due north course over very rugged quartz ranges of an auriferous character. Pieces of iron ore, very rich, were scattered in great numbers over some of the hills. On our being about to cross one of the branch creeks in the low range, we surprised some blacks—a man who, with a young fellow apparently his son, was upon a tree, cutting out something; and a lubra with a piccaninny. The two former did not see me until I was nearly close to them, and then they were dreadfully frightened; jumping down from the trees, they started off, shouting what sounded to us very like "Joe, Joe." Thus disturbed, the lubra, who was at some distance from them, just then caught sight of the camels and the remainder of the party as they came over the hill into the creek, and this tended to hasten their flight over the stones and porcupine grass. Crossing the range at the head of this creek, we came on a gully running north, down which we proceeded, and soon found it open out into a creek, at two or three points in which we found water. On this creek we found the first specimen of an eucalyptus, which has a very different appearance from the members of the gum-tree race. It grows as high as a good-sized gum tree, but with the branches less spreading: in shape it much resembles the elm; the foliage is dark, like that of the light wood; the trunk and branches are covered with a grey bark resembling in outward appearance that of the box tree. Finding that the creek was trending too much to the eastward, we struck off to the north again, and at a short distance came on a fine creek running about south-south-east. As it was now nearly time to camp, we travelled it up for about one and a-half mile, and came to a fine waterhole in a rocky basin, at which there were lots of birds.

Field book 7.

Camps 105 *to* 112. *Latitude* 20 1/4 *to* 19 1/4 *degrees*.

(Middle part of Cloncurry.)

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Sunday, 27th January, 1861.—Started from Camp 105 at five minutes past two in the morning. We followed along the bends of the creek by moonlight, and found the creek wind about very much, taking on the whole a north-east course. At about five miles it changed somewhat its features; from a broad and sandy channel, winding about through gum-tree flats, it assumes the unpropitious appearance of a straight, narrow creek, running in a north-north-east direction between high, perpendicular, earthy banks. After running between three or four miles in this manner, it took a turn to the west, at which point there is a fine waterhole, and then assumed its original character. Below this we found water at several places, but it all seemed to be either from surface drainage or from springs in the sand. The land in the vicinity of the creek appears to have received plenty of rain, the vegetation everywhere green and fresh; but there is no appearance of the creek having flowed in this part of the channel for a considerable period. Palm trees are numerous, and some bear an abundance of small, round dates (nuts) just ripening. These palms give a most picturesque and pleasant appearance to the creek.

Wednesday, 30th January, 1861.—Started at half-past seven A.M., after several unsuccessful attempts at getting Golah out of the bed of the creek. It was determined to try bringing him down until we could find a place for him to get out at; but after going in this way two or three miles it was found necessary to leave him behind, as it was almost impossible to get him through some of the waterholes, and had separated King from the party, which became a matter for very serious consideration when we found blacks hiding in the box trees close to us.

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Having reached the point indicated by the last date and passage in" Field Book 7," Mr. Burke and my son determined to leave Gray and King there in charge of the camels, and to proceed onwards to the shores of Carpentaria, themselves on foot and leading the horse. The river or creek down which they passed is named in the journal the Cloncurry. The channel making a sudden turn, my son remarked that it might be a new river. "If it should prove so," said Mr. Burke, "we will call it after my old friend Lord Cloncurry."

With reference to this locality, marked in the map as Camp 119, King was asked in his examination before the Royal Commissioners:

Question 815. Was the water salt?—Quite salt.

816. Who first made the discovery of reaching the sea, or did you all come upon it together; that is, reaching the salt water where the tide was?—Mr. Wills knew it; he had told us two or three days before we reached the salt water that we were in the country that had been discovered by Mr. Gregory and other previous explorers.

817. Some days before you got upon it he told you that?—Yes, and showed us on the chart the supposed place where Mr. Gregory crossed this small creek.

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It will be seen by these answers of King, that Mr. Burke assumed no topographical knowledge of the position. The Melbourne Argus stated and repeated that he had mistaken the Flinders for the Albert. Now the river in question was never mentioned as either, and the mistake, if made, was Mr. Wills's and not Mr. Burke's. This portion of the map was said to have been lost on the morning of its arrival in Melbourne; and this I can readily believe, as also that more might have met with the same fate had I not fortunately been there.

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Field book 8.

Camps 112 *to* 119. *South latitude* 19 1/4 *to* 17 *degrees* 53 *minutes*.

Lower part of Cloncurry.

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Field book 9.

Returning from Carpentaria to Cooper's Creek.

Sunday, February, 1861.—Finding the ground in such a state from the heavy falls of rain, that camels could scarcely be got along, it was decided to leave them at Camp 119, and for Mr. Burke and I to proceed towards the sea on foot. After breakfast we accordingly started, taking with us the horse and three days' provisions. Our first difficulty was in crossing Billy's Creek, which we had to do where it enters the river, a few hundred yards below the camp. In getting the horse in here, he got bogged in a quicksand bank so deeply as to be unable to stir, and we only succeeded in extricating him by undermining him on the creek's side, and then lugging him into the water. Having got all the things in safety, we continued down the river bank, which bent about from east to west, but kept a general north course. A great deal of the land was so soft and rotten that the horse, with only a saddle and about twenty-five pounds on his back, could scarcely walk over it. At a distance of about five miles we again had him bogged in crossing a small creek, after which he seemed so weak that we had great doubts about getting him on. We, however, found some better ground close to the water's edge, where the sandstone rock crops out, and we stuck to it as far as possible. Finding that the river was bending about so much that we were making very little progress in a northerly direction, we struck off due north and soon came on some table-land, where the soil is shallow and gravelly, and clothed with box and swamp gums. Patches of the land were very boggy, but the main portion was sound enough; beyond this we came on an open plain, covered with water up to one's ankles. The soil here was a stiff clay, and the surface very uneven, so that between the tufts of grass one was frequently knee deep in water. The bottom, however, was sound and no fear of

bogging. After floundering through this for several miles, we came to a path formed by the blacks, and there were distinct signs of a recent migration in a southerly direction. By making use of this path we got on much better, for the ground was well

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trodden and hard. At rather more than a mile, the path entered a forest through which flowed a nice watercourse, and we had not gone far before we found places where the blacks had been camping. The forest was intersected by little pebbly rises, on which they had made their fires, and in the sandy ground adjoining some of the former had been digging yams, which seemed to be so numerous that they could afford to leave lots of them about, probably having only selected the very best. We were not so particular, but ate many of those that they had rejected, and found them very good. About half a mile further, we came close on a black fellow, who was coiling up by a camp fire, whilst his gin and piccaninny were yabbering alongside. We stopped for a short time to take out some of the pistols that were on the horse, and that they might see us before we were so near as to frighten them. Just after we stopped, the black got up to stretch his limbs, and after a few seconds looked in our direction. It was very amusing to see the way in which he stared, standing for some time as if he thought he must be dreaming, and then, having signalled to the others, they dropped on their haunches, and shuffled off in the quietest manner possible. Near their fire was a fine hut, the best I have ever seen, built on the same principle as those at Cooper's Creek, but much larger and more complete: I should say a dozen blacks might comfortably coil in it together. It is situated at the end of the forest towards the north, and looks out on an extensive marsh, which is at times flooded by the sea water. Hundreds of wild geese, plover and pelicans, were enjoying themselves in the watercourses on the marsh, all the water on which was too brackish to be drinkable, except some holes that are filled by the stream that flows through the forest. The neighbourhood of this encampment is one of the prettiest we have seen during the journey. Proceeding on our course across the marsh, we came to a channel through which the sea water enters. Here we passed three blacks, who, as is universally their custom, pointed out to us, unasked, the best part down. This assisted us greatly, for the ground we were taking was very boggy. We moved slowly down about three miles and then camped for the night; the horse Billy being completely baked. Next morning we started at daybreak, leaving the horse short hobbled.

Memo.—Verbally transcribed from the Field Books of the late Mr. Wills. Very few words, casually omitted in the author's manuscripts, have been added in brackets. A few botanical explanations have been appended. A few separate general remarks referring to this portion of the diary will be published, together with the meteorological notes to which they are contiguous. No other notes in reference to this portion of the journey are extant.

5/11/61 FERD. *Mueller*.

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It will be observed in following these Field Books that there are occasional intervals and omissions, which I account for thus: —My son's first entries, in pencil, are more in the form of notes, with observations, and figures to guide him in mapping; because, when his maps are accurate and attended to, his journal is imperfect, and vice versa. Besides, there can be no doubt that Mr. Burke kept a journal, though perhaps not a complete one, and of which a very small portion has come to hand. In it he mentions a difficult pass they went through on the route to Carpentaria, of which my son does not speak. King confirms Mr. Burke's statement, and says my son knew he had written it, which was the reason why he did not himself repeat the same passage.

The Royal Commissioners in their Report said:

"It does not appear that Mr. Burke kept any regular journal, or that he gave written instructions to his officers. Had he performed these essential portions of the duties of a leader, many of the calamities of the Expedition might have been averted, and little or no room would have been left for doubt in judging the conduct of those subordinates who pleaded unsatisfactory and contradictory verbal orders and statements."

With all due submission and humility, I think this opinion too conclusive, and formed on unsatisfactory evidence, as any statement must be considered, proceeding from one who destroyed his own credit by self-contradiction to the extent that Mr. Brahe did. He admitted, on his examination, that he had burnt some of Mr. Burke's papers at Mr. Burke's own request. How then is it possible to determine what he may otherwise have burnt or placed out of the way? In fact, what written instructions, if any, he did or not receive, and what he did with them?

CHAPTER 10.

Return from Carpentaria to Cooper's Creek.
Mr. Wills's Journals from February 19th to April 21st, 1861.
Illness and Death of Gray.
The Survivors arrive at Cooper's Creek Depot and find it deserted.
A Small Stock of Provisions left.
Conduct of Brahe.
Report of the Royal Commission.

Mr. *Burke* and Mr. Wills having accomplished the grand object of the Expedition by reaching the Gulf of Carpentaria, rejoined Gray and King at Camp 119, where they had left them with the camels. On the 13th of February the party turned their faces to the south, and commenced their long and toilsome march in return. The entries in my son's journals were transcribed as follows:—

Tuesday, 19th February, 1861.—Boocha's Camp.

Wednesday, 20th February, 1861.—Pleasant Camp; 5R.

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Thursday, 21st February, 1861.—Recovery Camp; 6R. Between four and five o'clock a heavy thunderstorm broke over us, having given very little warning of its approach. There had been lightning and thunder towards south-east and south ever since noon yesterday. The rain was incessant and very heavy for an hour and a half, which made the ground so boggy that the animals could scarcely walk over it; we nevertheless started at ten minutes to seven A.M., and after floundering along for half an hour halted for breakfast. We then moved on again, but soon found that the travelling was too heavy for the camels, so camped for the remainder of the day. In the afternoon the sky cleared a little, and the sun soon dried the ground, considering. Shot a pheasant, and much disappointed at finding him all feathers and claws. This bird nearly resembles a cock pheasant in plumage, but in other respects it bears more the character of the magpie or crow; the feathers are remarkably wiry and coarse.

Friday, 22nd February, 1861.—Camp 7R. A fearful thunderstorm in the evening, about eight P.M., from east-south-east, moving gradually round to south. The flashes of lightning were so vivid and incessant as to keep up a continual light for short intervals, overpowering the moonlight. Heavy rain and strong squalls continued for more than an hour, when the storm moved off west-north-west. The sky remained more or less overcast for the rest of the night, and the following morning was both sultry and oppressive, with the ground so boggy as to be almost impassable.

Saturday, 23rd February, 1861.—Camp 8R. In spite of the difficulties thrown in our way by last night's storm, we crossed the creek, but were shortly afterwards compelled to halt for the day on a small patch of comparatively dry ground, near the river. The day turned out very fine, so that the soil dried rapidly, and we started in the evening to try a trip by moonlight. We were very fortunate in finding sound ground along a billibong, which permitted of our travelling for about five miles up the creek, when we camped for the night. The evening was most oppressively hot and sultry, so much so that the slightest exertion made one feel as if he were in a state of suffocation. The dampness of the atmosphere prevented any evaporation, and gave one a helpless feeling of lassitude that I have never before experienced to such an extent. All the party complained of the same symptoms, and the horses showed distinctly the effect of the evening trip, short as it was. We had scarcely turned in half an hour when it began to rain, some heavy clouds having come up from the eastward in place of the layer of small cirrocumulus that before ornamented the greater portion of the sky. These clouds soon moved on, and we were relieved from the dread of additional mud. After the sky cleared, the atmosphere became rather cooler and less sultry, so that, with the assistance of a little smoke to keep the mosquitoes off, we managed to pass a tolerable night.

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Sunday, 24th February, 1861.—Camp 9R. Comparatively little rain has fallen above the branch creek with the running water. The vegetation, although tolerably fresh, is not so rank as that we have left; the water in the creek is muddy, but good, and has been derived merely from the surface drainage of the adjoining plains. The Melaleneus continues on this branch creek, which creeps along at the foot of the ranges.

Monday, 25th February, 1861.—Camp 10R. There has been very little rain on this portion of the creek since we passed down; there was, however, no water at all then at the pans. At the Tea-tree spring, a short distance up the creek, we found plenty of water in the sand, but it had a disagreeable taste, from the decomposition of leaves and the presence of mineral matter, probably iron. There seems to have been a fair share of rain along here, everything is so very fresh and green, and there is water in many of the channels we have crossed.

Tuesday, 26th February, 1861.—Apple-tree Camp; 11R.

Thursday, 28th February, 1861.—Reedy Gully Camp; 12R. Came into the Reedy Gully Camp about midnight on Tuesday, the 26th; remained there throughout the day on Wednesday; starting at two A.M. on Thursday.

Friday, 1st March, 1861.—Camp of the Three Crows; 13R.

Saturday, 2nd March, 1861.—Salt-bush Camp; 14R. Found Golah. He looks thin and miserable; seems to have fretted a great deal, probably at finding himself left behind, and he has been walking up and down our tracks till he has made a regular pathway; could find no sign of his having been far off, although there is a splendid feed to which he could have gone. He began to eat as soon as he saw the other camels.

Sunday, 3rd March, 1861.—Eureka Camp; 15R. In crossing a creek by moonlight, Charley rode over a large snake; he did not touch him, and we thought that it was a log until he struck it with the stirrup iron; we then saw that it was an immense snake, larger than any I have ever before seen in a wild state. It measured eight feet four inches in length and seven inches in girth round the belly; it was nearly the same thickness from the head to within twenty inches of the tail; it then tapered rapidly. The weight was 11 1/2 pounds. From the tip of the nose to five inches back, the neck was black, both above and below; throughout the rest of the body, the under part was yellow, and the sides and back had irregular brown transverse bars on a yellowish brown ground. I could detect no poisonous fangs, but there were two distinct rows of teeth in each jaw, and two small claws of nails, about three-eighths of an inch long, one on each side of the vent.

Monday, 4th March, 1861.—Feasting Camp; 16R. Shortly after arriving at Camp 16 we could frequently hear distant thunder towards the east, from which quarter the wind was blowing. During the afternoon there were frequent heavy showers, and towards

evening it set in to rain steadily but lightly; this lasted till about eight P.M., when the rain ceased and the wind got round to west; the sky, however, remained overcast until late in the night, and then cleared for a short time; the clouds were soon succeeded by a dense fog or mist, which continued until morning. The vapour having then risen, occupied the upper air in the form of light cirrostratus and cumulus clouds.

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Tuesday, 5th March, 1861.—Camp 17R. Started at two A.M. on a south-south-westerly course, but had soon to turn in on the creek, as Mr. Burke felt very unwell, having been attacked by dysentery since eating the snake; he now felt giddy and unable to keep his seat. At six A.M., Mr. Burke feeling better, we started again, following along the creek, in which there was considerably more water than when we passed down. We camped, at 2.15 P.M., at a part of the creek where the date trees [Footnote: Probably Livistonas.] were very numerous, and found the fruit nearly ripe and very much improved on what it was when we were here before.

Wednesday, 6th March, 1861.—Camp 18R. Arrived at our former camp, and found the feed richer than ever, and the ants just as troublesome. Mr. Burke is a little better, and Charley looks comparatively well. The dryness of the atmosphere seems to have a beneficial effect on all. We found yesterday, that it was a hopeless matter about Golah, and we were obliged to leave him behind, as he seemed to be completely done up and could not come on, even when the pack and saddle were taken off.

Thursday, 7th March, 1861.—Fig-tree Camp; 19R; Palm-tree Camp, 104, and 20 degrees Latitude, by observation, coming down, 20 degrees 21 minutes 40 seconds. There is less water here than there was when we passed down, although there is evidence of the creek having been visited by considerable floods during the interval. Feed is abundant, and the vegetation more fresh than before. Mr. Burke almost recovered, but Charley is again very unwell and unfit to do anything; he caught cold last night through carelessness in covering himself.

Friday, 8th March, 1861.—Camp 20R. Followed the creek more closely coming up than going down. Found more water in it generally.

Saturday, 9th March, 1861.—Camp 21R. Reached our former camp at 1. 30 P.M. Found the herbage much dried up, but still plenty of feed for the camels.

Sunday, 10th March, 1861.—Camp 22R. Camped at the junction of a small creek from the westward, a short distance below our former camp, there being plenty of good water here, whereas the supply at Specimen Camp is very doubtful.

Monday, 11th March, 1861.—Camp 23R. Halted for breakfast at the Specimen Camp at 7.15 A.M., found more water and feed there than before; then proceeded up the creek and got safely over the most dangerous part of our journey. Camped near the head of the Gap in a flat, about two miles below our former camp at the Gap.

Tuesday, 12th March, 1861.—Camp 24R.

Wednesday, 13th March, 1861.—Camp 25R. Rain all day, so heavily that I was obliged to put my watch and field book in the pack to keep them dry. In the afternoon the rain increased, and all the creeks became flooded. We took shelter under some fallen

rocks, near which was some feed for the camels; but the latter was of no value, for we had soon to remove them up amongst the rocks, out of the way of the flood, which fortunately did not rise high enough to drive us out of the cave; but we were obliged to shift our packs to the upper part. In the evening the water fell as rapidly as it had risen, leaving everything in a very boggy state. There were frequent light showers during the night.

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Thursday, 14th March, 1861.—Camp 26R; Sandstone cave. The water in the creek having fallen sufficiently low, we crossed over from the cave and proceeded down the creek. Our progress was slow, as it was necessary to keep on the stony ridge instead of following the flats, the latter being very boggy after the rain. Thinking that this creek must join Scratchley's, near our old camp, we followed it a long way, until finding it trend altogether too much eastward, we tried to shape across for the other creek, but were unable to do so, from the boggy nature of the intervening plain.

Friday, 15th March, 1861.—Camp 27R.

Saturday, 16th March, 1861.—Camp 28R. Scratchley's Creek.

Sunday, 17th March, 1861.—Camp 29R.

Monday, 18th March, 1861.—Camp 30R.

Tuesday, 19th March, 1861.—Camp 31R.

Wednesday, 20th March, 1861.—Camp 32R. Feasting Camp. Last evening the sky was clouded about nine P.M., and a shower came down from the north. At ten o'clock it became so dark that we camped on the bank of the creek, in which was a nice current of clear water. To-day we halted, intending to try a night journey. The packs we overhauled and left nearly 60 pounds weight of things behind. They were all suspended in a pack from the branches of a shrub close to the creek. We started at a quarter to six, but were continually pulled up by billibongs and branch creeks, and soon had to camp for the night. At the junction of the two creeks just above are the three cones, which are three remarkably small hills to the eastward.

Thursday, 21st March, 1861.—Humid Camp, 33R.—Unable to proceed on account of the slippery and boggy state of the ground. The rain has fallen very heavily here to-day, and every little depression in the ground is either full of water or covered with slimy mud. Another heavy storm passed over during the night, almost extinguishing the miserable fire we were able to get up with our very limited quantity of waterlogged and green wood. Having been so unfortunate last night, we took an early breakfast this morning at Camp 33, which I had named the Humid Camp, from the state of dampness in which we found everything there; and crossing to the east bank of the main creek, proceeded in a southerly direction nearly parallel with the creek. Some of the flats near the creek contain the richest alluvial soil, and are clothed with luxuriant vegetation. There is an immense extent of plain, back, of the finest character for pastoral purposes, and the country bears every appearance of being permanently well watered. We halted on a large billibong at noon, and were favoured during dinner by a thunderstorm, the heavier portion of which missed us, some passing north and some south, which was fortunate, as it would otherwise have spoiled our baking process, a matter of some

importance just now. We started again at seven o’clock, but the effects of the heavy rain prevented our making a good journey.

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Friday, 22nd March, 1861.—Muddy Camp, 34R.—Had an early breakfast this morning, and started before sunrise. Found that the wet swampy ground that checked our progress last night was only a narrow strip, and that had we gone a little further we might have made a fine journey. The country consisted of open, well-grassed, pebbly plains, intersected by numerous small channels, all containing water. Abundance of fine rich portulac was just bursting into flower along all these channels, as well as on the greater portion of the plain. The creek that we camped on last night ran nearly parallel with us throughout this stage. We should have crossed it, to avoid the stony plains, but were prevented by the flood from so doing.

Saturday, 23rd March, 1861.—Mosquito Camp, 35R.—Started at a quarter to six and followed down the creek, which has much of the characteristic appearance of the River Burke, where we crossed it on our up journey. The land in the vicinity greatly improves as one goes down, becoming less stony and better grassed. At eleven o'clock we crossed a small tributary from the eastward, and there was a distant range of considerable extent visible in that direction. Halted for the afternoon in a bend where there was tolerable feed, but the banks are everywhere more or less scrubby.

Sunday, 24th March, 1861.—Three-hour Camp, 36R.

Monday, 25th March, 1861.—Native-Dog Camp, 37R.—Started at half-past five, looking for a good place to halt for the day. This we found at a short distance down the creek, and immediately discovered that it was close to Camp 89 of our up journey. Had not expected that we were so much to the westward. After breakfast, took some time-altitudes, and was about to go back to last camp for some things that had been left, when I found Gray behind a tree eating skilligolee. He explained that he was suffering from dysentery, and had taken the flour without leave. Sent him to report himself to Mr. Burke, and went on. He, having got King to tell Mr. Burke for him, was called up, and received a good thrashing. There is no knowing to what extent he has been robbing us. Many things have been found to run unaccountably short. Started at seven o'clock, the camels in first-rate spirits. We followed our old course back (south). The first portion of the plains had much the same appearance as when we came up, but that near Camp 88, which then looked so fresh and green, is now very much dried up; and we saw no signs of water anywhere. In fact, there seems to have been little or no rain about here since we passed. Soon after three o'clock we struck the first of several small creeks or billibongs, which must be portions of the creek with the deep channel that we crossed on going up, we being now rather to the westward of our former course. From here, after traversing about two miles of the barest clay plain, devoid of all vegetation, we reached a small watercourse, most of the holes in which contained some water of

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a milky or creamy description. Fine salt bush and portulac being abundant in the vicinity, we camped here at 4.30 A.M. When we started in the evening, a strong breeze had already sprung up in the south, which conveyed much of the characteristic feeling of a hot wind. It increased gradually to a force of five and six, but by eleven o'clock had become decidedly cool, and was so chilly towards morning that we found it necessary to throw on our ponchos. A few cirrocumulus clouds were coming up from the east when we started, but we left them behind, and nothing was visible during the night but a thin hazy veil. The gale continued throughout the 26th, becoming warmer as the day advanced. In the afternoon it blew furiously, raising a good deal of dust. The temperature of air at four P.M. was 84 degrees in the shade. Wind trees all day.

. . .

This last entry contains an unpleasant record of poor Gray's delinquency. He appears to have been hitherto rather a favourite with my son.

King, on his examination before the Royal Commission, finding that Mr. Burke was censured for chastising Gray, at first denied it strongly. My son only relates in his diary what Mr. Burke had told him; "I have given Gray a good thrashing, and well he deserved it." King blamed my son for mentioning this, but admitted that Mr. Burke gave Gray several slaps on the head; afterwards, seeing that Mr. Burke was found fault with for not keeping a journal, King was made to appear to say that Mr. Wills's journal was written in conjunction with and under the supervision of Mr. Burke; and thus accounted for the absence of one by Mr. Burke. I was present at King's examination, and can bear witness that he said nothing of the kind. His answers, as given in the Royal Commission Report, were framed to suit the questions of the interrogator, which appeared to astonish King, and he made no reply. King's statements, as far as he understood what he was asked, I believe to have been generally very truthful, and honestly given.

After March 25th, an interval of three days occurs, in which nothing is noted. Gray's illness, attending to the maps, with extra labour, may account for this omission.

. . .

March 29.—Camels' last feast; fine green feed at this camp: plenty of vines and young polygonums on the small billibongs.

March 30.—Boocha's rest.—Poor Boocha was killed; employed all day in cutting up and jerking him: the day turned out as favourable for us as we could have wished, and a considerable portion of the meat was completely jerked before sunset.

March 31.—Mia Mia Camp.—Plenty of good dry feed; various shrubs; salt bushes, including cotton bush and some coarse kangaroo grass; water in the hollows on the

stony pavement. The neighbouring country chiefly composed of stony rises and sand ridges.

April 5—Oil Camp.—Earthy and clayey plains, generally sound and tolerably grassed, but in other places bare salt bush, and withered.

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April 6 and 7.—Earthy flats, cut into innumerable water courses, succeeded by fine open plains, generally very bare, but having in some places patches of fine salt bush. The dead stalks of portulac and mallows show that those plants are very plentiful in some seasons. Towards noon came upon earthy plains and numerous billibongs. The next day the water and feed much dried up, and nearly all the water has a slightly brackish taste of a peculiar kind, somewhat resembling in flavour potassio-tartrate of soda (cream of tartar).

On the 8th, poor Gray, suffering under the bad odour of his peculations, was thought to be pretending illness, because he could not walk, and my son, when he was himself ill, much regretted their suspicions on this point; but it appears from King's evidence, that Gray's excuse for using the provisions surreptitiously, that he was attacked by dysentery, was without foundation.

Monday, April 8.—Camp 50R.—Camped a short distance above Camp 75. The creek here contains more water, and there is a considerable quantity of green grass in its bed, but it is much dried up since we passed before. Halted fifteen minutes to send back for Gray, who pretended that he could not walk. Some good showers must have fallen lately, as we have passed surface water on the plains every day. In the latter portion of to-day's journey, the young grass and portulac are springing freshly in the flats, and on the sides of the sand ridges.

Tuesday, April 9.—Camp 51R.—Camped on the bank of the creek, where there is a regular field of salt bush, as well as some grass in its bed, very acceptable to the horse, who has not had a proper feed for the last week until last night, and is, consequently, nearly knocked up.

Wednesday, April 10.—Camp 52R.—Remained at Camp 52 R all day, to cut up and jerk the meat of the horse Billy, who was so reduced and knocked up for want of food that there appeared little chance of his reaching the other side of the desert; and as we were running short of food of every description ourselves, we thought it best to secure his flesh at once. We found it healthy and tender, but without the slightest trace of fat in any portion of the body.

. . .

In the journal to the Fifteenth, there is nothing worthy of note; there were watercourses daily, the character of the country the same; the plants chiefly chrysanthemums and salt bush. On the latter day it rained heavily, commenced at five in the morning, and continued pretty steadily throughout the day. The camel, Linda, got knocked up owing to the wet, and having to cross numerous sand ridges; and at four o'clock they had to halt at a clay-pan among the sandhills.

On Wednesday, the 17th, my son notes the death of poor Gray: “He had not spoken a word distinctly since his first attack, which was just about as we were going to start.” Here King mentions that they remained one day to bury Gray. They were so weak, he said, that it was with difficulty they could dig a grave sufficiently deep to inter him in. This is not in the journal, but in King’s narrative.

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. . .

On the 19th, camped again without water, on the sandy bed of the creek, having been followed by a lot of natives who were desirous of our company; but as we preferred camping alone, we were compelled to move on until rather late, in order to get away from them. The night was very cold. A strong breeze was blowing from the south, which made the fire so irregular that, as on the two previous nights, it was impossible to keep up a fair temperature. Our general course throughout the day had been south-south-east.

. . .

On Sunday, April 21, the survivors, Mr. Burke, my son, King, and two camels, reached Cooper's Creek at the exact place where the depot party had been left under Brahe. *There was no one there*! During the last few days every exertion had been made, every nerve strained to reach the goal of their arduous labours—the spot where they expected to find rest, clothing, and provisions in abundance. King describes in vivid language the exertions of that last ride of thirty miles; and Burke's delight when he thought he saw the depot camp; "There they are!" he exclaimed; "I see them!" The wish was "father to the thought." Lost and bewildered in amazement, he appeared like one stupefied when the appalling truth burst on him. King has often described to me the scene. "Mr. Wills looked about him in all directions. Presently he said, 'King, they are gone;' pointing a short way off to a spot, 'there are the things they have left.' Then he and I set to work to dig them up, which we did in a short time. Mr. Burke at first was quite overwhelmed, and flung himself on the ground." But soon recovering, they all three set to work to cook some victuals. When thus refreshed, my son made the following entry in his journal:

Sunday, April 21.—Arrived at the depot this evening, just in time to find it deserted. A note left in the plant by Brahe communicates the pleasing information that they have started today for the Darling; their camels and horses all well and in good condition. We and our camels being just done up, and scarcely able to reach the depot, have very little chance of overtaking them. Brahe has fortunately left us ample provisions to take us to the bounds of civilization namely:—Flour, 50 pounds; rice, 20 pounds; oatmeal, 60 pounds; sugar, 60 pounds; and dried meat, 15 pounds. These provisions, together with a few horse-shoes and nails, and some odds and ends, constitute all the articles left, and place us in a very awkward position in respect to clothing. Our disappointment at finding the depot deserted may easily be imagined;—returning in an exhausted state, after four months of the severest travelling and privation, our legs almost paralyzed, so that each of us found it a most trying task only to walk a few yards. Such a leg-bound feeling I never before experienced, and hope I never shall again. The exertion required to get up a slight

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piece of rising ground, even without any load, induces an indescribable sensation of pain and helplessness, and the general lassitude makes one unfit for anything. Poor Gray must have suffered very much many times when we thought him shamming. It is most fortunate for us that these symptoms, which so early affected him, did not come on us until we were reduced to an exclusively animal diet of such an inferior description as that offered by the flesh of a worn-out and exhausted horse. We were not long in getting out the grub that Brahe had left, and we made a good supper off some oatmeal porridge and sugar. This, together with the excitement of finding ourselves in such a peculiar and most unexpected position, had a wonderful effect in removing the stiffness from our legs. Whether it is possible that the vegetables can have so affected us, I know not; but both Mr. Burke and I remarked a most decided relief and a strength in the legs greater than we had had for several days. I am inclined to think that but for the abundance of portulac that we obtained on the journey, we should scarcely have returned to Cooper's Creek at all.

. . .

I asked King how my son behaved. His answer was, that he never once showed the slightest anger or loss of self-command. From under a tree on which had been marked, "*Dig*, 21st April, 1861," a box was extracted containing the provisions, and a bottle with the following note:—

Depot, Cooper's Creek, April 21, 1861.

The depot party of the V.E.E. leaves this camp to-day to return to the Darling. I intend to go south-east from Camp 60 to get into our old track near Bulloo. Two of my companions and myself are quite well; the third, Patten, has been unable to walk for the last eighteen days, as his leg has been severely hurt when thrown by one of the horses. No one has been up here from the Darling. We have six camels and twelve horses in good working condition.

William brahe.

. . .

Brahe has been blamed for not having left a true statement of his condition, and that of those with him; but it was truth when he wrote it. He believed Patten's to have been a sprain. It was afterwards that he contradicted himself, in his journal *written in Melbourne*, and in his evidence before the Royal Commission. Brahe had no journal when he came down the first time with a message from Wright, and was requested, or ordered, by the committee to produce one, which he subsequently did. In this journal, Brahe enters, on the 15th April:

Patten is getting worse. I and McDonough begin to feel *alarming symptoms* of the same disease (namely, a sprain).

April 18.—There is no probability of Mr. Burke returning this way. Patten is in a deplorable state, and desirous of returning to the Darling to obtain medical assistance; and our provisions will soon be reduced to a quantity insufficient to take us back to the Darling if the trip should turn out difficult and tedious. Being also sure that I and McDonough would not much longer escape scurvy, I, after most seriously considering all circumstances, made up my mind to start for the Darling on Sunday next, the 21st.

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. . .

That day he abandoned the depot at ten A.M. leaving 50 pounds of flour, taking with him 150 pounds; leaving 50 pounds of oatmeal, taking *about* 70 pounds; leaving 50 pounds of sugar, taking 75 pounds; leaving rice 30 pounds, taking one bag. He left neither tea nor biscuits, and took all the clothes, being the property of Mr. Wills. The latter, he said before the Royal Commissioners, were only shirts, omitting the word flannel, and added that they were badly off themselves. He was asked:—

Question 323: Had you any clothes of any description at Cooper's Creek that might have been left?—Yes, I had a parcel of clothes that were left with me by Mr. Wills; these were all that I know of, and we ourselves were very badly off.

Question 1729. By Dr. Wills (through the chairman)—I wish to know whether a portmanteau was left with you, belonging to Mr. Wills, my son? Yes, a bag, a calico bag containing clothes.

1730.—You were aware it was his own property?—I was.

1731.—What made you take those clothes back to Menindie, and not leave them in the cache?—Mr. Wills was better supplied than any other member of the party, and I certainly did not think he would be in want of clothes.

. . .

With a somewhat unaccountable disposition to sympathize with Brahe, on the part of the Committee and the Royal Commission, the latter summed up their impression of his conduct thus:

The conduct of Mr. Brahe in retiring from his position at the depot before he was rejoined by his commander, or relieved from the Darling, may be deserving of considerable censure; but we are of opinion that a responsibility far beyond his expectations devolved upon him; and it must be borne in mind that, with the assurance of his leader, and his own conviction that he might each day expect to be relieved by Mr. Wright, he still held his post for four months and five days; and that only when pressed by the appeals of a comrade sickening even to death, as was subsequently proved, his powers of endurance gave way, and he retired from the position which could alone afford succour to the weary explorers should they return by that route. His decision was most unfortunate; but we believe he acted from a conscientious desire to discharge his duty, and we are confident that the painful reflection that twenty-four hours' further perseverance would have made him the rescuer of the explorers, and gained for himself the praise and approbation of all, must be of itself an agonizing thought, without the addition of censure he might feel himself undeserving of.

BOOKRAGS

CHAPTER 11.

Proceedings in Melbourne.
Meeting of the Exploration Committee.
Tardy Resolutions.
Departure of Mr. Howitt.
Patriotic Effort of Mr. Orkney.
South Australian Expedition under Mr. McKinlay.
News of White Men and Camels having been seen by Natives in the Interior.
Certain Intelligence of the Fate of the Explorers reaches Melbourne.

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In March, 1861, I began, in the absence of all intelligence, to feel some apprehension for my son's safety, and the result of the expedition. On the 8th, Professor Neumayer, in reply to a letter from me, said: "You have asked me about the Exploring Expedition, and it is really a difficult matter to give a definite answer to the question. I think that by this time the party must have reached the Gulf of Carpentaria, supposing them to have proceeded in that direction. In fact, I think they may have recrossed already a great part of the desert country, if everything went on smoothly after leaving Cooper's Creek. I have a thorough confidence in Mr. Wills's character and energy, and I am sure they will never fail. I cannot help regretting that the Committee should not have understood the force of my arguments, when I advised them to send the expedition towards the north-west. This would very likely have forwarded the task considerably. My feeling is not very strong as to the results we may expect from the present attempt. Indeed, as far as science and practical advantages are concerned, I look upon the whole as a mistake. Mr. Wills is entirely alone; he has no one to assist him in his zeal, and take a part of his onerous duties from him. Had he been put in a position to make valuable magnetic observations, he would have earned the thanks of the scientific world. But, under existing circumstances, he can do nothing at all for the advancement of this particular branch. However, I hope future expeditions will afford him an opportunity to fill up that deficiency, if he should now be successful. The affair with Landells was nothing more nor less than what I expected and was quite prepared to hear. The man was not more qualified for the task he undertook than he would have been for any scientific position in the expedition. I am confident Mr. Wills is all right, and that Mr. Burke and he will agree well together."

All this was complimentary and gratifying to a father's feelings. Still, as time passed on, forebodings came upon me that this great expedition, starting with so much display from Melbourne, with a steady, declared, and scientific object, would dwindle down into a flying light corps, making a sudden dash across the continent and back again with no permanent results. Discharges and resignations had taken place, and no efforts were made by the committee to fill up the vacancies. No assistant surveyor had been sent to my son, no successor appointed to Dr. Beckler. The last-named gentleman brought back many of the scientific instruments intrusted to his charge, alleging that if he had not done so, Mr. Burke, who was unscientific and impatient of the time lost in making and registering observations, threatened to throw them into the next creek. The supineness of the committee was justly, not too severely commented on in the Report of the Royal Commission: "The Exploration Committee, in overlooking the importance of the contents of Mr.

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Burke's despatch from Torowoto, and in not urging Mr. Wright's departure from the Darling, committed errors of a serious nature. A means of knowledge of the delay of the party at Menindie was in possession of the committee, not indeed by direct communication to that effect, but through the receipt of letters from Drs. Becker and Beckler, at various dates up to the end of November;—without, however, awakening the committee to a sense of the vital importance of Mr. Burke's request in that despatch that he should 'be soon followed up;'—or to a consideration of the disastrous consequences which would be likely to result, and did unfortunately result, from the fatal inactivity and idling of Mr. Wright and his party on the Darling."

During the month of March, the Argus newspaper called attention to the matter, and a letter, signed Lockhart Moreton, expressed itself thus "What has become of the expedition? Surely the committee are not alive to the necessity of sending some one up? Burke has by this time crossed the continent, or is lost. What has become of Wright? What is he doing?"

Then came a letter from Menindie, expressing strong opinions on the state of affairs, but flattering to my son. It was evident to me that these gentlemen knew or thought more than they felt disposed to state directly in words. I have already mentioned that Mr. Burke, while within the districts where newspapers could reach him, had been harassed, from the time of his appointment, by remarks in the public prints, evidently proceeding from parties and their friends who thought the honour of leading this grand procession more properly belonged to themselves. Being a gentleman of sensitive feelings, these observations touched him to the quick. When he was no longer within reach, they still continued, but he found defenders in the all-powerful Argus. I am sorry to say, for the sake of human nature, that there were some who went so far as to wish no successful result to his enterprise.

Believing and trusting that these remarks of Mr. Moreton and others, would stir up the committee to take some steps to ascertain if Mr. Wright was moving in his duty, I contented myself with writing to the Magnetic Observatory, to learn from Professor Neumayer what was going on. He being absent on scientific tours, I received answers from his locum tenens, to the effect that within a month certain information was expected. The committee I did not trouble, as their Honorary Secretary had deigned no reply to letters I had previously sent.

In the month of June, unable to bear longer suspense, with a small pack on my shoulders and a stick in my hand, I walked from Ballaarat to Melbourne, a distance of seventy-five miles, stopping for a couple of nights on the way at the house of a kind and hospitable friend, Dugald McPherson, Esquire, J.P., at Bungel-Tap. This gentleman has built a substantial mansion there, in the Elizabethan style, likely, from its solidity,

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to last for centuries. I arrived at Melbourne on Saturday, the 16th of June. On Monday, the 18th, I called on the Honourable David Wilkie, honorary treasurer to the committee. I found him issuing circulars for a meeting to consider what was to be done. My heart sank within me when I found that no measures whatever had yet been taken. I called on those I knew amongst the committee to entreat their attendance. I hastened to Professor Neumayer, with reference to Mr. Lockhart's letter, to ask if it had been arranged with Mr. Burke that a vessel should be despatched round the coast to the Gulf to meet him there. His answer was that a conversation on that point had taken place between Mr. Burke, my son, and himself, but that Mr. Burke had enjoined him (the professor) not to move in it, for that, if so disposed, he would himself apply to the committee by letter.

A meeting took place on the evening of the 18th. The opinions were as numerous as the members in attendance. Quot homines tot sententiae. One talked of financial affairs, another of science, a third of geography, a fourth of astronomy, and so on. A chapter in the Circumlocution Office painfully unfolded itself. Mr. Ligar rather rudely asked me what I was in such alarm about; observed that "there was plenty of time; no news was good news; and I had better go home and mind my own business." I felt hurt, naturally enough, some of my readers may suppose, and replied that had I not been convinced something was doing, I should scarcely have remained quiet at Ballaarat for three months. A gentleman, with whom I had no previous acquaintance, seeing my anxiety, and feeling that the emergency called for immediate action, appealed to them warmly, and the result was a decision, nemine contradicente, that it was time to move, if active and trustworthy agents could be found. I offered my services for one, but the meeting adjourned without coming to any decision, and was followed by other indefinite meetings and adjournments de die in diem.

On the following day, Dr. Macadam, Honorary Secretary, attended (the press of the morning had incited movement) and announced the welcome intelligence that Mr. A. Howitt was in Melbourne; that he had seen him; that he was ready to go on the shortest notice. So far all was good. But now I saw the full misery and imbecility of leaving a large body to decide what should have been delegated to a quorum of three at the most. The meetings took place regularly, but the same members seldom attended twice. New illusions and conceits suggested themselves as often as different committee-men found it convenient to deliver their opinions and vouchsafe their presence. Let me here specially except Ferdinand Mueller, M.D. and F.R.S., of London, who though a foreigner, a Dane by birth, I believe, has won by his talents that honourable distinction. His energy in all he undertakes is untiring and unsurpassable. On this occasion he was ever active and unremitting, while his sympathy

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and kindness to myself have never varied from the first day of our acquaintance. The Honourable David Wilkie, at whose private house we met nightly, deserves the highest credit for expediting the business, which ended in the despatch of the party under Mr. Howitt. Mr. Heales also, then Chief Secretary for the Colony, promised assistance in money, and the use of the Victoria steamer, under Captain Norman, to be sent round to the Gulf of Carpentaria as soon as she could be got ready.

The Melbourne Argus, of June 19th, contained the following leading article:—

The public will be glad to learn that the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society have at length resolved to set about partly doing what in April last we urged upon them. A small party is to be despatched to Cooper's Creek with means to supply necessaries to the Exploring Expedition, and to make all possible efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of Mr. Burke. It is well this should be done, and that quickly, for we some eight months since learned that Mr. Burke had provisions calculated to last his party for five months only. But this is not all that should be done. When referring to this subject two months ago, basing our calculations on the knowledge we then had—and it has since received no increase—we reckoned that Mr. Burke, who left Menindie on the 19th of October last, would reach Cooper's Creek by the beginning of November, and that if he determined upon making for the Gulf of Carpentaria, he might be expected to reach the north coast by about the middle of March last. If his provisions enabled him to do this, it is unlikely they would suffice him for a return journey southwards, or an expedition westward. We cannot think, then, that a party sent to Cooper's Creek should be regarded as sufficient. Why should not the Victoria be utilized? Were she sent round the west coast to the point Mr. Burke might be expected to strike—if, instead of bearing north, after reaching the centre, he has turned westward, as we anticipated he might do—he would possibly be heard of there. If not, the Victoria would be still so far on her way to the Gulf of Carpentaria—the only other goal he is likely to aim at reaching. Two expeditions, therefore, should at once be despatched—the party to Cooper's Creek, and the colonial steamer round the coast. Let it not be said to our disgrace that anything has been neglected which money or energy could have done to insure the safety of the men who have devoted themselves to a work in which the whole civilized world is interested, and of which, if now carried on with success, this colony will reap all the glory. It is a work which all men must have at heart, whether as lovers of their fellow-men, of science, or of their country. Let it not be marred by aught of niggardliness or supineness. The work must be well and quickly done. The progress of Mr. Stuart and of Mr. Burke is now watched with the warmest interest and sympathy by men of science in Europe. Mr. Stuart is well and generously cared for by the South Australian Government and people. What will be said if Victoria alone, by parsimony or apathy, allowed her Exploring Expedition to fail or her public servants to suffer unnecessary hardships, or even death?

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As to the men to whom the inland expedition is to be intrusted, some conversation took place at the recent meeting of the Exploration Committee. Dr. Wills, of Ballaarat, father of Mr. Wills, second in command with Mr. Burke, was present, and offered to accompany the party. Professor Neumayer suggested a gentleman named Walsh, from his own office, as suitable for the enterprise; and Dr. Embling, it is rumoured, supports Mr. Landells as a fit person for the post of leader. We have nothing to say for or against the two former suggestions, but this last demands notice. We consider that Mr. Landells has already shown himself singularly unfitted to fill a post of this kind.

. . .

Mr. Howitt's offer did away with the necessity for my pressing to go. Although I felt tolerably confident in my own physical powers, I should have much regretted had they failed on experiment, and thereby retarded rather than aided the object in view. Mr. Walsh went, but was of no service, as he lost the sight of one eye in the first observation he attempted to make; but Mr. Howitt proved equal to the emergency and did the work. [Footnote: A strange incident connected with Mr. Walsh's misfortune was reported abroad, but I do not vouch for its truth. When under surgical treatment for his impaired vision, it was said that the operators in consultation decided on an experiment to test the powers of the retina to receive light, and in so doing blinded the other eye. Mr. Walsh went to England, having had a sum granted to him by the Victoria government. Whether he has recovered his sight I know not.]

Mr. Howitt being equipped and despatched, I returned to Ballaarat, somewhat relieved, after my fortnight's anxious labours with the committee; but on the evening of Friday, the 5th of July, I was startled by reading the following statement in the Melbourne Weekly Age:—

The news from the exploring expedition.

The unexpected news of Mr. Burke's expedition of discovery, which we publish this morning, is positively disastrous. The entire company of explorers has been dissipated out of being, like dewdrops before the sun. Some are dead, some are on their way back, one has come to Melbourne, and another has made his way to Adelaide, whilst only four of the whole party have gone forward from the depot at Cooper's Creek upon the main journey of the expedition to explore the remote interior. The four consist of the two chief officers and two men; namely, Mr. Burke, the leader, and Mr. Wills, the surveyor and second in command of the party, together with the men King and Gray. This devoted little band left Cooper's Creek for the far interior on the 16th of December last, more than six months ago, taking with them six camels and one horse, and only twelve weeks' provisions. From Mr. Burke's despatch we learn that he meant to proceed in the first place to Eyre's Creek; and from that place he would

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make an effort to explore the country northward in the direction of the Gulf of Carpentaria. He states also that he meant to return to Cooper's Creek within three months at the farthest; that is, about the middle of March. Before starting on this route he had already tried a passage northward between Gregory's and Stuart's tracks; but he found this passage impracticable, from want of water. He does not state anything that would enable us to form an opinion of what his intentions might be after leaving Eyre's Creek, beyond his saying that he meant to push northwards towards the Gulf. Neither does it appear that he left any instructions or directions upon the matter with Mr. Brahe. He merely informed the latter that he meant to run no risks, and that he would be back within a brief stated period, and that Mr. Brahe was not to wait for him at the depot beyond three months. Mr. Brahe's statement, in fact, throws very little light upon the probabilities of Mr. Burke's future course, after leaving the depot at Cooper's Creek. He accompanied him one day's journey, some twenty miles or so, on his way towards the north. But he seems to know very little of what Mr. Burke's ultimate intentions were. Perhaps, indeed, Mr. Burke himself had no very definite scheme sketched out in his own mind, as to any settled purpose for the future, beyond his trying to make the best of his way in the direction of the Gulf of Carpentaria. He probably never entertained the idea of its being necessary to plan out various different alternatives to adopt, in case of the failure of any one particular course of proceeding. The facility and despatch with which he had got over the ground to Cooper's Creek may have produced too confident a state of mind as to the future. And his having learned that Stuart had, with only two or three companions, advanced within a couple of days' journey of the northern coast, would tend greatly to increase that too confident tone of mind. Both circumstances were likely to produce a feeling, especially in a sanguine temperament like Burke's, that there was no need of his arranging beforehand, and leaving behind him, with Mr. Brahe, plans of intended procedure on his part, the knowledge of which would subsequently give a clue to his fate, in case of his continued absence. He seems not to have formed any anticipation of a vessel being sent round to meet him on the north coast, according to Mr. Brahe's account.

What then did he propose to do, and what is likely to have become of him? The fear forces itself upon us, that, acting under the influence of excessive confidence, arising from the causes already referred to, Mr. Burke and his little band of three companions went forth towards the north in a state of mind unprepared to meet insurmountable obstacles; that difficulties, arising chiefly from want of water, sprung up in his path, and assumed greater magnitude than the previous experience of the expedition could have led them to

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anticipate; and that if the little party has not succumbed to these difficulties before now, they are to be sought for either on the northern coast, by a vessel to be sent there for that purpose, or in the country towards the Gulf of Carpentaria, by an overland party despatched in that direction. Indeed, both attempts should be made simultaneously, and with the least possible delay. The present period of the year is most propitious for the inland journey, both on account of the abundance of water and the moderate temperature incident to the winter season. There should not be a moment lost, then, in forwarding this portion of the search; and the coasting portion of it should be commenced as soon after as possible.

The sufferings to which the unhappy men are exposed will be understood from Mr. Wright's report of what befell the party under his charge. They were prostrated by scurvy, as well as being additionally enfeebled by the irregular supply of water. And at length four of their number, worn out by their sufferings, perished by a wretched, lingering death in the wilderness. There is something deeply melancholy in such a fact. Poor Becker! He had scarcely the physique for encountering the toils of such an expedition. However, regrets over the past are vain. What is of importance now is to save the remainder of the party, if possible. And perhaps the best way of opening up the search inland would be for the committee to avail themselves of Mr. Howitt's offer to proceed at once, with an enlarged party, including Mr. Brahe, to Cooper's Creek, and thence to Eyre's Creek, and northwards towards the coast, should they not previously have encountered Mr. Burke and his companions on their return.

It is somewhat disheartening to find that when Mr. Wright returned for the last time to the Cooper's Creek depot, namely, so recently as the first week in May—that is, five months after Burke set out on his final excursion—he did not think it necessary to make any examination of the country, as far at least as Eyre's Creek. It might naturally be supposed that on finding, by examining the concealed stores, that Mr. Burke had not revisited the depot, Mr. Wright would endeavour to make some search for him, to the extent of a few days' journey at all events. Before turning their back finally upon the solitude where their companions were wandering, one last search might have well been made. But perhaps the disabled condition of the men, horses, and camels may be taken to account for this seeming neglect. It may not be too late even now, however, to make amends for this strange oversight, by hastening on Mr. Howitt's party. The whole expedition appears to have been one prolonged blunder throughout; and it is to be hoped that the rescuing party may not be mismanaged and retarded in the same way as the unfortunate original expedition was. The savans have made a sad mess of the whole affair; let them, if possible, retrieve themselves in this its last sad phase.

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I returned immediately to Melbourne, and found the committee in earnest at last, the Government aiding them in every possible way. Mr. Heales offered all the assistance he could give. The Victoria, which I thought had been made ready, was now put under immediate repair. Proceedings were reported in the Herald as follows:—

The adjourned meeting of the Exploration Committee was held yesterday afternoon, in the Hall of the Royal Society, Victoria Street. Dr. Mueller occupied the chair, in the unavoidable absence of Sir William Stawell.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Chairman said the honorary treasurer would lay before the committee the result of the interview the deputation had the honour to hold with the Chief Secretary that day. Unfortunately they had not had the advantage of Dr. Macadam's assistance, but he was glad that gentleman was now present, and that they had one member of the Government.

The Honourable Dr. Wilkie, M.L.C., said that Dr. Mueller, himself, and Dr. Wills, father of Mr. Wills, a member of the expedition, waited on the Chief Secretary and communicated to him the resolution passed by the Exploration Committee, strongly recommending the Government to give the Victoria steamer for the purpose of proceeding to the Gulf of Carpentaria in aid of Mr. Burke's party. He might state that the deputation entered fully into the whole question, and that the Chief Secretary very cordially promised that the Victoria should be given, and that at the same time he (the Chief Secretary) said it was the desire of the Government to promote the wishes of the Exploration Committee, as far as possible, in rendering assistance to Mr. Burke. Further discussion took place with reference to other matters, which would immediately come under the consideration of the committee;—as to the sending a land party from Rockhampton; and the Government had promised every possible assistance that they could render.

. . .

Mr. Howitt, who returned the next day, was soon despatched again with increased means, to follow up his work in aid. A communication was immediately opened with the Queensland Government on the north-east to get up an expedition under some competent person, but at the charge of Victoria; and Mr. Walker, who had already acquired note as a leader of a party of native police, was proposed for the command. Captain Norman with the Victoria steamer was to start as soon as possible, coasting round to the Gulf, taking with him a small tender; whilst Walker, or whoever might be appointed in Queensland, should proceed north, overland. Nothing further could be done in Melbourne by the committee or Government; but I have now to narrate a noble act on the part of a private individual.

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James Orkney, Esquire, M.L.A. for West Melbourne, had a small steamer of sixteen tons, built by himself from a model of the Great Eastern, which was quite ready for sea; and having also a captain willing to embark in her, he undertook to send her round to the Gulf of Carpentaria at his own charge. The adventurous gentleman who offered his services was no less a personage than Wyse, the skipper of Lord Dufferin's yacht on his celebrated voyage to the North Seas, which his lordship has commemorated in his delightful little book entitled, Letters from High Latitudes. The Sir Charles Hotham, for so the little craft was called, was intended to precede Captain Norman, as the Victoria would take at least a fortnight in equipping. She was expected, from her light draught of water, to render much aid in exploring the rivers and steaming against currents. She left on the 6th of July, towed out of Hudson's Bay by the Sydney steamer. The weather became stormy, and the steamer was compelled to cut her adrift during the night. Left to herself and her gallant captain, with a crew of two men only, she made her way to Sydney. During this time the coast was visited by severe gales, and much anxiety was felt for the Sir Charles Hotham. The agents of the Sydney steamer regretted that they had not heard of the proposed arrangement a few hours earlier, as they would readily have taken her on deck. But they did all that was in their power.

Mr. Orkney soon received the pleasing intelligence that his little craft was safe in Sydney Harbour, but requiring some repairs. These were completed with as much speed as possible, Mr. Orkney bearing every expense, including that of the telegrams, which was considerable. Again the miniature steamer proceeded from Sydney, northward; but after some progress, Wyse, steering her into shallow water, near shore, to anchor for the night, ran her on the peak of the anchor, which made a hole in her bottom, and quite incapacitated her from further service. Thus Mr. Orkney lost the hope he entertained and the satisfaction he would have enjoyed, of being serviceable to the lost explorers; but the credit due to him is far from being diminished by his want of success, and the patriotic effort deserves to be recorded to his eternal honour. Through this incident I made his acquaintance, and ever since we have been, and I hope shall continue to be, sincere friends.

My anxiety for my son's safety interfered with my attention to ordinary professional avocations. I accordingly left Ballaarat for a time, and continued in Melbourne, casting about to see how I could render myself useful in the great object of my thoughts. At first I inclined to go round to the Gulf with Captain Norman, and obtained permission to do so, when an announcement reached Melbourne by telegram to the effect that the South Australian Government had decided on sending an Expedition from that quarter, and asking for the loan of some camels, with the use of the two

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that had strayed in that direction, and had been brought down to Adelaide from Dr. Brown's station. These turned out to be two of the three that my son had lost when out on an excursion from Cooper's Creek, the circumstances of which have been already mentioned. Mr. McKinlay was at that time in Melbourne. He immediately started by the Havelock steamer to offer his services as leader of the party. I sent a letter to Sir Richard McDonnel, the Governor, by him, proposing to accompany them as surgeon, and to assist as guide. I received a reply by telegram asking if I would put myself under Mr. McKinlay, and also requesting from the Government some additional camels. I obtained permission from Mr. Heales to have those that might be useful, and in three days started in the Oscar (since lost) with the camels.

On arriving in Adelaide, I found that the South Australian Expedition was instructed to proceed, in the first instance, to Cooper's Creek, whither Mr. Howitt had already gone. This I thought a mistaken direction, as Howitt would be there before us, and the north and east search being amply provided for, it appeared profitless. The Government also proposed a surveying tour on their own account, in conjunction with the search for the missing explorers. These plans not exactly falling in with my view of the business, I gave up my intention of forming one of the party. Mr. McKinlay was a fine fellow, well adapted to the work; his companions strong and lively, and of a proper age, neither too old nor too young. Having seen him off, I determined to remain for a time in Adelaide, a delightful place, where I found some of the kindest and most agreeable acquaintances I have ever had the good fortune to meet with.

The South Australian Register, of the 24th of August, 1861, gave the following summary of the measures in progress:—

Our readers will perhaps be surprised to learn that a new exploring expedition has just been sent to the northern interior. To explore is clearly one of the missions of South Australia; but this time the object is less one of curiosity than humanity. With Mr. Stuart and his party still engaged in the work of opening a route to the north-west coast, no one would have thought it desirable, under ordinary circumstances, to undertake fresh explorations. But the whole colony has been moved by the dreadful doubt which hangs over the fate of Mr. Burke, the Victorian explorer, who, with three men, left Cooper's Creek at the beginning of the year; having only a few months' provisions with him. They have not been heard of since, and there is not much hope entertained of their safety. But all that can be done to assist them or to ascertain their fate is being done. The three adjacent provinces have sent in search of the lost explorers, and this colony has also despatched its expedition for the same good purpose. Mr. McKinlay, an experienced bushman, has left Adelaide upon this chivalric task, taking with him six men, twenty-four horses, and four camels. His first duty is to seek for Burke, and in the next place to obtain a knowledge of unexplored country in the north.

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After general instructions, Mr. McKinlay's duties were more specifically defined:—

You will in all matters keep the following objects in full view:—

Firstly. The relief of the expedition under the command of Mr. Burke, or the acquiring a knowledge of its fate. This is the great object of the expedition under your command.

When you may have accomplished the foregoing, or may have deemed it necessary to abandon the search for Mr. Burke, then,

Secondly. The acquiring a knowledge of the country between Eyre's Creek and Central Mount Stuart.

Thirdly. The acquiring a knowledge of the western shores of Lake Eyre. A separate letter of instructions is given to you and the particular matters to which you will direct your attention in this locality.

. . .

I had been in Adelaide nearly a month when I was startled by the following note, from Major Egerton Warburton:—

September 19th.

My dear sir,

Would you kindly call in at my office? I have important news which must interest you.

Yours very truly,

J. *Egerton Warburton*.

. . .

I hastened to him, and asked, almost breathlessly, "What news—good or bad?" He replied, "Not so bad;" and then gave me the information which was made known in the House of Assembly that night, and embodied in the Adelaide Advertiser, the next day, to the following effect:—

On Thursday morning, considerable interest was excited in Adelaide by a rumour to the effect that intelligence from the interior had been received of Burke's party. We lost no time in instituting inquiry, and found that the report was certainly not unfounded. It was stated that a police trooper in the north had sent down information, derived through a

black, that at a long distance beyond the settled districts some white men were living, and that the black had obtained a portion of their hair. The white men were described as being entirely naked, and as living upon a raft on a lake, supporting themselves by catching fish: that they had no firearms nor horses, but some great animals, which, from the description given by the native, were evidently camels. There could, therefore, be but little doubt as to this being Burke's party, or a portion of it; and as soon as it was ascertained that the rumour had some tangible kind of foundation, public curiosity for fuller and more authentic details speedily rose very high. On the assembling of Parliament, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, desirous of allaying the anxiety of the public, read from his place the letter brought by the native, of which the following is a copy: —

Wirrilpa, September 12, 1861,

Sir,

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I have the honour to forward the following particulars gathered from the blacks, seeming to refer to Mr. Burke and party. A black fellow called Sambo, who has lately come in from Lake Hope, brought with him the hair of two white men, which he showed to the cook and stockman at Tooncatchin. He says it was given to him by other blacks, who told him that there were white men living much farther out than where he had been. Frank James, one of Mr. Butler's stockmen, saw Sambo again on the 6th instant, and tried to get the hair from him. He had unfortunately given it away to other blacks. James promised him tobacco for it, and he has promised to get it again. Sambo says that the white men are naked, have no firearms or horses, but animals which from his description are evidently camels; that they sleep on a raft, which they build on the water. They live on fish which they catch with nets made with grass. Sambo says that the other blacks had told him that the white men arrived there this winter. According to Sambo, the people are twenty sleeps from Tooncatchin, by way of Lake Hope Creek. I do not think that these sleeps on the average exceed ten miles, so it is probable that they are on or near Cooper's Creek. Sambo is quite willing to go out all the way with a party of white men. He also says that the blacks on Lake Hope Creek are afraid of these white men. I received the above information from Mr. H. Butler, Frank James, and Cleland, on my arrival at Blanche on the 8th instant. Knowing that Mr. McKinlay and party were on their way, I accordingly left Blanche on the 9th, and I met Mr. McKinlay and party to-day on Bandnoota Plain, 145 miles south of Blanche, when I put that gentleman in possession of the above particulars.

I have *etc*.

James Howe, Police Trooper.

To George Hamilton, Esquire, J.P., Inspector of Police.

The Surveyor-General (Mr. Goyder) says that from the general tenor of the letter he inclines to the opinion that the white men are on some of the newly-discovered waters between Cooper's Creek and Eyre's Creek; and if so, this is precisely in the direction that Mr. McKinlay would, according to his instructions, have taken. But the most gratifying portion of the whole statement is that which assures us of Mr. McKinlay being placed in possession of the whole of the circumstances of the case; and considering the date when the information was given him, there is little doubt but that Mr. McKinlay, as the reader's eye rests on these words, is *on the spot indicated* by the black; and should this prove to be correct, and the party be saved, South Australia will have, in the cause of humanity, reason to rejoice that the Parliament took such prompt and vigorous measures to send out the relief expedition. The Commissioner of Crown Lands telegraphed to Melbourne, without delay, the substance of the trooper's letter; but it is not likely that any practical use

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could be made of it there, though it would revive the hopes of many of the friends of Burke and his party. If the white men spoken of in the letter are where Mr. Goyder imagines them to be, it is not very likely that Mr. Howitt's relief party would find them; so that it may, after all, be the destiny of South Australia not only to find men to cross the Australian continent, but to relieve and restore other explorers who have failed in that hazardous attempt.

Mr. Burke's party consists of himself as leader, Mr. Wills, astronomer and surveyor, and who is second in command,—two men, six camels, and one horse. Dr. Wills, who is now in Adelaide, having come round from Melbourne with the additional camels, says that the two camels which a short time since made their way into this colony overland, and were brought to town from Truro, were two out of the three that belonged to his son, and that they were allowed to stray, by a man left in charge of them whilst Mr. Wills was engaged in some astronomical pursuits. The man left the camels to make some tea, and, on his return, the animals had disappeared. Two of them, as already stated, have been recovered, but no tidings have been received of the third, unless it be the one recently said to have arrived at Fort Bourke. We hope we shall soon have further information, not only respecting Burke and his party, but also of Stuart, the time of whose anticipated return now draws on rapidly.

***We had scarcely written the above lines when we received a private telegram, informing us that Mr. Stuart was on his way to Adelaide.

This intelligence raised my sinking hopes to a high pitch. I felt convinced that this was the missing party. The black fellow had described the animals, which the natives called "gobble gobble," from the noise they made in their throats. Mr. McKinlay put little faith in the story; and I was vexed to hear by the next report from him that he was not hastening to the rescue. But it would then have been too late. The white men alluded to were, unquestionably, Burke, my son, and King, with exaggeration as to their being without clothes, and living on a raft.

Shortly after this I returned to Melbourne, and in another week the sad catastrophe became public beyond all further doubt. The intelligence had reached Melbourne on a Saturday night. I was staying at that time at the house of my kind friend Mr. Orkney. He had gone to the opera with Mrs. Orkney and another lady, and came home about half-past ten. I was surprised at their early return, and thought something unpleasant must have happened. A servant came to say that he wished to speak with me privately, and then I received the terrible communication which had been announced at the theatre during an interval between the acts. As soon as I had sufficiently recovered the shock, we proceeded in a car to the residence of Dr. Wilkie, the treasurer of the Committee. He had heard a report, but was rather incredulous,

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as nothing official had reached the Committee. At this moment, Dr. Macadam, the Honorary Secretary, came in. He was perfectly bewildered, believed nothing, and had received no telegram. "But," said I, "when were you at your own house last?" "At seven o'clock," was the reply. "Good God!" I exclaimed, "jump into the car." We proceeded to his house, and there indeed was the telegram, which had been waiting for him some hours.

The next morning, Sunday, November the 3rd, Brahe arrived at an early hour at the Spencer-street Station, having been sent in by Mr. Howitt with the journals and letters dug up in the cache at Cooper's Creek. I was anxiously waiting his arrival. Dr. Macadam was also there, and appeared confused, as if he had been up all night. He insisted on dragging me on to the Governor's house, four miles from Melbourne, Heaven only knows with what object. With some difficulty I obtained from him possession of the bundle of papers, and deposited them for safety in the hands of Dr. Wilkie. I have nothing more to say of Dr. Macadam, except that I sincerely trust it may never be my fortune to come in contact with him again, in any official business whatever. He is a man of unbounded confidence in his own powers, ready to undertake many things at the same time; and would not, I suspect, shrink from including the honorary governorship of the colony, if the wisdom of superior authority were to place it at his disposal.

CHAPTER 12.

The attempt to reach South Australia and Adelaide by Mount Hopeless. Mistake of selecting that Route. Mr. Wills's Journals from the 23rd of April to the 29th of June, 1861. Adventures with the Natives. Discovery of Nardoo as a Substitute for Food. Mr. Burke and King go in search of Natives as a last resource. Mr. Wills left alone in the Desert. The Last Entry in his Journal.

On the morning of Thursday, the 23rd of April, 1861, Mr. Burke, my son, and King, being refreshed and strengthened by the provisions they found at Cooper's Creek, again resumed their journey homewards. It was an unfortunate resolve of Burke's, to select the route to the Adelaide district by Mount Hopeless, instead of returning by the Darling. King says, "Mr. Wills and I were of opinion that to follow Brahe was the best mode of proceeding; but Mr. Burke had heard it stated positively at the meeting of the Royal Society, that there were South Australian settlers within one hundred miles of Cooper's Creek in the direction he proposed to take;" and by this very questionable assertion, without evidence, his mind was biassed. There was, in fact, nothing to recommend the route by Mount Hopeless, while everything was in favour of that by the Darling. Blanche Water, the nearest police-station on the Adelaide line, was distant between four and five hundred miles. The one road they knew nothing of, the other was familiar to them. The camels, too, would have plucked

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up spirit on returning after the others on the old track. It is true that Brahe's false statement of the condition of his party held out no encouragement that they might be able to overtake him; but there was a chance that a new party might even then be coming up, or that the laggard Wright would be on the advance at last, as proved to be the fact. A Melbourne paper, commenting on these points, had the following remarks, which were as just as they were doubly painful, being delivered after the event:—

Wills and King it appears were desirous of following their track out from Menindie, which would unquestionably have been the wiser course; but Mr. Burke preferred striking for the South Australian stations, some of which, he had been informed by the Royal Committee of Exploration, were only one hundred and fifty miles from Cooper's Creek. It was a most unfortunate and fatal matter for Mr. Burke that these Royal people had anything whatever to do with his movements.

He made two attempts to strike in the direction in which they had assured him he would easily reach a settled district, and twice was he driven back for want of water. It was a fatal mistake on his part to follow the suggestion of these ready advisers. The practical impressions of Wills or King were worth a world of theoretical conjectures and philosophic presumption. But it seems to have been decreed that Burke should have favoured the former instead of the latter; the consequences of which were that himself and poor Wills were to perish miserably.

. . .

Much as I approve of and admire my son's steady obedience to his leader, I cannot but regret and wonder that in this particular instance he was not more resolute in remonstrance. It bears out what I said to Mr. Burke on taking leave of him: "If you ask his advice, take it; but he will never offer it; and should he see you going to destruction, he will follow you without a murmur."

The party, before they left Cooper's Creek, buried my son's journals in the cache, with the subjoined note from Mr. Burke, which were dug out and brought up by Brahe.

Depot 2, Cooper's Creek Camp 65.

The return party from Carpentaria, consisting of myself, Wills, and King (Gray dead), arrived here last night and found that the depot party had only started on the same day. We proceed on, to-morrow, slowly down the creek towards Adelaide by Mount Hopeless, and shall endeavour to follow Gregory's track; but we are very weak. The two camels are done up, and we shall not be able to travel faster than four or five miles a day. Gray died on the road, from exhaustion and fatigue. We have all suffered much from hunger. The provisions left here will, I think, restore our strength. We have discovered a practicable route to Carpentaria, the chief position of which lies in the 140 degrees of east longitude. There is some good country between this and the Stony

Desert. From thence to the tropics the land is dry and stony. Between the Carpentaria a considerable portion is rangy, but well watered and richly grassed. We reached the shores of Carpentaria on the 11th of February, 1861. Greatly disappointed at finding the party here gone.

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(Signed) *Robert* O'HARA *Burke*, Leader.

April 22, 1861.

P.S. The camels cannot travel, and we cannot walk, or we should follow the other party. We shall move very slowly down the creek.

. . .

My son's journal is now written in a more complete and consecutive form. He had no instruments for observation or mapping, so that his time and mind were concentrated on the one employment.

April, 1861.—*Journal of trip from Cooper's creek towards Adelaide*.

The advance party of the V.E.E., consisting of Burke, Wills, and King (Gray being dead), having returned from Carpentaria, on the 21st April, 1861, in an exhausted and weak state, and finding that the depot party left at Cooper's Creek had started for the Darling with their horses and camels fresh and in good condition, deemed it useless to attempt to overtake them, having only two camels, both done up, and being so weak themselves as to be unable to walk more than four or five miles a day. Finding also that the provisions left at the depot for them would scarcely take them to Menindie, they started down Cooper's Creek for Adelaide, via Mount Hopeless, on the morning of 23rd April, 1861, intending to follow as nearly as possible, the route taken by Gregory. By so doing they hoped to be able to recruit themselves and the camels whilst sauntering slowly down the creek, and to have sufficient provisions left to take them comfortably, or at least without risk, to some station in South Australia.

Their equipment consists of the following articles:—Flour, 50 pounds; sugar, 60 pounds; rice, 20 pounds; oatmeal, 60 pounds; jerked meat, 25 pounds; ginger, 2 pounds; salt, 1 pound.—[Then follow some native words with their meanings.]

From Depot.

Tuesday, 23rd April, 1861.—Having collected together all the odds and ends that seemed likely to be of use to us, in addition to provisions left in the plant, we started at 9.15 A.M., keeping down the southern bank of the creek; we only went about five miles, and camped at 11.30 on a billibong, where the feed was pretty good. We find the change of diet already making a great improvement in our spirits and strength. The weather is delightful, days agreeably warm, but the nights very chilly. The latter is more noticeable from our deficiency in clothing, the depot party having taken all the reserve things back with them to the Darling.—To Camp 1.

From Camp 1.

Wednesday, 24th April, 1861.—As we were about to start this morning, some blacks came by, from whom we were fortunate enough to get about twelve pounds of fish for a few pieces of straps and some matches, *etc*. This is a great treat for us, as well as a valuable addition to our rations. We started at 8.15 P.M., on our way down the creek, the blacks going in the opposite direction, little thinking that in a few miles they might be able to get lots of pieces for nothing, better than those they had obtained from us. —To Camp 2.

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From Camp 2.

Thursday, 25th April, 1861.—Awoke at five o'clock after a most refreshing night's rest—-the sky was beautifully clear, and the air rather chilly—the terrestrial radiation seems to have been considerable, and a slight dew had fallen. We had scarcely finished breakfast, when our friends the blacks, from whom we obtained the fish, made their appearance with a few more, and seemed inclined to go with us and keep up the supply. We gave them some sugar, with which they were greatly pleased—they are by far the most well-behaved blacks we have seen on Cooper's Creek. We did not get away from the camp until 9.30 A.M., continuing our course down the most southern branch of the creek which keeps a general south-west course. We passed across the stony point which abuts on one of the largest waterholes in the creek, and camped at 12.30 about a mile below the most dangerous part of the rocky path. At this latter place we had an accident that might have resulted badly for us: one of the camels fell while crossing the worst part, but we fortunately got him out with only a few cuts and bruises. To Camp 3.—The waterhole at this camp is a very fine one, being several miles long, and on an average about—chains broad. The water-fowl are numerous, but rather shy, not nearly so much so, however, as those on the creeks between here and Carpentaria; and I am convinced that the shyness of the latter, which was also remarked by Sturt on his trip to Eyre's Creek, arises entirely from the scarcity of animals, both human and otherwise, and not from any peculiar mode of catching them that the blacks may have.

From Camp 3.

Friday, 26th April, 1861.—Last night was beautifully calm and comparatively warm, although the sky was very clear. We loaded the camels by moonlight this morning, and started at a quarter to six: striking off to the south of the creek, we soon got on a native path which leaves the creek just below the stony ground and takes a course nearly west across a piece of open country, bounded on the south by sand ridges and on the north by the scrub by ground which flanks the bank of the creek at this part of its course. Leaving the path on our right at a distance of three miles, we turned up a small creek, which passes down between some sandhills, and finding a nice patch of feed for the camels at a waterhole, we halted at 7. 15 for breakfast. We started again at 9.50 A.M., continuing our westerly course along the path: we crossed to the south of the watercourse above the water, and proceeded over the most splendid salt-bush country that one could wish to see, bounded on the left by sandhills, whilst to the right the peculiar-looking flat-topped sandstone ranges form an extensive amphitheatre, through the far side of the arena of which may be traced the dark line of creek timber. At twelve o'clock we camped in the bed of the creek at camp—, our last camp on the road down from the Gulf, having taken four days to do what we then did in one. This comparative rest and the change in diet have also worked wonders, however; the leg-tied feeling is now entirely gone, and I believe that in less than a week we shall be fit to undergo any fatigue whatever. The camels are improving, and seem capable of doing all that we are likely to require of them.—To Camp 4.

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From Camp 4.

Saturday, 27th April, 1861.—First part of night clear, with a light breeze from south. Temperature at midnight 10 degrees (Reaumur). Towards morning there were a few cirrocumulus clouds passing over north-east to south-west, but these disappeared before daylight. At five A.M. the temperature was 7.5 degrees (Reaumur). We started at six o'clock, and following the native path, which at about a mile from our camp takes a southerly direction, we soon came to the high sandy alluvial deposit which separates the creek at this point from the stony rises. Here we struck off from the path, keeping well to the south of the creek, in order that we might mess in a branch of it that took a southerly direction. At 9. 20 we came in on the creek again where it runs due south, and halted for breakfast at a fine waterhole with fine fresh feed for the camels. Here we remained until noon, when we moved on again, and camped at one o'clock on a general course, having been throughout the morning south-west eight miles. The weather is most agreeable and pleasant; nothing could be more favourable for us up to the present time. The temperature in the shade at 10.30 A.M. was 17.5 degrees (Reaumur), with a light breeze from south and a few small cirrocumulus clouds towards the north. I greatly feel the want of more instruments, the only things I have left being my watch, prism compass, pocket compass, and one thermometer (Reaumur).—To Camp 5.

From Camp 5.

Sunday, 28th April, 1861.—Morning fine and calm, but rather chilly. Started at 4.45 A.M., following down the bed of a creek in a westerly direction by moonlight. Our stage was, however, very short for about a mile—one of the camels (Landa) got bogged by the side of a waterhole, and although we tried every means in our power, we found it impossible to get him out. All the ground beneath the surface was a bottomless quicksand, through which the beast sank too rapidly for us to get bushes of timber fairly beneath him; and being of a very sluggish stupid nature he could never be got to make sufficiently strenuous efforts towards extricating himself. In the evening, as a last chance, we let the water in from the creek, so as to buoy him up and at the same time soften the ground about his legs; but it was of no avail. The brute lay quietly in it, as if he quite enjoyed his position.—To Camp 6.

Camp 6.

Monday, 29th April, 1861.—Finding Landa still in the hole, we made a few attempts at extricating him, and then shot him, and after breakfast commenced cutting off what flesh we could get at for jerking.

Tuesday, 30th April, 1861.—Remained here to-day for the purpose of drying the meat, for which process the weather is not very favourable. [Meteorological note follows.]

From Camp 6.

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Wednesday, 1st May, 1861.—Started at 8.40, having loaded our only camel, Rajah, with the most necessary and useful articles, and packed up a small swag each, of bedding and clothing for our own shoulders. We kept on the right bank of the creek for about a mile, and then crossed over at a native camp to the left, where we got on a path running due west, the creek having turned to the north. Following the path we crossed an open plain, and then some sand ridges, whence we saw the creek straight ahead of us running nearly south again: the path took us to the southernmost point of the bend in a distance of about two and a-half miles from where we had crossed the creek, thereby saving us from three to four miles, as it cannot be less than six miles round by the creek.—To Camp 7.

From Camp 7.

Thursday, 2nd May, 1861.—Breakfasted by moonlight and started at 6.30. Following down the left bank of the creek in a westerly direction, we came at a distance of six miles on a lot of natives who were camped on the bed of a creek. They seemed to have just breakfasted, and were most liberal in their presentations of fish and cake. We could only return the compliment by some fishhooks and sugar. About a mile further on we came to a separation of the creek, where what looked like the main branch, turned towards the south. This channel we followed, not however without some misgivings as to its character, which were soon increased by the small and unfavourable appearance that the creek assumed. On our continuing along it a little further it began to improve and widened out with fine waterholes of considerable depth. The banks were very steep, and a belt of scrub lined it on either side. This made it very inconvenient for travelling, especially as the bed of the creek was full of water for a considerable distance. At eleven A.M., we halted, until 1.30 P.M., and then moved on again taking a south-south-westerly course for about two miles, when at the end of a very long waterhole it breaks into billibongs, which continue splitting into sandy channels until they are all lost in the earthy soil of a box forest. Seeing little chance of water ahead, we turned back to the end of the long waterhole and camped for the night. On our way back, Rajah showed signs of being done up. He had been trembling greatly all the morning. On this account his load was further lightened to the amount of a few pounds by the doing away with the sugar, ginger, tea, cocoa, and two or three tin plates.—To Camp 8.

From Camp 8.

Friday, 3rd May, 1861.—Started at seven A.M., striking off in a northerly direction for the main creek. At a mile and a-half came to a branch which—[Left unfinished].—To Camp 9.

Junction.—From Camp 9.

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Saturday, 4th May, 1861.—Night and morning very cold. Sky clear, almost calm, occasionally a light breath of air from south. Rajah appears to feel the cold very much. He was so stiff this morning as to be scarcely able to get up with his load. Started to return down the creek at 6.45, and halted for breakfast at 9 A.M., at the same spot as we breakfasted at yesterday. Proceeding from there down the creek we soon found a repetition of the features that were exhibited by the creek examined on Thursday. At a mile and a-half we came to the last waterhole, and below that the channel became more sandy and shallow, and continued to send off billibongs to the south and west, slightly changing its course each time until it disappeared altogether in a north-westerly direction. Leaving King with the camel, we went on a mile or two to see if we could find water; and being unsuccessful we were obliged to return to where we had breakfasted as being the best place for feed and water.—To Camp 10.

Sunday, 5th May, 1861.—Started by myself, to reconnoitre the country in a southerly direction, leaving Mr. Burke and King with the camel at Camp 10. Travelled south-west by south for two hours, following the course of the most southerly billibongs; found the earthy soil becoming more loose and cracked up, and the box track gradually disappearing. Changed course to west for a high sand ridge, which I reached in one hour and a half, and continuing in the same direction to one still higher, obtained from it a good view of the surrounding country. To the north were the extensive box forests bounding the creek on either side. To the east earthy plains intersected by watercourses and lines of timber, and bounded in the distance by sand ridges. To the south the projection of the sand ridge partially intercepted the view; the rest was composed of earthy plains, apparently clothed with chrysanthemums. To the westward another but smaller plain was bounded also by high sand ridges running nearly parallel with the one on which I was standing. This dreary prospect offering no encouragement to proceed, I returned to Camp 10 by a more direct and better route than I had come, passing over some good salt-bush land which borders on the billibongs to the westward. —[Here follow some meteorological notes.]

From Camp 10 back to 9.

Monday, 6th May, 1861.—Moved up the creek again to Camp 9, at the junction, to breakfast, and remained the day there. The present state of things is not calculated to raise our spirits much; the rations are rapidly diminishing; our clothing, especially the boots, are all going to pieces, and we have not the materials for repairing them properly; the camel is completely done up and can scarcely get along, although he has the best of feed and is resting half his time. I suppose this will end in our having to live like the blacks for a few months.

From Camp 9.

Tuesday, 7th May, 1861.—Breakfasted at daylight; but when about to start, found that the camel would not rise even without any load on his back. After making every attempt to get him up, we were obliged to leave him to himself.

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Mr. Burke and I started down the creek to reconnoitre; at about eleven miles we came to some blacks fishing; they gave us some half-a-dozen fish each, for luncheon, and intimated that if we would go to their camp we should have some more and some bread. I tore in two a piece of macintosh stuff that I had, and Mr. Burke gave one piece and I the other. We then went on to their camp about three miles further. They had caught a considerable quantity of fish, but most of them were small. I noticed three different kinds; a small one that they call Cupi, from five to six inches long, and not broader than an eel; the common one, with large coarse scales, termed Peru; and a delicious fish, some of which run from a pound to two pounds weight; the natives call them Cawilchi. On our arrival at the camp they led us to a spot to camp on, and soon afterwards brought a lot of fish, and a kind of bread which they call nardoo. The lighting a fire with matches delights them, but they do not care about having them. In the evening various members of the tribe came down with lumps of nardoo and handfuls of fish, until we were positively unable to eat any more. They also gave us some stuff they call bedgery or pedgery; it has a highly intoxicating effect when chewed even in small quantities. It appears to be the dried stems and leaves of some shrub.

Wednesday, 8th May, 1861.—Left the blacks' camp at 7.30, Mr. Burke returning to the junction, whilst I proceeded to trace down the creek. This I found a shorter task than I had expected, for it soon showed signs of running out, and at the same time kept considerably to the north of west. There were several fine waterholes within about four miles of the camp I had left, but not a drop all the way beyond that, a distance of seven miles. Finding that the creek turned greatly towards the north, I returned to the blacks' encampment, and as I was about to pass they invited me to stay;—I did so, and was even more hospitably entertained than before, being, on this occasion, offered a share of a gunyah, and supplied with plenty of fish and nardoo, as well as a couple of nice fat rats—the latter found most delicious; they were baked in their skins.

Last night was clear and calm, but unusually warm. We slept by a fire just in front of the blacks' camp; they were very attentive in bringing us firewood and keeping the fire up during the night.

Thursday, 9th May, 1861.—Parted from my friends, the blacks, at 7. 30, and started for camp 9.

From Camp 9.

Friday, 10th May, 1861.—Mr. Burke and King employed in jerking the camel's flesh, whilst I went out to look for the nardoo seed for making bread: in this I was unsuccessful, not being able to find a single tree of it in the neighbourhood of the camp. I, however, tried boiling the large kind of bean which the blacks call padlu; they boil easily, and when shelled are very sweet, much resembling in taste the French chestnut; they are to be found in large quantities nearly everywhere.

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Saturday, 11th May, 1861.—To-day Mr. Burke and King started down the creek to the blacks' camp, determined to ascertain all particulars about the nardoo. I have now my turn at the meat jerking, and must devise some means for trapping the birds and rats, which is a pleasant prospect after our dashing trip to Carpentaria, having to hang about Cooper's Creek, living like the blacks.

Sunday, 12th May, 1861.—Mr. Burke and King returned this morning, having been unsuccessful in their search for the blacks, who it seems have moved over to the other branch of the creek.

Decided on moving out on the main creek tomorrow, and then trying to find the natives of the creek.

Monday, 13th May, 1861.—Shifted some of the things, and brought them back again, Mr. Burke thinking it better for one to remain here with them for a few days, so as to eat the remains of the fresh meat, whilst the others went in search of the blacks and nardoo.

Tuesday, 14th May, 1861.—Mr. Burke and King gone up the creek to look for blacks with four days' provisions. Self employed in preparing for a final start on their return.

This evening Mr. Burke and King returned, having been some considerable distance up the creek and found no blacks. It is now settled that we plant the things, and all start together the day after to-morrow.

The weather continues very fine; the nights calm, clear and cold, and the days clear, with a breeze generally from south, but to-day from east, for a change; this makes the first part of the day rather cold. When clouds appear they invariably move from west to east.

Wednesday, 15th, 1861.—Planting the things and preparing to leave the creek for Mount Hopeless.

Thursday, 16th, 1861.—Having completed our planting, *etc*., started up the creek for the second blacks' camp, a distance of about eight miles: finding our loads rather too heavy we made a small plant here of such articles as could best be spared.—[Here follow a few meteorological notes.]

Nardoo, Friday, 17th May, 1861.—Started this morning on a blacks' path, leaving the creek on our left, our intention being to keep a south-easterly direction until we should cut some likely looking creek, and then to follow it down. On approaching the foot of the first sandhill, King caught sight in the flat of some nardoo seeds, and we soon found that the flat was covered with them. This discovery caused somewhat of a revolution in our feelings, for we considered that with the knowledge of this plant we were in a position to

support ourselves, even if we were destined to remain on the creek and wait for assistance from town. Crossing some sand ridges, running north and south, we struck into a creek which runs out of Cooper's Creek, and followed it down; at about five miles we came to a large waterhole, beyond which the watercourse runs out on extensive flats and earthy plains.

Calm night; sky cleared towards morning, and it became very cold. A slight easterly breeze sprung up at sunrise but soon died away again. The sky again became overcast and remained so throughout the day. There was occasionally a light breeze from south, but during the greater portion of the day it was quite calm. Fine halo around the sun in the afternoon.

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Camp 16.

Saturday, 18th May, 1861.—[No entry except the following meteorological entry on an opposite page, which may probably refer to this date.] Calm night; sky sometimes clear and sometimes partially overcast with veil clouds.

Sunday, 19th May, 1861.—[No entry beyond this citation of date.]

Monday, 20th May, 1861.—[No entry beyond this citation of date.]

Tuesday, 21st May.—Creek.—[No entry beyond this citation of date.]

Wednesday, 22nd May, 1861.—Cooper's Creek.—[No entry beyond this citation of date.]

Thursday, 23rd May, 1861.—[No entry beyond this citation of date.]

Friday, 24th May, 1861.—Started with King to celebrate the Queen's birthday by fetching from Nardoo Creek what is now to us the staff of life; returned at a little after two P.M. with a fair supply, but find the collecting of the seed a slower and more troublesome process than could be desired. Whilst picking the seed, about eleven A.M., both of us heard distinctly the noise of an explosion, as if of a gun, at some considerable distance. We supposed it to have been a shot fired by Mr. Burke, but on returning to the camp found that he had not fired, nor had heard the noise. The sky was partially overcast with high cumulostratus clouds, and a light breeze blew from the east, but nothing to indicate a thunderstorm in any direction.

Saturday, 25th May, 1861.—[No entry beyond this.]

Sunday, 26th May.—[No entry beyond this.]

Monday, 27th May, 1861.—Started up the creek this morning for the depot, in order to deposit journals and a record of the state of affairs here. On reaching the sandhills below where Landa was bogged, I passed some blacks on a flat collecting nardoo seed. Never saw such an abundance of the seed before. The ground in some parts was quite black with it. There were only two or three gins and children, and they directed me on, as if to their camp, in the direction I was before going; but I had not gone far over the first sandhill when I was overtaken by about twenty blacks, bent on taking me back to their camp, and promising any quantity of nardoo and fish. On my going with them, one carried the shovel, and another insisted on taking my swag in such a friendly manner that I could not refuse them. They were greatly amused with the various little things I had with me. In the evening they supplied me with abundance of nardoo and fish, and one of the old men, Poko Tinnamira, shared his gunyah with me. . .The night was very cold, but by the help of several fires—[The entry suddenly

stops here; but in the margin of the opposite page is written the names of several natives, and certain native words with their meanings in English.]

Tuesday, 28th May, 1861:—Left the blacks' camp, and proceeded up the creek; obtained some mussels near where Landa died, and halted for breakfast. Still feel very unwell from the effects of constipation of the bowels. After breakfast travelled on to our third camp coming down.

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Wednesday, 29th.—Started at seven A.M. and went on to the duck-holes, where we breakfasted coming down. Halted there at 9.30 A.M. for a feed, and then moved on. At the stones saw a lot of crows quarrelling about something near the water; found it to be a large fish, of which they had eaten a considerable portion. As it was quite fresh and good, I decided the quarrel by taking it with me. . .It proved a most valuable addition to my otherwise scanty supper of nardoo porridge. This evening I camped very comfortably in a mia-mia, about eleven miles from the depot. The night was very cold, although not entirely cloudless. A brisk easterly breeze sprang up in the morning, and blew freshly all day. In the evening the sky clouded in, and there were one or two slight showers, but nothing to wet the ground.

Thursday, 30th May, 1861.—Reached the depot this morning at eleven A.M.; no traces of any one except blacks having been here since we left. Deposited some journals and a notice of our present condition. Started back in the afternoon, and camped at the first waterhole. Last night, being cloudy, was unusually warm and pleasant.

[Footnote: The notice left in the cache ran as follows:—

Depot Camp, May 30th.

We have been unable to leave the creek. Both camels are dead, and our provisions are exhausted. Mr. Burke and King are down the lower part of the creek. I am about to return to them, when we shall probably come up this way. We are trying to live the best way we can, like the blacks, but find it hard work. Our clothes are going to pieces fast. Send provisions and clothes as soon as possible.

W.J. *Wills*.

The depot party having left, contrary to instructions, has put us in this fix. I have deposited some of my journals here for fear of accident.

W.J.W.]

Friday, 31st May, 1861.—Decamped at 7.30 A.M., having first breakfasted; passed between the sandhills at nine A.M., and reached the blanket mia-mias at 10.40 A.M.; from there proceeded on to the rocks, where I arrived at 1.30 P.M., having delayed about half-an-hour on the road in gathering some portulac. It had been a fine morning, but the sky now became overcast, and threatened to set in for steady rain; and as I felt very weak and tired, I only moved on about a mile further, and camped in a sheltered gully under some bushes. Night clear and very cold; no wind; towards morning, sky became slightly overcast with cirrostratus clouds.

Saturday, 1st June, 1861.—Started at 7.45 A.M.; passed the duck-holes at ten A.M. and my second camp up, at two P.M., having rested in the meantime about forty-five

minutes. Thought to have reached the blacks' camp, or at least where Landa was bogged, but found myself altogether too weak and exhausted; in fact, had extreme difficulty in getting across the numerous little gullies, and was at last obliged to camp from sheer fatigue. Night ultimately both clear and cloudy, with occasional showers.

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Sunday, 2nd June, 1861.—Started at half-past six, thinking to breakfast at the blacks' camp below Landa's grave. Found myself very much fagged, and did not arrive at their camp until ten A.M., and then found myself disappointed as to a good breakfast, the camp being deserted. Having rested awhile and eaten a few fish-bones, I moved down the creek, hoping by a late march to be able to reach our own camp; but I soon found, from my extreme weakness, that that would be out of the question. A certain amount of good luck, however, still stuck to me, for on going along by a large waterhole I was so fortunate as to find a large fish, about a pound and a half in weight, which was just being choked by another which it had tried to swallow, but which had stuck in its throat. I soon had a fire lit, and both of the fish cooked and eaten: the large one was in good condition. Moving on again after my late breakfast, I passed Camp 67 of the journey to Carpentaria, and camped for the night under some polygonum bushes.

Monday, 3rd June, 1861.—Started at seven o'clock, and keeping on the south bank of the creek was rather encouraged at about three miles by the sound of numerous crows ahead; presently fancied I could see smoke, and was shortly afterwards set at my ease by hearing a cooey from Pitchery, who stood on the opposite bank, and directed me round the lower end of the waterhole, continually repeating his assurance of abundance of fish and bread. Having with some considerable difficulty managed to ascend the sandy path that led to the camp, I was conducted by the chief to a fire where a large pile of fish were just being cooked in the most approved style. These I imagined to be for the general consumption of the half-dozen natives gathered around, but it turned out that they had already had their breakfast. I was expected to dispose of this lot—a task which, to my own astonishment, I soon accomplished, keeping two or three blacks pretty steadily at work extracting the bones for me. The fish being disposed of, next came a supply of nardoo cake and water until I was so full as to be unable to eat any more; when Pitchery, allowing me a short time to recover myself, fetched a large bowl of the raw nardoo flour mixed to a thin paste, a most insinuating article, and one that they appear to esteem a great delicacy. I was then invited to stop the night there, but this I declined, and proceeded on my way home.

Tuesday, 4th June, 1861.—Started for the blacks' camp intending to test the practicability of living with them, and to see what I could learn as to their ways and manners.

Wednesday, 5th June, 1861.—Remained with the blacks. Light rain during the greater part of the night, and more or less throughout the day in showers. Wind blowing in squalls from south.

Thursday, 6th June, 1861.—Returned to our own camp: found that Mr. Burke and King had been well supplied with fish by the blacks. Made preparation for shifting our camp nearer theirs on the morrow.

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. . .

During my son's absence, which lasted for eleven days, in which he travelled altogether above seventy miles, King mentions in his narrative that Mr. Burke, whilst frying some fish set fire to the mia-mia (a shelter made by the blacks with bushes of trees, so thickly laid that it serves to exclude the sun and a great deal of rain); thus destroying every remnant of clothing. King told me that nothing was saved but a gun, although his narrative says a pistol also; but Mr. Burke's pistol was burnt.

The incidents of the journal from the 27th of May to the 5th of June, show how well my son had established himself in the good graces of the natives. Had it been his fortune to have survived, we should probably have had an interesting account of these simple aborigines and their doings.

. . .

Friday, 7th June, 1861.—Started in the afternoon for the blacks' camp with such things as we could take; found ourselves all very weak in spite of the abundant supply of fish that we have lately had. I, myself, could scarcely get along, although carrying the lightest swag, only about thirty pounds. Found that the blacks had decamped, so determined on proceeding to-morrow up to the next camp, near the nardoo field.

Saturday, 8th June, 1861.—With the greatest fatigue and difficulty we reached the nardoo camp. No blacks, greatly to our disappointment; took possession of their best mia-mia and rested for the remainder of the day.

Sunday, 9th June, 1861.—King and I proceeded to collect nardoo, leaving Mr. Burke at home.

Monday, 10th June, 1861.—Mr. Burke and King collecting nardoo; self at home too weak to go out; was fortunate enough to shoot a crow.—[Here follow some meteorological notes which appear to relate to another period.]

Tuesday, 11th June, 1861.—King out for nardoo; Mr. Burke up the creek to look for the blacks.

Wednesday, 12th June, 1861.—King out collecting nardoo; Mr. Burke and I at home pounding and cleaning. I still feel myself, if anything, weaker in the legs, although the nardoo appears to be more thoroughly digested.

Thursday, 13th June, 1861.—Last night the sky was pretty clear, and the air rather cold, but nearly calm, a few cirrostratus hung about the north-east horizon during the first part of the night. Mr. Burke and King out for nardoo; self weaker than ever; scarcely able to go to the waterhole for water. Towards afternoon, cirrocumulus and cirrostratus began to appear moving northward. Scarcely any wind all day.

Friday, 14th June, 1861.—Night alternately clear and cloudy; cirrocumulus and cumulostratus moving northwards; no wind; beautifully mild for the time of year; in the morning some heavy clouds on the horizon. King out for nardoo; brought in a good supply. Mr. Burke and I at home, pounding and cleaning seed. I feel weaker than ever, and both Mr. B. and King are beginning to feel very unsteady in the legs.

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Saturday, 15th June, 1861.—Night clear, calm, and cold; morning very fine, with a light breath of air from north-east. King out for nardoo; brought in a fine supply. Mr. Burke and I pounding and cleaning; he finds himself getting very weak, and I am not a bit stronger.

I have determined on beginning to chew tobacco and eat less nardoo, in hopes that it may induce some change in the system. I have never yet recovered from the constipation, the effect of which continues to be exceedingly painful.

Sunday, 16th June, 1861.—Wind shifted to north; clouds moving from west to east; thunder audible two or three times to the southward: sky becoming densely overcast, with an occasional shower about nine A.M.

We finished up the remains of the camel Rajah yesterday, for dinner; King was fortunate enough to shoot a crow this morning.

The rain kept all hands in, pounding and cleaning seed during the morning. The weather cleared up towards the middle of the day, and a brisk breeze sprang up in the south, lasting till near sunset, but rather irregular in its force. Distant thunder was audible to westward and southward frequently during the afternoon.

Monday, 17th June, 1861.—Night very boisterous and stormy; northerly wind blowing in squalls, and heavy showers of rain, with thunder in the north and west; heavy clouds moving rapidly from north to south; gradually clearing up during the morning; the wind continuing squally during the day from west and north-west.

King out in the afternoon for nardoo.

Tuesday, 18th June, 1861.—Exceedingly cold night; sky clear, slight breeze, very chilly and changeable; very heavy dew. After sunrise, cirrostratus clouds began to pass over from west to east, gradually becoming more dense, and assuming the form of cumulostratus. The sky cleared, and it became warmer towards noon.

Wednesday, 19th June, 1861.—Night calm; sky during first part overcast with cirrocumulus clouds, most of which cleared away towards morning, leaving the air much colder; but the sky remained more or less hazy all night, and it was not nearly as cold as last night.

About eight o’clock a strong southerly wind sprung up, which enabled King to blow the dust out of our nardoo seed, but made me too weak to render him any assistance.

Thursday, 20th June, 1861.—Night and morning very cold, sky clear. I am completely reduced by the effects of the cold and starvation. King gone out for nardoo; Mr. Burke at home pounding seed; he finds himself getting very weak in the legs. King holds out by far the best; the food seems to agree with him pretty well.

Finding the sun come out pretty warm towards noon, I took a sponging all over; but it seemed to do little good beyond the cleaning effects, for my weakness is so great that I could not do it with proper expedition.

I cannot understand this nardoo at all—it certainly will not agree with me in any form; we are now reduced to it alone, and we manage to consume from four to five pounds per day between us; it appears to be quite indigestible, and cannot possibly be sufficiently nutritious to sustain life by itself.

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Friday, 21st June, 1861.—Last night was cold and clear, winding up with a strong wind from north-east in the morning. I feel much weaker than ever and can scarcely crawl out of the mia-mia. Unless relief comes in some form or other, I cannot possibly last more than a fortnight.

It is a great consolation, at least, in this position of ours, to know that we have done all we could, and that our deaths will rather be the result of the mismanagement of others than of any rash acts of our own. Had we come to grief elsewhere, we could only have blamed ourselves; but here we are returned to Cooper's Creek, where we had every reason to look for provisions and clothing; and yet we have to die of starvation, in spite of the explicit instructions given by Mr. Burke—"That the depot party should await our return;" and the strong recommendation to the Committee "that we should be followed up by a party from Menindie."

About noon a change of wind took place, and it blew almost as hard from the west as it did previously from the north-east. A few cirrocumulus continued to pass over towards east.

Saturday, 22nd June, 1861.—Night cloudy and warm; every appearance of rain; thunder once or twice during the night; clouds moving in an easterly direction; lower atmosphere perfectly calm. There were a few drops of rain during the night, and in the morning, about nine A.M., there was every prospect of more rain until towards noon, when the sky cleared up for a time.

Mr. Burke and King out for nardoo; the former returned much fatigued. I am so weak to-day as to be unable to get on my feet.

Sunday, 23rd June, 1861.—All hands at home. I am so weak as to be incapable of crawling out of the mia-mia. King holds out well, but Mr. Burke finds himself weaker every day.

Monday, 24th June, 1861.—A fearful night. At about an hour before sunset, a southerly gale sprung up and continued throughout the greater portion of the night; the cold was intense, and it seemed as if one would be shrivelled up. Towards morning it fortunately lulled a little, but a strong cold breeze continued till near sunset, after which it became perfectly calm.

King went out for nardoo in spite of the wind, and came in with a good load; but he himself terribly cut up. He says that he can no longer keep up the work, and as he and Mr. Burke are both getting rapidly weaker, we have but a slight chance of anything but starvation, unless we can get hold of some blacks.

Tuesday, 25th June, 1861.—Night calm, clear and intensely cold, especially towards morning. Near daybreak, King reported seeing a moon in the east, with a haze of light

stretching up from it; he declared it to be quite as large as the moon, and not dim at the edges. I am so weak that any attempt to get a sight of it was out of the question; but I think it must have been Venus in the Zodiacal Light that he saw, with a corona around her.

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26th.—Mr. Burke and King remain at home cleaning and pounding seed; they are both getting weaker every day; the cold plays the deuce with us, from the small amount of clothing we have: my wardrobe consists of a wide-awake, a merino shirt, a regatta shirt without sleeves, the remains of a pair of flannel trousers, two pairs of socks in rags, and a waistcoat, of which I have managed to keep the pockets together. The others are no better off. Besides these, we have between us, for bedding, two small camel pads, some horse-hair, two or three little bits of rag, and pieces of oil-cloth saved from the fire.

The day turned out nice and warm.

Wednesday, 27th June, 1861.—Calm night; sky overcast with hazy cumulostratus clouds; an easterly breeze sprung up towards morning, making the air much colder. After sunrise there were indications of a clearing up of the sky, but it soon clouded in again, the upper current continuing to move in an easterly direction, whilst a breeze from the north and north-east blew pretty regularly throughout the day. Mr. Burke and King are preparing to go up the creek in search of the blacks; they will leave me some nardoo, wood, and water, with which I must do the best I can until they return. I *think this is almost our only chance*. I feel myself, if anything, rather better, but I cannot say stronger: the nardoo is beginning to agree better with me; but without some change I see little chance for any of us. They have both shown great hesitation and reluctance with regard to leaving me, and have repeatedly desired my candid opinion in the matter. I could only repeat, however, that I considered it our only chance, for I could not last long on the nardoo, even if a supply could be kept up.

Thursday, 28th June, 1861.—Cloudy, calm, and comparatively warm night, clouds almost stationary; in the morning a gentle breeze from east. Sky partially cleared up during the day, making it pleasantly warm and bright; it remained clear during the afternoon and evening, offering every prospect of a clear cold night.

Friday, 29th June, 1861.—Clear cold night, slight breeze from the east, day beautifully warm and pleasant. Mr. Burke suffers greatly from the cold and is getting extremely weak; he and King start to-morrow up the creek to look for the blacks; it is the only chance we have of being saved from starvation. I am weaker than ever, although I have a good appetite and relish the nardoo much; but it seems to give us no nutriment, and the birds here are so shy as not to be got at. Even if we got a good supply of fish, I doubt whether we could do much work on them and the nardoo alone. Nothing now but the greatest good luck can save any of us; and as for myself I may live four or five days if the weather continues warm. My pulse is at forty-eight, and very weak, and my legs and arms are nearly skin and bone. I can only look out, like Mr. Micawber,

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'for *something to turn* up;' starvation on nardoo is by no means very unpleasant, but for the weakness one feels, and the utter inability to move one's self; for as far as appetite is concerned, it gives the greatest satisfaction. Certainly fat and sugar would be more to one's taste; in fact those seem to me to be the great stand-by for one in this extraordinary continent: not that I mean to depreciate the farinaceous food; but the want of sugar and fat in all substances obtainable here is so great that they become almost valueless to us as articles of food, without the addition of something else.

(Signed) W.J. *Wills*.

CHAPTER 13.

King's Narrative.
Mr. Burke and King go in search of the Natives, as a last resource.
Death of Mr. Burke.
King returns and finds Mr. Wills dead in the Gunyah.
He falls in with the Natives and wanders about with them until
delivered by Mr. Howitt's party.
Extract from Mr. Howitt's Diary.
Extract from Mr. McKinlay's Diary.
My Son's last Letter to me, dated June 27th, 1861.
Strong Attachment between Mr. Burke and my Son.
King delivers the Letter and Watch intrusted to him.
With some difficulty I recover the Pistol.
King's Reception in Melbourne.
Sir H. Barkly's Letter to Sir Roderick Murchison.
Summary of Events and their Causes.

The latter portion of my poor son's journal was transcribed by Mr. Archer, Registrar-General of Victoria. We may believe that after writing the last paragraph to which he subscribed his name, he did not survive for many hours. The sequel, as far as any of its details can ever be made known to us, is best told in the unaffected language of

John King's narrative,

As delivered to the Royal commission.

Mr. Burke, Mr. Wills, and I, reached the depot at Cooper's Creek, on April 21st, about half-past seven in the evening, with two camels; all that remained of the six Mr. Burke took with him. All the provisions we then had consisted of one-and-a-half pound of dried meat. We found the party had gone the same day; and looking about for any mark they might have left, found the tree with '*dig*, Ap. 21.' Mr. Wills said the party had left for the Darling. We dug and found the plant of stores. Mr. Burke took the papers out of the

bottle, and then asked each of us whether we were able to proceed up the creek in pursuit of the party; we said not, and he then said that he thought it his duty to ask us, but that he himself was unable to do so, but that he had decided upon trying to make Mount Hopeless, as he had been assured by the Committee in Melbourne, that there was a cattle station within 150 miles of Cooper's Creek. Mr. Wills was not inclined to follow this plan, and wished to go down our old track; but at

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last gave in to Mr. Burke's wishes. I also wished to go down by our old track. We remained four or five days to recruit, making preparations to go down the creek by stages of four or five miles a day, and Mr. Burke placed a paper in the plant stating what were our plans. Travelling down the creek, we got some fish from the natives; and some distance down, one of the camels (Landa) got bogged, and although we remained there that day and part of the next, trying to dig him out, we found our strength insufficient to do so. The evening of the second day we shot him as he lay, and having cut off as much meat as we could, we lived on it while we stayed to dry the remainder. Throwing all the least necessary things away, we made one load for the remaining camel (Rajah), and each of us carried a swag of about twenty-five pounds. We were then tracing down the branches of the creek running south, and found that they ran out into earthy plains. We had understood that the creek along Gregory's track was continuous; and finding that all these creeks ran out into plains, Mr. Burke returned, our camel being completely knocked up. We then intended to give the camel a spell for a few days, and to make a new attempt to push on forty or fifty miles to the south, in the hope of striking the creek. During the time that the camel was being rested, Mr. Burke and Mr. Wills went in search of the natives, to endeavour to find out how the nardoo grew. Having found their camp, they obtained as much nardoo cake and fish as they could eat, but could not explain that they wished to be shown how to find the seed themselves: they returned on the third day bringing some fish and nardoo cake with them. On the following day the camel Rajah seemed very ill, and I told Mr. Burke I thought he could not linger out more than four days, and as on the same evening the poor brute was on the point of dying, Mr. Burke ordered him to be shot; I did so, and we cut him up with two broken knives and a lancet: we cured the meat and planted it, and Mr. Burke then made another attempt to find the nardoo, taking me with him: we went down the creek expecting to find the natives at the camp where they had been last seen, but found that they had left; and not knowing whether they had gone up or down the creek, we slept in their gunyahs that night, and on the following morning returned to Mr. Wills. The next day, Mr. Burke and I started up the creek, but could see nothing of them, and were three days away, when we returned and remained three days in our camp with Mr. Wills. We then made a plant of all the articles we could not carry with us, leaving five pounds of rice and a quantity of meat, and then followed up the creek to where there were some good native huts. We remained at that place a few days; and finding that our provisions were beginning to run short, Mr. Burke said, that we ought to do something, and that if we did not find the nardoo, we should starve, and that he intended to save a little dried meat and rice to carry us to

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Mount Hopeless. The three of us then came to the conclusion that it would be better to make a second attempt to reach Mount Hopeless, as we were then as strong as we were likely to be, our daily allowance being then reduced. Mr. Burke asked each of us whether we were willing to make another attempt to reach the South Australian settlements, and we decided on going; we took with us what remained of the provisions we had planted—two-and-a-half pounds of oatmeal, a small quantity of flour, and the dried meat: this, with powder and shot, and other small articles, made up our swags to thirty pounds each, and Mr. Burke carried one billy of water; and I another. We had not gone far before we came on a flat, where I saw a plant growing which I took to be clover, and on looking closer saw the seed, and called out that I had found the nardoo; they were very glad when I found it. We travelled three days, and struck a watercourse coming south from Cooper's Creek; we traced this as it branched out and re-formed in the plains, until we at last lost it in flat country; sandhills were in front of us, for which we made, and travelled all day but found no water. We were all greatly fatigued, as our rations now consisted of only one small Johnny cake and three sticks of dried meat daily. We camped that evening about four o'clock, intending to push next day until two o'clock P.M., and then, should we not find water, to return. We travelled and found no water, and the three of us sat down and rested for one hour, and then turned back. We all felt satisfied that had there been a few days' rain we could have got through: we were then, according to Mr. Wills's calculation, forty-five miles from the creek. We travelled, on the day we turned back, very late, and the following evening reached the nearest water at the creek. We gathered some nardoo and boiled the seeds, as we were unable to pound them. The following day we reached the main creek; and knowing where there was a fine waterhole and native gunyahs, we went there intending to save what remained of our flour and dried meat for the purpose of making another attempt to reach Mount Hopeless. On the following day Mr. Wills and I went out to gather nardoo, of which we obtained a supply sufficient for three days, and finding a pounding stone at the gunyahs, Mr. Burke and I pounded the seed, which was such slow work that we were compelled to use half flour and half nardoo. Mr. Burke and Mr. Wills then went down the creek for the remainder of the dried meat which we had planted; and we had now all our things with us, gathering nardoo and living the best way we could. Mr. Burke requested Mr. Wills to go up the creek as far as the depot, and to place a note in the plant there, stating that we were then living on the creek, the former note having stated that we were on our road to South Australia. He also was to bury there the field-books of the journey to the Gulf. Before starting he got three pounds of flour and four pounds of pounded nardoo, and about a pound of meat, as he expected to be absent about eight days. During his absence I gathered nardoo and pounded it, as Mr. Burke wished to lay in a supply in case of rain.

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A few days after Mr. Wills left, some natives came down the creek to fish at some waterholes near our camp. They were very civil to us at first and offered us some fish. On the second day they came again to fish, and Mr. Burke took down two bags, which they filled for him. On the third day they gave us one bag of fish, and afterwards all came to our camp. We used to keep our ammunition and other articles in one gunyah, and all three of us lived together in another. One of the natives took an oilcloth out of this gunyah, and Mr. Burke seeing him run away with it followed him with his revolver and fired over his head, and upon this the native dropt the oilcloth; while he was away, the other blacks invited me away to a waterhole to eat fish, but I declined to do so as Mr. Burke was absent, and a number of natives were about who would have taken all our things. When I refused, one took his boomerang and laid it over my shoulder, and then told me by signs that if I called out for Mr. Burke (as I was doing) that he would strike me; upon this I got them all in front of the gunyah and fired a revolver over their heads, but they did not seem at all afraid until I got out the gun, when they all ran away. Mr. Burke hearing the report came back, and we saw no more of them until late that night, when they came with some cooked fish and called out “white fellow.” Mr. Burke then went out with his revolver, and found a whole tribe coming down, all painted, and with fish in small nets carried by two men. Mr. Burke went to meet them, and they wished to surround him; but he knocked as many of the nets of fish out of their hands as he could, and shouted out to me to fire. I did so, and they ran off. We collected five small nets of cooked fish. The reason he would not accept the fish from them was, that he was afraid of being too friendly lest they should be always at our camp. We then lived on fish until Mr. Wills returned. He told us that he had met the natives soon after leaving us, and that they were very kind to him, and had given him plenty to eat both on going up and returning. He seemed to consider that he should have very little difficulty in living with them, and as their camp was close to ours he returned to them the same day and found them very hospitable and friendly, keeping him with them two days. They then made signs to him to be off: he came to us and narrated what had happened, but went back to them the following day, when they gave him his breakfast, but made signs for him to go away; he pretended not to understand them, and would not go, upon which they made signs that they were going up the creek, and that he had better go down: they packed up and left the camp, giving Mr. Wills a little nardoo to take to us.

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During his absence, while Mr. Burke was cooking some fish during a strong wind, the flames caught the gunyah and burned so rapidly that we were unable not only to put it out but to save any of our things, excepting one revolver and a gun. Mr. Wills having returned, it was decided to go up the creek and live with the natives if possible, as Mr. Wills thought we should have but little difficulty in obtaining provisions from them if we camped on the opposite side of the creek to them. He said he knew where they were gone, so we packed up and started. Coming to the gunyahs where we expected to have found them, we were disappointed, and seeing a nardoo field close by halted, intending to make it our camp. For some time we were employed gathering nardoo, and laying up a supply. Mr. Wills and I used to collect and carry home a bag each day, and Mr. Burke generally pounded sufficient for our dinner during our absence; but Mr. Wills found himself getting very weak, and was shortly unable to go out to gather nardoo as before, or even strong enough to pound it, so that in a few days he became almost helpless. I still continued gathering, and Mr. Burke now also began to feel very weak, and said he could be of very little use in pounding; I had now to gather and pound for all three of us. I continued to do this for a few days; but finding my strength rapidly failing, my legs being very weak and painful, I was unable to go out for several days, and we were compelled to consume six days' stock which we had laid by. Mr. Burke now proposed that I should gather as much as possible in three days, and that with this supply we should go in search of the natives—a plan which had been urged upon us by Mr. Wills as the only chance of saving him and ourselves as well, as he clearly saw that I was no longer able to collect sufficient for our wants. Having collected the seed as proposed, and having pounded sufficient to last Mr. Wills for eight days, and two days for ourselves, we placed water and firewood within his reach and started; before leaving him, however, Mr. Burke asked him whether he still wished it, as under no other circumstance would he leave him, and Mr. Wills again said that he looked on it as our only chance. He then gave Mr. Burke a letter and his watch for his father, and we buried the remainder of the field-books near the gunyah. Mr. Wills said that, in case of my surviving Mr. Burke, he hoped that I would carry out his last wishes, in giving the watch and letter to his father.

In travelling the first day, Mr. Burke seemed very weak, and complained of great pain in his legs and back. On the second day he seemed to be better, and said that he thought he was getting stronger, but on starting, did not go two miles before he said he could go no further. I persisted in his trying to go on, and managed to get him along several times, until I saw that he was almost knocked up, when he said he could not carry his swag, and threw all he

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had away. I also reduced mine, taking nothing but a gun and some powder and shot, and a small pouch and some matches. In starting again, we did not go far before Mr. Burke said we should halt for the night; but as the place was close to a large sheet of water, and exposed to the wind, I prevailed on him to go a little further, to the next reach of water, where we camped. We searched about and found a few small patches of nardoo, which I collected and pounded, and with a crow, which I shot, made a good evening's meal. From the time we halted Mr. Burke seemed to be getting worse, although he ate his supper; he said he felt convinced he could not last many hours, and gave me his watch, which he said belonged to the committee, and a pocket-book to give to Sir William Stawell, and in which he wrote some notes. He then said to me, "I hope you will remain with me here till I am quite dead—it is a comfort to know that some one is by; but, when I am dying, it is my wish that you should place the pistol in my right hand, and that you leave me unburied as I lie." That night he spoke very little, and the following morning I found him speechless, or nearly so, and about eight o'clock he expired. I remained a few hours there, but as I saw there was no use remaining longer I went up the creek in search of the natives. I felt very lonely, and at night usually slept in deserted wurleys belonging to the natives. Two days after leaving the spot where Mr. Burke died, I found some gunyahs where the natives had deposited a bag of nardoo, sufficient to last me a fortnight, and three bundles containing various articles. I also shot a crow that evening; but was in great dread that the natives would come and deprive me of the nardoo.

I remained there two days to recover my strength, and then returned to Mr. Wills. I took back three crows; but found him lying dead in his gunyah, and the natives had been there and had taken away some of his clothes. I buried the corpse with sand, and remained there some days, but finding that my stock of nardoo was running short, and as I was unable to gather it, I tracked the natives who had been to the camp by their footprints in the sand, and went some distance down the creek shooting crows and hawks on the road. The natives, hearing the report of the gun, came to meet me, and took me with them to their camp, giving me nardoo and fish: they took the birds I had shot and cooked them for me, and afterwards showed me a gunyah where I was to sleep with three of the single men. The following morning they commenced talking to me, and putting one finger on the ground and covering it with sand, at the same time pointing up the creek saying "white fellow," which I understood to mean that one white man was dead. From this I knew that they were the tribe who had taken Mr. Wills's clothes. They then asked me where the third white man was, and I also made the sign of putting two fingers on the ground and covering them with sand, at the same time pointing

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up the creek. They appeared to feel great compassion for me when they understood that I was alone on the creek, and gave me plenty to eat. After being four days with them, I saw that they were becoming tired of me, and they made signs that they were going up the creek and that I had better go downwards; but I pretended not to understand them. The same day they shifted camp, and I followed them, and on reaching their camp I shot some crows, which pleased them so much that they made me a breakwind in the centre of their camp, and came and sat round me until such time as the crows were cooked, when they assisted me to eat them. The same day one of the women, to whom I had given part of a crow, came and gave me a ball of nardoo, saying that she would give me more only she had such a sore arm that she was unable to pound. She showed me a sore on her arm, and the thought struck me that I would boil some water in the billy and wash her arm with a sponge. During the operation, the whole tribe sat round and were muttering one to another. Her husband sat down by her side, and she was crying all the time. After I had washed it, I touched it with some nitrate of silver, when she began to yell, and ran off, crying out “Mokow! Mokow!” (Fire! Fire!). From this time, she and her husband used to give me a small quantity of nardoo both night and morning, and whenever the tribe was about going on a fishing excursion he used to give me notice to go with them. They also used to assist me in making a wurley or breakwind whenever they shifted camp. I generally shot a crow or a hawk, and gave it to them in return for these little services. Every four or five days the tribe would surround me and ask whether I intended going up or down the creek; at last I made them understand that if they went up I should go up the creek, and if they went down I should also go down; and from this time they seemed to look upon me as one of themselves, and supplied me with fish and nardoo regularly: they were very anxious, however, to know where Mr. Burke lay, and one day when we were fishing in the waterholes close by, I took them to the spot. On seeing his remains, the whole party wept bitterly, and covered them with bushes. After this, they were much kinder to me than before, and I always told them that the white men would be here before two moons; and in the evening when they came with nardoo and fish they used to talk about the “white-fellows” coming, at the same time pointing to the moon. I also told them they would receive many presents, and they constantly asked me for tomahawks, called by them “Bomay Ko.” From this time to when the relief party arrived, a period of about a month, they treated me with uniform kindness, and looked upon me as one of themselves. The day on which I was released, one of the tribe who had been fishing came and told me that the “white fellows,” were coming, and the whole of the tribe who were then in camp sallied out in every direction to meet the party, while the man who had brought the news took me over the creek, where I shortly saw the party coming down.

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Brahe having quitted Cooper's Creek, as we have seen, on the 21st of April, retraced his steps, towards the Darling. On the 28th or 29th (there is a doubt about the exact date), he fell in with Wright's party at Bulloo, and placed himself under his orders. On the 29th, Dr. Becker died. On the 1st of May they left Bulloo, on their return to Menindie. On the 3rd, Wright makes the following entry in his diary:—

Friday, Koorliatto.—As I was anxious to ascertain, before finally leaving the country, whether Mr. Burke had visited the old depot at Cooper's Creek, between the present date and that on which he left on his advance northward, or whether the stores cached there had been disturbed by the natives, I started with Mr. Brahe and three horses for Cooper's Creek and reached the head waters of that creek on Sunday, the 5th May, in about seventy miles, steering about west-north-west. I did not find any water throughout the distance, but crossed several fine large gum creeks, and saw an immense number of native dogs.

Thursday, May 9th.—This morning I reached Cooper's Creek depot, and found no sign of Mr. Burke having visited the creek, or of the natives having disturbed the stores. I therefore retraced my steps to the depot that remained at Koorliatto.

. . .

On the examination of Wright and Brahe before the Royal Commission, it came out that they did not remain more than a quarter of an hour at Cooper's Creek depot, casting only a hurried glance around; and believing that no one had been there, never thought of opening the cache to identify the fact. Had they done so, they would have found the papers and letters deposited by Mr. Burke, and all would yet have been well. It is much to be regretted, and may excite some surprise, that Burke and my son, after opening and closing up the cache, affixed no *external* token of their having been there. But the apathy, stupidity, and carelessness of Wright and Brahe are really beyond comprehension. The effect of their miserably evasive and contradictory evidence, when under examination, can never be forgotten by those who were present. They, too, left no indications of their useless visit. It will be remembered that twenty-two days after, on the 30th of May, my son returned to Cooper's Creek for the last time, and deposited his journals and letters in the cache.

The following extracts from Mr. Howitt's diary relate the discovery of King, with the finding and interment of the remains of Mr. Burke and my son.

September 14th, 1861.—Latitude, 27 degrees 4 minutes; longitude 140 degrees 4 minutes.—Camped on a large waterhole, about a quarter of a mile below Mr. Burke's first camp, after leaving the depot at Cooper's Creek. We could see where the camels had been tied up, but found no marked tree. To-day I noticed in two or three places old

camel-droppings and tracks, where Mr. Brahe informed me he was certain their camels had never been, as they were watched every day near the depot and tied up at night. Mr. Burke's camels were led on the way down. It looked very much as if stray camels had been about during the last four months. The tracks seemed to me to be going up the creek, but the ground was too strong to be able to make sure.

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September 15th.—Camp 32.—Latitude, 27 degrees 44 minuts; longitude, 140 degrees 40 minutes.—On leaving this morning I went ahead with Sandy, to try and pick up Mr. Burke's track. At the lower end of a large waterhole, from which one or two horses had been feeding for some months, the tracks ran in all directions to and from the water, and even as recent as a week. At the same place I found the handle of a clasp-knife. From here struck out south for a short distance from the creek, and found a distinct camel's track and droppings on a native path: the footprint was about four months old and going east. I then sent the black boy to follow the creek, and struck across some sandy country in a bend on the north side. No tracks here; and coming on a native path leading my way, I followed it, as the most likely place to see any signs. In about four miles this led me to the lower end of a very large reach of water, and on the opposite side were numbers of native wurleys. I crossed at a neck of sand, and at a little distance again came on the track of a camel going up the creek; at the same time I found a native, who began to gesticulate in a very excited manner, and to point down the creek, bawling out, "Gow, gow!" as loud as he could. When I went towards him he ran away, and finding it impossible to get him to come to me, I turned back to follow a camel track, and to look after my party. The track was visible in sandy places, and was evidently the same I had seen for the last two days. I also found horse traces in places, but very old. Crossing the creek, I cut our track, and rode after the party. In doing so I came upon three pounds of tobacco, which had lain where I saw it for some time. This, together with a knife-handle, fresh horse tracks, and the camel track going eastward, puzzled me extremely, and led me into a hundred conjectures. At the lower end of the large reach of water before mentioned, I met Sandy and Frank looking for me, with the intelligence that King, the only survivor of Mr. Burke's party, had been found. A little further on I found the party halted, and immediately went across to the blacks' wurleys, where I found King sitting in a hut which the natives had made for him. He presented a melancholy appearance—wasted to a shadow, and hardly to be distinguished as a civilized being but by the remnants of clothes upon him. He seemed exceedingly weak, and I found it occasionally difficult to follow what he said. The natives were all gathered round, seated on the ground, looking with a most gratified and delighted expression.

September 18th.—Left camp this morning with Messrs. Brahe, Welsh, Wheeler, and King, to perform a melancholy duty, which has weighed on my mind ever since we have encamped here, and which I have only put off until King should be well enough to accompany us. We proceeded down the creek for seven miles, crossing a branch running to the southward, and followed a native track leading to that part of the creek where

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Mr. Burke, Mr. Wills, and King encamped after their unsuccessful attempt to reach Mount Hopeless and the northern settlements of South Australia, and where poor Wills died. We found the two gunyahs situated on a sand-bank between two waterholes and about a mile from the flat where they procured nardoo seed, on which they managed to exist so long. Poor Wills's remains we found lying in the wurley in which he died, and where King, after his return from seeking for the natives, had buried him with sand and rushes. We carefully collected the remains and interred them where they lay; and, not having a prayer-book, I read chapter 15 of 1 Corinthians, that we might at least feel a melancholy satisfaction in having shown the last respect to his remains. We heaped sand over the grave, and laid branches upon it, that the natives might understand by their own tokens not to disturb the last repose of a fellow-being. I cut the following inscription on a tree close by, to mark the spot:—

W.J.*Wills*,
XLV. YDS.
W.N.W.
A.H.

(W. J. *Wills*, 45 yards, west-north-west. A.H.)

The field-books, a note-book belonging to Mr. Burke, various small articles lying about, of no value in themselves, but now invested with a deep interest, from the circumstances connected with them, and some of the nardoo seed on which they had subsisted, with the small wooden trough in which it had been cleaned, I have now in my possession.

September 21st.—Finding that it would not be prudent for King to go out for two or three days, I could no longer defer making a search for the spot where Mr. Burke died, and with such directions as King could give, I went up to the creek this morning with Messrs. Brahe, Welsh, Wheeler, and Aitkin. We searched the creek upwards for eight miles, and at length, strange to say, found the remains of Mr. Burke lying among tall plants under a clump of box-trees, within two hundred yards of our last camp, and not thirty paces from our track. It was still more extraordinary that three or four of the party and the two black boys had been close to the spot without noticing it. The bones were entire, with the exception of the hands and feet; and the body had been removed from the spot where it first lay, and where the natives had placed branches over it, to about five paces' distance. I found the revolver which Mr. Burke held in his hand when he expired partly covered with leaves and earth, and corroded with rust. It was loaded and capped. We dug a grave close to the spot, and interred the remains wrapped in the union jack—the most fitting covering in which the bones of a brave but unfortunate man could take their last rest. On a box-tree, at the head of the grave, the following inscription is cut in a similar manner to the above:—

R.O'H.B. 21/9/61 A.H.

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September 23rd.—Went down the creek to-day in search of the natives . . .I could not think of leaving without showing them that we could appreciate and reward the kindness they had shown to Burke's party and particularly to King. . .Passed the first feeder of Strleczki's Creek, going to the southward, and at a large reach of water below, found the natives camped. They made a great commotion when we rode up, but seemed very friendly. I unpacked my blanket, and took out specimens of the things I intended giving them,—a tomahawk, a knife, beads, a looking-glass, comb, and flour and sugar. The tomahawk was the great object of attraction, after that the knife, but I think the looking-glass surprised them most. On seeing their faces reflected, some seemed dazzled, others opened their eyes like saucers, and made a rattling noise with their tongues expressive of wonder. We had quite a friendly palaver, and my watch amused them immensely. I made them understand that they were to bring the whole tribe up next morning to our camp to receive their presents, and we parted the best of friends.

September 24th.—This morning, about ten o'clock, our black friends appeared in a long procession, men, women, and children, or, as they here also call them, piccaninnies; and at a mile distance they commenced bawling at the top of their voices as usual. When collected altogether on a little flat, just below our camp, they must have numbered between thirty and forty, and the uproar was deafening. With the aid of King, I at last got them all seated before me, and distributed the presents—tomahawks, knives, necklaces, looking-glasses, combs—amongst them. I think no people were ever so happy before, and it was very interesting to see how they pointed out one or another whom they thought might be overlooked. The piccaninnies were brought forward by their parents to have red ribbon tied round their dirty little heads. An old woman, Carrawaw, who had been particularly kind to King, was loaded with things. I then divided fifty pounds of sugar between them, each one taking his share in a union-jack pocket-handkerchief, which they were very proud of. The sugar soon found its way into their mouths; the flour, fifty pounds of which I gave them, they at once called "white-fellow nardoo," and explained that they understood that these things were given to them for having fed King. Some old clothes were then put on some of the men and women, and the affair ended in several of our party and several of the black fellows having an impromptu "corroboree," to the intense delight of the natives, and I must say, very much to our amusement. They left, making signs expressive of friendship, carrying their presents with them. The men all wore a net girdle; and of the women some wore one of leaves, others of feathers. I feel confident that we have left the best impression behind us, and that the "white fellows," as they have already learned to call us, will be looked on henceforth as friends, and that, in case of emergency, any one will receive the kindest treatment at their hands.

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. . .

The South Australian Register, of the 26th of November, 1861, published at Adelaide, contained the following statement, which excited universal attention:—

The Government have just received from Mr. McKinlay, leader of the expedition sent from this colony in search of Burke, a diary of his proceedings up to the 26th of October last. This document contains a most singular narrative, being nothing less than an account of McKinlay's discovery of what he believes to be the remains of Burke's party, who he considers were some time since not only murdered, but partly eaten by the natives in the neighbourhood of Cooper's Creek. He, of course, had heard nothing of the result of Mr. Howitt's expedition, or of Mr. King having been found alive by that expedition. When, therefore, he came to a spot where there were graves containing the bones of white men, and where there were indications of a conflict having taken place with the natives, some of whom spoke of those white men having been killed and partly eaten, he came to the conclusion that he had ascertained all that was possible of Mr. Burke and his companions. He accordingly buried a letter, containing a statement to this effect, at a place near where the remains were found, and then after forwarding to Adelaide the despatch which has now reached us, proceeded westward upon some other business intrusted to him by the Government.

It seems fated that every chapter of the unfortunate Burke exploration shall be marked with unusual interest. The failures at the beginning of the enterprise, the tragedy of the explorers' deaths, and the remarkable rescue of the survivor King, are now followed by a subject of interest altogether new and mysterious. Certain as it is that McKinlay cannot have discovered the remains of Burke's party, as he so firmly believed he had, it is equally clear that some other white men must have met their deaths at the spot reached by him, and that those deaths were, to all appearance, the result of foul play. That the remains found by McKinlay cannot have been those of Burke and Wills, disinterred, removed, and mangled after death, may be inferred from a number of circumstances detailed by him in the extracts which we have given from his diary. It will be seen that marks of violence were found on the remains, that there were indications of white men having camped in the neighbourhood (which was far distant from any camp of Burke's), that one of the natives bore marks of having been engaged in a conflict where pistols were used, and that, lastly, the natives themselves said the bones were those of white men who had been murdered and eaten. All this would probably appear conclusive to Mr. McKinlay that he had ascertained the fate of the explorers whom he had been in search of. He was prepared for such a result, and there were many circumstances favourable to its probability. He saw even, as he believed, positive indications of camels having been at the

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place where he found the graves; and yet, it will be seen, he speaks of appearances indicating that the remains were buried a long time ago, and states that some of the human hair discovered was in a state of decay. This certainly would not accord with the supposition of the remains being those of Burke. But it is useless to seek an explanation of this strange matter from the facts at present before us. It is a mystery which will have further to be inquired into, and which Mr. McKinlay himself will perhaps be able to throw some light upon when he reviews all the particulars of the discovery, with the knowledge before him that Burke and his companions were not killed by the natives, but died from starvation, and were buried at places far distant from the spot where these new remains were discovered.

. . .

The following extract from McKinlay's diary details the incidents here spoken of more minutely.

October 21st.—Up in good time. Before starting for the grave went round the lake, taking Mr. Hodgkinson with me, to see if natives were really on the lake, as I did not intend saddling the camels to-day if there were no natives here, intending to leave our camp unprotected—rather unwise, but being so short of hands could not help it, the grave being much out of sight. Found no natives round the lake, nor any very recent traces, saving that some of the trees were still burning that they (when here last) had lighted. We started at once for the grave, taking a canteen of water with us and all the arms. On arrival removed the ground carefully, and close to the top of the earth found the body of a European enveloped in a flannel shirt with short sleeves—a piece of the breast of which I have taken—the flesh, I may say, completely cleared from the bones, and very little hair but what must have been decomposed; what little there was, I have taken. Description of body: Skull marked with slight sabre cuts, apparently two in number—one immediately over the left eye, the other on the right temple, inclining over right ear, more deep than the left; decayed teeth existed in both sides of lower jaw and right of upper; the other teeth were entire and sound. In the lower jaw were two teeth—-one on each side (four between in front) rather projecting, as is sometimes called in the upper jaw "back teeth." I have measured the bones of the thigh and leg as well as the arm with a cord, not having any other method of doing it; gathered all the bones together and buried them again, cutting a lot of boughs and other wood and putting over top of the earth. Body lies head south, feet north, lying on face, head severed from body. On a small tree immediately south we marked "MK, 21st Oct., 61." Immediately this was over we questioned the native further on the subject of his death. He says he was killed by a stroke from what the natives call a sword (an instrument of semicircular form, five to eight feet long, and very formidable). He showed

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us where the whites had been attacked when encamped. We saw lots of fish-bones, but no evidence there on the trees to suppose whites had been there. They had certainly chosen a very bad camp, in the centre of a box scrub, with native huts within 150 to 200 yards of them. On further examination we found the dung of camels and horse or horses evidently tied up a long time ago. Between that and the grave we found another grave, evidently dug with a spade or shovel, and a lot of human hair of two colours, that had become decomposed in the skin of the skull and fallen off in flakes, some of which I have also taken. I fancy they must all have been murdered here. Dug out the new-found grave with a stick, the only instrument we had, but found no remains of bodies, save one little bone. The black accounted for this in this manner—he says they had eaten them. Found in an old fireplace immediately adjoining what appeared to be bones very well burnt, but not in any quantity. In and about the last grave named, a piece of light blue tweed and fragments of paper, and small pieces of a Nautical Almanac were found, and an exploded Eley's cartridge; no appearance on any of the trees of bullet marks as if a struggle had taken place. On a further examination of the blacks' camp where the pint pot was found, there was also found a tin canteen similar to what is used for keeping naphtha in, or some such stuff, both of which we keep. The natives say that any memos the whites had are back on the last camp we were at on the lake with the natives, as well as the iron-work of saddles, *etc*., which on our return we mean to endeavour to recover, if the blacks can be found. It may be rash, but there is necessity for it. Intend before returning to have a further search.

. . .

The next day they dug up a quantity of baked horsehair, which had apparently been used for saddle stuffing. The hostility displayed by the blacks compelled Mr. McKinlay and his party to fire upon them. The mystery attached to the remains here spoken of has yet to be cleared up. The idea at first entertained that they were those of Gray is not tenable. A glance at the map will show that Gray died and was buried far away to the north-east of McKinlay's track.

On the day of King's arrival in Melbourne, my son's watch, a gold chronometer, which he had used to calculate the longitudes by, was duly delivered to me in presence of the Governor; also his last letter, distinctly traced in a firm hand on a ruled page torn from some book. It was not sealed, but neatly wrapped in a loose cover. The relic is invaluable.

Mr. *Wills's last letter to his father*. *Brought down by King*.

Cooper's Creek, 27 June, 1861.

My dear father,

These are probably the last lines you will ever get from me. We are on the point of starvation, not so much from absolute want of food, but from the want of nutriment in what we can get.

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Our position, although more provoking, is probably not near so disagreeable as that of poor Harry* and his companions.

[* Footnote: Harry, his cousin, Lieutenant Le Vescompte, who perished with Sir John Franklin.]

We have had very good luck, and made a most successful trip to Carpentaria, and back to where we had every right to consider ourselves safe, having left a depot here consisting of four men, twelve horses, and six camels. They had provisions enough to have lasted them twelve months with proper economy, and we had also every right to expect that we should have been immediately followed up from Menindie by another party with additional provisions and every necessary for forming a permanent depot at Cooper's Creek. The party we left here had special instructions not to leave until our return, *unless from absolute necessity*. We left the creek with nominally three months' supply, but they were reckoned at little over the rate of half rations. We calculated on having to eat some of the camels. By the greatest good luck, at every turn, we crossed to the gulf, through a good deal of fine country, almost in a straight line from here. On the other side the camels suffered considerably from wet; we had to kill and jerk one soon after starting back. We had now been out a little more than two months, and found it necessary to reduce the rations considerably; and this began to tell on all hands, but I felt it by far less than any of the others. The great scarcity and shyness of game, and our forced marches, prevented our supplying the deficiency from external sources to any great extent; but we never could have held out but for the crows and hawks, and the portulac. The latter is an excellent vegetable, and I believe secured our return to this place. We got back here in four months and four days, and found the party had left the Creek the same day, and we were not in a fit state to follow them.

I find I must close this, that it may be planted; but I will write some more, although it has not so good a chance of reaching you as this. You have great claims on the committee for their neglect. I leave you in sole charge of what is coming to me. The whole of my money I desire to leave to my sisters; other matters I pass over for the present. Adieu, my dear Father. Love to Tom. [Footnote: Tom, his brother in Melbourne.]

W.J. *Wills*.

I think to live about four or five days. My spirits are excellent.

. . .

The remark that I had great claims on the committee was inserted in the letter, as King informed me, in consequence of Mr. Burke observing, "Wills, be sure to say something to that effect." The letter was read to Burke and King by my son, as soon as he had concluded it. On King's examination, he was questioned as follows, on this point:

Question 1068. Do you see that letter—[pointing to the letter written by Mr. Wills to his father]?—That is the letter Mr. Wills read.

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1069. Did he read it out for the purpose of being corrected if there was any statement in it that was not quite correct?—I believe the reason was, in case the letter should be found, that he should not say anything to our disadvantage, mine or Mr. Burke's; he thought that we would see it was the truth and nothing but the truth.—[Watch produced] —That is the watch Mr. Wills desired the survivor to give to his father, which I have done.

1070. There was a pocket-book, was there not?—Yes, which Mr. Burke gave me on the evening before his death, requesting me to deliver it to Sir William Stawell, but under any circumstances I was not to deliver it to any other gentleman of the committee. I delivered it to Sir William Stawell this morning.

1071. Did you know anything of the nature of the contents of it? —No, except what Mr. Burke read to me affecting myself, and which Sir William Stawell has read to me this morning. The same book I showed to Mr. Howitt, telling him that it was Mr. Burke's desire that I should deliver it to Sir William Stawell himself. Mr. Burke also gave me his watch, and told me it was the property of the committee; the same I delivered to Mr. Howitt.

1072. You kept possession of the book?—Yes, and gave it over to Sir William Stawell this morning.

1073. How did you preserve all those things while with the blacks? —I had a small canvas pouch, which I always carried about with me on my person.

1074. Did they ever covet anything?—Yes, they used often to make me show them the contents of it.

. . .

The letter and watch being handed to Mr. Burke, my son then lent him his pistol, the only defence he could have retained against hostile attack, and lying on the bare ground, resigned to his fate, urgently requested them to leave him. Imagination, with all the aid of poetical fancy, can conceive no position to exceed this in utter desolation. It has been said, and many may think, they ought not to have separated. No consideration, or argument, should have induced his two companions to abandon him. It was indeed a trying alternative, but falling in with the blacks appeared to be the only chance of rescue for the whole party; and had this fortunately happened before the sudden and total prostration of Burke, there can be no doubt they would have hastened immediately to bring the same succour to my son. King informed me that Mr. Burke was dreadfully distressed, and that he had great difficulty in persuading him to go on. At times he would stop and exclaim, "How can I leave him, that dear, good fellow?" He was usually in the habit of addressing him as "My dear boy," for although twenty-seven, and

wearing a beard, he had such a youthful appearance that few would have taken him for more than twenty when he left Melbourne.

During the whole journey, and through all their trials, King said that not an approach to altercation, or a word of difference, ever took place between my poor boy and his leader. When I claimed the pistol above alluded to, it was considered of too much consequence to be surrendered without minute investigation. To my first application I received the following diplomatic reply:

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Exploration committee,

Royal Society of Victoria,

Victoria Street, Melbourne, January 28th, 1862.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that, at a committee meeting held 27th instant, the Honourable Dr. Wilkie in the chair, the subject of delivering the “Burke” pistol to you, which you claim as your late son’s property, was discussed. The report of the Assistant-Secretary was to the effect that, as the tradesmen who supplied the fire-arms did not register the numbers, the identity of this particular pistol could not be traced as one supplied to the expedition; but that as there were several “Colt’s” revolvers furnished, there is room for doubt as to whether this may not be one of them.

As the committee merely wishes to be fully satisfied of the validity of your claim before parting with such a melancholy and interesting relic, instructions have been given to apply to Mr. King for any information he may be able to supply, to guide the committee to a right decision.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your most obedient servant,

John Macadam, M.D.,

Hon. Secretary.

W. *Wills*, ESQ. M.D.

. . .

Finally, and with much trouble, after I know not how many meetings, and what amount of discussion, the pistol was handed over to me, and is now in my possession. So much for my claims on the Committee, who are the only parties acquainted with the merits of my poor son from whom I have received anything like coldness or offence. On the day of King’s arrival, as the mail was leaving for England, I was anxious to obtain at once the letter which I knew was in his possession. My earnestness interrupted an arrangement they had made for receiving him, and my unseasonable importunity, as it was considered, drew on me something bearing a close resemblance to a vote of censure.

King, who although only a common soldier, has a heart and feelings which would do no dishonour to a gentleman of education, would have preferred coming into Melbourne,

after the loss of his officers, at least unostentatiously, if not in sackcloth and ashes. But he was greeted with a howling and shouting more suitable to the reception of some notorious bush-ranger recently captured. Many, in common with myself, considered the ovation out of place and character; while others, and apparently the more numerous party, were of a different opinion. Perhaps it was well meant, and chacun a son gout. Public enthusiasm is not always gaugeable by the standard of reason or good taste. The following account was printed:—

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From about five o'clock, groups of persons anxious to welcome back the first who had crossed and re-crossed the Australian continent began to pour into the station, and its vicinity was so crowded with cars and spectators that it was impossible to reach the entrance. The arrival of the train was hailed with vociferous cheering. The carriage in which King was a passenger was at once recognized by its being decorated with flags. Such was the "rush" to see King that it was some time before the porters could reach the carriage door, and when they had reached it they experienced considerable difficulty in getting the door opened. Dr. Gilbee, who was accompanied by Dr. Macadam, was in attendance with his private carriage to convey King as quietly as possible to the Royal Institute, where the Exploration Committee and a numerous assemblage of ladies and gentlemen were in waiting to see him. Those gentlemen, however, were unable to reach the carriage; and Dr. Wills, who was fortunately opposite the door, seeing that it was impossible for the arrangements to be carried out, immediately conveyed King to an open car and drove off. Dr. Gillbee and Dr. Macadam, with King's sister, immediately followed. The cars were then rushed; and cars, buggies, horses, and pedestrians raced along Collins Street to William Street, and thence to Government House. A great many were, of course, disappointed by this alteration, as it was generally expected that King would be received by His Excellency and the Committee at the Royal Institute, and therefore drove along the streets that were likely to facilitate their reaching the institution before King's arrival. On reaching Government House, King was assisted up stairs, for though he looked very healthy and robust; he was scarcely able to stand. He was taken into the room adjoining the Chief Secretary's office, where he was shortly afterwards joined by his sister. Their meeting was, of course, strictly private. In a few minutes the approaches to Government House, the lobbies, stairs, and landing were impassably crowded, so that it was necessary for the police to clear a passage for His Excellency from his own office to that of the Chief Secretary. His Excellency, accompanied by Captain Timins, entered the Chief Secretary's office, and after a short conversation with Welch, who accompanied King to town, went into the anteroom; accompanied by Captain Timins, and followed by Dr. Wills, Welch, and Brahe. When His Excellency entered the room, King and his sister respectfully stood up, but His Excellency requested them to be seated, as King was evidently unable to stand on his feet. The excitement was almost too much for the poor fellow, and it was thought advisable to get him away as speedily and as privately as possible to St. Kilda, where his sister resides.

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A few days afterwards, at a meeting of the Exploration Committee, a series of questions, more or less pertinent to the circumstances under which he appeared before them, were personally put to him by members of the committee, and which he answered calmly, displaying considerable intelligence and precision of mind in his replies to the rather discursive examination he was subjected to. The Herald, in reference to the interview, had the following observations: —John King was an object of great and curious interest. Having come out of such great tribulation—having fasted for so many days in the desert—having been wasted by privations till he became so near death that for Death to have overcome him would have been no triumph—he was regarded with feelings similar to those which made the people say of Dante, "There goes the man who has been in Hades." Though only a subordinate, he is a man possessing, we should say—or, indeed, as we know—good leading qualities, the attributes of a hero; and though his intellectual powers have not been highly cultivated, he evidently possesses no small share of intelligence. A man who would mind his own business, and not given to ask very many questions, which as things have turned out is to be regretted; but with a memory capable of retaining everything that came within his knowledge. His coolness rather took aback those members of the committee, yesterday, who seemed to have come loaded to the muzzle with questions, which they proceeded to fire off indiscriminately. He seemed to know better than those inquisitors the way in which his examination should be conducted; that the inquiry had a more important object than gratifying sheer curiosity; and when he goes before the Royal Commission next Thursday they will find him a very good witness. The deepest sympathy was expressed by the meeting, and it will be most sincerely felt by every soul to whom his extraordinary history will become known.

The Exploration Committee held a private meeting on the 29th, at which King was present. He there stated that the tide rose and fell six inches at the part of the river where he was left by Messrs. Burke and Wills when they proceeded on foot with the object of discovering the sea. The gallantry of King is amply testified to by some memoranda in the handwriting of poor Burke—the last he ever wrote. The documents were contained in a pocket-book which the dying explorer committed to the care of the survivor, charging him to deliver it into the hands of Sir William Stawell. This last desire of his unfortunate commander was most scrupulously observed by King. The manuscript ran as follows:—

I hope that we shall be done justice to. We have fulfilled our task, but we have been abandoned. We have not been followed up as we expected, and the depot party abandoned their post.

R. O'HARA *Burke*.

Cooper's Creek, June 26th.

King has behaved nobly. I hope that he will be properly cared for.
He comes up the creek in accordance with my request.

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R. O'HARA *Burke*.

Cooper's Creek, June 28th.

Again, the next entry says:—

King has behaved nobly. He has stayed with me to the last, and placed the pistol in my hand, leaving me lying on the surface as I wished.

R. O'H. *Burke*.

Cooper's Creek, June 28th.

. . .

The following sketch of the journey across the continent of Australia, by Messrs. Burke and Wills, in a letter from the Governor of Victoria, Sir Henry Barclay, to Sir Roderick Murchison, was read before the Royal Geographical Society in London on the 15th of January, 1862, and was ordered to be printed in their proceedings. The letter also appeared in the Times of the 15th of January:—

My dear sir Roderick,

Knowing the interest you have ever taken in the exploration of the interior of Australia, and that you still occupy the post of Vice-President of the Royal Geographical Society, it was my intention to address you fully by the present mail-steamer respecting the Victorian expedition under Burke and Wills, which you will learn has achieved the honour of first crossing from sea to sea, by a route far distant and utterly distinct from that of McDouall Stuart, from whose great fame as an explorer I have not the least desire to detract.

I wished, indeed, as the expedition had cost the gallant leaders of it their lives, to narrate in a connected form its design and history from the very commencement, in order that it might serve the Geographical Society as a record, and prevent any misconception of the causes which have marred its triumphant result.

I find, however, that the pressure of other business will prevent my carrying out this design, and I must content myself therefore with forwarding the newspapers which contain the best report of what has recently come to light, together with the diaries of Burke and Wills, as published in a pamphlet form, and lastly with a map of Australia, on which our Surveyor-General has added to other recent explorations, a reduced tracing of the track of the expedition, from the depot on Cooper's Creek to the Gulf of Carpentaria, where it struck, as would appear, the Flinders River, and not the Albert, as the explorers supposed.

I would refer you, at the same time, for precise details of the whole enterprise to my several despatches of 21st of August, 1860; 20th of July, and 20th of November, 1861; which I am confident the Duke of Newcastle will put at your disposal for the information of the Geographical Society, if applied to.

On one account I am not sorry to be obliged to postpone a detailed communication on the subject, for it would be difficult to tell the sad story of the sufferings and death of the brave men who returned to the spot where they expected to find friends and ample store of provisions and clothing, only to find the depot abandoned, and to perish miserably in default of assistance, without at least implying blame in some quarter or other; and, as a good deal is still enveloped in mystery, and I have appointed a commission of inquiry to take evidence and report thereupon, it would obviously be improper in me to anticipate their conclusion.

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The sole survivor of the party who crossed the continent, John King, once, I believe, a soldier in India, is expected to reach Melbourne to-night; and with the aid of his recollections of the journey, the Surveyor-General hopes to be enabled to add to the chart on a large scale, which he is constructing from Mr. Wills's field books, fuller particulars as to the nature of the country; as well as to supply some blanks which were evidently left to be filled in afterwards, especially in regard to the route back, which, from the determination at our observatory of one of his earlier camps, from an observation of one of the planets which is recorded, seems to have been considerably to the eastward of the course pursued in going, though this is not expressly so stated.

I need hardly add that as soon as Mr. Ligar finishes this chart I will send you copies of it, as also the report of the commission of inquiry.

The country towards Carpentaria or Burke's Land—as I hope it will be called—seems so good that there can be little doubt of the formation, at no distant date, of a colony on the shores of that estuary;—a project which you have long, I know, had at heart; and before we recall the several parties sent out for the relief of the missing expedition, I trust we shall be able so far to complete the task as to connect the settled country, by Mr. Howitt's aid, with Burke's Land by the best possible route; and, by means of the party sent by sea in the Victoria steamer, to add greatly to our knowledge of the Gulf, and of the embouchures of the different rivers falling into it.

Believe me ever,

My dear Sir Roderick,

Yours very truly,

Henry Barkly.

Government Offices, Melbourne, 25th November, 1861.

P.S.—After I had finished my letter, I received a memorandum from the Surveyor-General respecting Mr. Wills's astronomical observations, which is of so much importance that I enclose it for your information, not having time to get a copy made.

H.B.

. . .

It has been remarked, with some disposition to draw uncharitable conclusions therefrom, that no religious expressions, or any specific references to that all-important subject, are to be found in the field-books and journals that have been given to the public. On this point, King said, in reply to Question 1714, "I wish to state, with regard to there being no particular tokens of religion recorded in any part of the diaries, that we

each had our Bible and Prayer-book, and occasionally read them going and coming back; and also the evening before the death of Mr. Burke, I am happy to say, he prayed to God for forgiveness for the past, and died happy, a sincere Christian.”

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The curtain drops here on the history of the great Victorian Exploring Expedition, and little more remains to be told of its results or shortcomings. The continent was crossed, the Gulf reached, and the road indicated by the hardy pioneers, which their successors will find it comparatively easy to level and macadamize. Already the stimulant of the Burke and Wills catastrophe has called into active exercise the successive expeditions and discoveries of Howitt, Norman, Walker, Landsborough, and McKinlay. Others will rapidly follow, with the characteristic energy and perseverance of the Saxon race. Now that time has, to a certain extent, allayed the poignant grief of those who are most nearly and dearly interested in the fate of the original explorers; when first impulses have cooled down, and the excitement of personal feelings has given way before unquestionable evidence, we may safely ascribe, as far as human agencies are concerned, the comparative failure of the enterprise to the following specific causes:—

1. The double mistake on the part of the leader, of dividing and subdividing his forces at Menindie and Cooper's Creek;

2. The utter unfitness of Wright for the position in which he was placed;

3. The abandonment by Brahe of the depot at Cooper's Creek;

4. The resolve of the surviving explorers to attempt the route by Mount Hopeless, on their homeward journey;

And lastly, to the dilatory inefficiency of the Committee, in not hurrying forward reliefs without a moment's delay, as the state of circumstances became gradually known to them.

It is not so easy to estimate the relative quantity of blame which ought justly to attach to all who are implicated. Each will endeavour to convince himself that his own share is light, and that the weight of the burden should fall on the shoulders of some one else. Meanwhile, there remain for the heroic men who died in harness without a murmur in the unflinching exercise of their duty, an undying name, a public funeral, and a national monument; the unavailing sympathy and respect which rear an obelisk instead of bestowing a ribbon or a pension; recorded honours to the unconscious dead, in place of encouraging rewards to the triumphant living. A reverse of the picture, had it been permitted, might have been more agreeable; but the lesson intended to be conveyed, and the advantages to be derived from studying it, would have been far less salutary and profitable.

CHAPTER 14.

Letters of sympathy and condolence; from Sir Henry Barkly; Major Egerton Warburton; A.J. Baker, Esquire; P.A. Jennings, Esquire;

Dr. Mueller; The Council of Ballaarat East; Robert Watson, Esquire; John Lavington Evans, Esquire
Meeting at Totnes.
Resolution to erect a Monument to Mr. Wills.
Proceedings in the Royal Geographical Society of London.
Letter from Sir Roderick Murchison to Dr. Wills.
Dr. Wills's Reply.
The Lost Explorers, a poetical tribute.
Concluding Observations.

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As soon as my son's death became publicly known, and there could no longer be a doubt on the subject, letters of condolence and sympathy poured in upon me from many quarters. From these I select a few as indicating the general impression produced by his untimely fate, and the estimation in which he was held by those who were personally acquainted with him. The afflicting event was communicated to his mother in Totnes, Devon, by a telegram a fortnight before the regular mail, accompanied by the following letter from Sir Henry Barkly, Governor of Victoria:—

Government Office, Melbourne, November 26th, 1861.

Dear madam,

Though you will hear of the bereavement which has befallen you inthe loss of your gallant son from those that are near and dear both to you and to himself, I cannot refrain, in the position I have the honour to hold, from adding my assurance of the sympathy of the entire community with your grief, and the universal admiration of his abilities as displayed throughout the expedition, and which his noble and heroic conduct to the last hour of his life have inspired.

You may rely upon it that the name of William John Wills will go down to posterity, both at home and in this colony, amongst the brightest of those who have sacrificed their lives for the advancement of scientific knowledge and the good of their fellow-creatures.

Believe me, dear Madam,

Yours very respectfully,

(Signed) *Henry Barkly*,

Governor of Victoria.

Mrs. Wills, Totnes, Devon.

. . .

Sir Henry also moved in the committee and the motion was carried nemine contradicente, that from the important part Mr. Wills had taken, the expedition should be called, "The Burke and Wills exploring Expedition." Some spiteful remarks by opposite partisans were made in the Melbourne Argus on this very natural and complimentary resolution. An advocate on one side said, "If the expedition had failed would it have been called the Burke and Wills Expedition?—We opine not." To which another replied the following day, in the same columns, "Would the expedition have succeeded if Wills had not been there?—We opine not." None would have regretted these invidious observations more than the generous, free-hearted Burke, and my gallant son, had they lived to see them. They had no petty jealousies. Each knew his position, and they

acted throughout with unswerving confidence as friends as well as associated explorers.

It was asserted by Burke's enemies that he was violent, and not having sufficient command over himself, was therefore unfitted to command others. This conclusion, sound enough in the abstract, is more easily made than proved, and in the present instance receives direct contradiction from the undeviating cordiality between the leader and his second. In the cases of Landells and Dr. Beckler, universal opinion pronounced Burke to be in the right.

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. . .

From Major Egerton Warburton.

Adelaide.

My dear Dr. *Wills*,

Vain as must be any consolation that can be offered to you under the circumstances of almost unparalleled distress attending the loss of your son, I cannot but avail myself of our acquaintanceship to express my most humble and hearty sympathy in the terrible catastrophe.

Anger and horror combine to drive us away from the contemplation of the causes of this tragic termination of a feat of heroism and endurance such as has been rarely before achieved; and we turn with deep sorrow and admiration to dwell upon that noble display of faithful, patient courage which calmly awaited an early and unbefriended grave on the spot where the foot-prints of triumph were reasonably to have been expected.

We all share in your grief; and would fain hope that this may somewhat lessen its bitterness to you; but it must be a source of pride and comfort to you to remember that your son died having *done* his duty to his country and his companions. More than this no man can do, live he ever so long, and few there are who do so much.

Permit me to subscribe myself a deep sympathiser with you in your affliction,

J. *Egerton Warburton*.

The Major had been a candidate for the office of leader, but his conditions as to his second were objected to. The next letter is from a gentleman who had accompanied Major Warburton as second on some explorations from Adelaide. At Totnes I knew him when a boy.

. . .

Dorset Terrace, Adelaide.

My dear sir,

I truly sympathize with you in the loss you have met with in so heroic and superb a fellow as your son. I cannot read his journals without wishing that I had been with him, for his qualities as an explorer were perfect in my humble opinion. The news of his sad death has been a great blow to all of us, and we sincerely feel for you in your affliction. But though dead in the flesh, the brave spirit of your son will stand emblazoned on the

pages of our country's history as one of those heroes who have died for the cause in which he was engaged, in the flush of victory, cheerfully fulfilling his duties to the last.

I cannot believe that Wright and Brahe ever returned to Cooper's Creek. If they had done so a stockman so well experienced in tracking as Wright must be, would have detected the presence of signs that might escape the eye of one less practised; for it is ascertained now that the stores had been removed about the time that Brahe left, and before, as they say, they returned in company.

I also believe that, had Burke taken his companions' advice, and followed down Brahe's tracks, they would have been saved, for it is well known to all travellers that animals will feel cheered in following the footsteps of their late associates; but to attempt to force his party to explore new country when a well-known route was open to him was little short of madness. I have not patience to criticize Wright and Brahe's conduct. If Brahe had even left more stores, clothing especially, we should have had the pleasure of welcoming the explorers home.

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But God's wise providence knows what is best, and in saying, His will be done, I pray that He may comfort you and yours in this great bereavement. Mrs. B. and my daughter unite with me in kindest regards, and believe me to be as ever,

My dear sir,

Your sincere friend,

Arthur John Baker.

. . .

From P.A. *Jennings*, *esquire*, *st*. *Arnaud*, *Victoria*.

St. Arnaud, December 15th, 1861.

My dear sir,

I did not like to intrude upon your sorrow before; but I feel desirous of now testifying the sympathy of myself and friends at St. Arnaud with you under your heavy affliction. I had the pleasure of forming an intimacy with your lamented and gallant son during his stay here; an intimacy which soon ripened into a true friendship.

It was in the year 1858, from March to July, that your son stopped in this vicinity, as the promoter of the survey of this town. I was thrown much into his company, and soon learned to appreciate his amiable and noble disposition. My mother and sisters, who also found pleasure in his society, had the deepest regard and admiration for him; and the expedition in which he was engaged therefore possessed an unusual interest for us.

I assure you I can hardly find words to express our feelings, at the thought of his fate, and the base desertion of Burke and himself by those who should have endeavoured to sustain them. I had the most profound confidence in your son's ability as an explorer, knowing well the varied nature of his scientific attainments, his great practical knowledge of bush life, and the clear common sense which was his leading characteristic. Many a time we have talked about him; and every time we mentioned his name the same feeling of assurance in his safe return was always expressed, even to the last. Such was our confidence in him. A week before the sad tidings of his death reached Melbourne, I had a conversation with Mr. Byerly, whom I then met accidentally, and who had just returned from Queensland. Our conversation reverted to your son, and Mr. Byerly coincided with me in my faith in him, but remarked that all his exertions could be of little avail if not properly supported. Mr. Byerly had at first expressed a fear that the party *had been allowed to perish* through the remissness of those whose duty it should have been to use every possible means to rescue them in the proper time. His words were, unfortunately, prophetic.

I know, my dear sir, that almost anything like consolation for you now must come from other than man, but I could not help saying these few words to you; and I know that no persons unconnected by blood with your family, and enjoying such brief personal acquaintance with your son as myself; and mother and sisters, can be more sincerely or deeply moved at the harrowing record of his untimely fate. Indeed, it has cast a gloom over every one; and the hardest heart could not but be affected by such a noble spectacle as the last days of his glorious life present.

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It is proposed here to erect an obelisk to his memory, and I am about to get one of the streets named after him. I cannot commit myself to write further on the subject, but will conclude by subscribing myself,

Yours, ever faithfully,

P.A. *Jennings*.

W. Wills, Esquire, M.D.

. . .

From Dr. *Mueller*.

December 11th, 1861.

My dear doctor,

His Excellency informed me by note last night that Mr. Heales thinks to leave the consideration of everything connected with the great and glorious enterprise of your son and Mr. Burke, to the Commission, which Mr. Heales will probably have installed before leaving office.

His Excellency adds, that every thought shall be given, that the family who immortalized their name by the work of your lamented son shall not be forgotten. I hope to be in town to-morrow, and will do myself the pleasure of calling on you.

Very regardfully yours,

FERD. *Mueller*.

. . .

The Melbourne Advertiser, of December the 4th, 1861, contained the following leading paragraph:

It is the intention of Mr. O'Shanassy to place a sum of 5000 pounds on the Estimates towards the erection of a national monument to Burke and Wills, and it is believed a like amount will be raised by public subscription in various parts of the colony; so that the aggregate amount will enable us to raise a memorial worthy of Victoria, and worthy of the heroes whom we design to honour. This is as it should be. Burke and Wills achieved a splendid exploit: their lives were the forfeit of their daring; and we owe it to their reputation, as well as to our own character, to preserve a durable record of their great achievement, and to signalize to after-ages our admiration of its simple grandeur, and our gratitude to the brave men who accomplished it. A time will come when a belt

of settlements will connect the shores of Port Phillip with those of the Gulf of Carpentaria; when, on the banks of the Albert or of the Flinders, a populous city will arise, and will constitute the entrepot of our commerce with the Indies; and when beaten roads will traverse the interior, and a line of electric telegraph will bisect the continent. The happy valley of Prince Rasselas was not more verdant or more fertile than much of the country passed through by the explorers, whose loss we deplore; and it is certain that these beautiful solitudes will be rapidly occupied by the flocks and herds of the squatter. Agricultural settlements will follow; towns and villages will be established, gold-fields probably discovered, and waves of population will overflow and will fertilize vast tracts of country which we have hitherto concluded to be a sterile desert. These events will owe their initiation to the adventurous pioneers who first crossed the continent from sea to sea. Theirs

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was the arduous effort; theirs the courage, endurance, and sustaining hope; theirs the conflict with danger and the great triumph over difficulties; theirs the agony of a lingering death, and theirs the mournful glory of a martyr's crown. Defrauded, as it were, of the honours which would have rewarded them had they lived to receive the congratulations they had earned, it becomes the melancholy duty of their fellow-citizens to perpetuate the memory of Burke and Wills by a monument which shall testify to their worth and our munificence.

. . .

From Dr. Mueller.

Melbourne, December 21st, 1861.

My very dear doctor,

I need not assure you that I shall be but too happy to render you any services within my power, and especially such as are connected with doing justice to your poor and great son.

Having been duly authorized by you to secure the pistol of your late son, I will take an early opportunity to claim it for you and bring it to your son Thomas. I will also very gladly do what I can in restoring to you any other property I may hear of as belonging to your lamented son William. As soon as Professor Neumayer returns, we can learn with exactness what instruments were your son's. I will also inquire about the telescope. I believe I forgot mentioning to you, that it would be a source of the highest gratification to me to call some new plant by the name of the family, who claim as their own, one of now imperishable fame. But I will not be unmindful that, in offering an additional tribute, humble as it is, to your son's memory, it will be necessary to select, for the Willsia, a plant as noble in the Australian flora as the young savant himself who sacrificed his life in accomplishing a great national and never-to-be-forgotten enterprise.

Trusting, my dear and highly valued friend, that the greatness of the deed will, to a certain extent, alleviate your grief and sorrow for an irreparable loss, and that Providence may spare you long in health and happiness, for your family.

I remain,

Your faithfully attached,

FERD. *Mueller*.

W. Wills, Esquire, M.D.

. . .

Melbourne Botanical Gardens, January 5th, 1862.

My dear Dr. *Wills*,

It affords me a melancholy satisfaction that the humble tribute which I wish to pay to the memory of your lamented son, in attaching his name to the enclosed plant, elicited such kind recognition from yourself. I need not assure you that I shall continue to maintain, as I have done on all previous occasions, that only by the skilful guidance and scientific talents of your unfortunate son, the great geographic success is achieved, which he sealed with his heroic death.

We can only now deeply deplore the loss of *such* a man, and award that honour to his memory which his great exploit for ever merits.

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With the deepest sympathy for you, ever dear and respected friend,

Yours,

FERD. *Mueller*.

The plant is thus registered in the Fragmenta Phytographiae Australiae:—

Eremophila WILLSII:

Speciem Eremophilae Goodwinii (F. M. Report on the Plants of Babble's Expedition, page 17) propinquam tesqua Australiae centralis ornantem, elegi ut botanicis recordarem gloriam nunquam obliviscendam intrepidi et ingeniosi sed infelicissimi Gulielmi Wills, qui primo terram Australiae continentalem a litore ad litus peragravit, sua morte praecocissima in tacito eremo triumphum aeternum agens. [Footnote: I have chosen a species of Eremophila resembling Goodwin's, which adorns the deserts of central Australia, to record by botany the glory never to be forgotten of the intrepid and talented, but most unfortunate, William Wills, who was the first to traverse the continent of Australia from shore to shore, winning for himself, by his too early death in the silent wilderness, an eternal triumph.]

From Dr. *Mueller*.

June 6th, 1862.

Dear Dr. *Wills*,

Once more I wish you a most cordial goodbye, and trust that in the circle of your family you will feel some consolation for the dreadful bereavement which has befallen you in the loss of your son. May it alleviate your affliction to some small extent, to remember that your son has gained by the sacrifice of his precious life a world-wide fame, and an appreciation which will remain unobliterated throughout all ages.

With the deepest solicitude for your health and happiness, I remain, my very dear Dr. Wills,

Your attached friend,

FERD. *Mueller*.

. . .

At an earlier period, the Municipal Council of Ballaarat East paid me the compliment of the subjoined address:—

To W. *Wills*, *esquire*, M.D.

Council Chamber, Ballaarat East, November 7th, 1861.

Sir,

The Municipal Council of Ballaarat East, for itself and on behalf of the native community of this district, with feelings of the deepest sorrow and commiseration, beg leave to sympathize with you in the most severe and irreparable bereavement which you are so unfortunately called upon to bear in the loss of your worthy and devoted son, Mr. William John Wills. It would however hope that all possible consolation will be yours in the knowledge of his having nobly and successfully accomplished his mission, the benefits of which cannot be too highly appreciated by the whole of the inhabitants of the Australian Colonies; and which must secure to his future memory, under the unfortunate circumstances by which he was sacrificed, not only honour and fame, but the sympathy, love, and respect of his fellow-men in all parts of Her Majesty's dominions, and in every civilized country throughout the world. These considerations the Council trusts you will endeavour to bring to your aid in overcoming the intense grief with which you must be afflicted.

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I am, sir,

In the most heartfelt sorrow,

Yours very truly,

W.B. RODIER,

Town Clerk.

. . .

A proclamation in a supplement to one of the Melbourne Gazettes, towards the end of November, announced that the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, had directed that the portions of Main-street, Ballaarat East, lying between the Yarrowee River and Princess Street, shall hereafter be designated Wills Street, in memory of the companion of Burke.

The two following letters, written by Devonians settled in Victoria, appeared in the Totnes Weekly Times:—

Batesford, Geelong, 25th November, 1861.

Dear sir,

I have sent you by this mail the sad history of poor Burke and Wills, which I am sure will be read with painful interest by all your fellow-townsmen. The Melbourne papers have been very severe on the Exploration Committee, and it was my intention to have sent you copies of the Argus, from 4th to 9th November, but they cannot now be procured at any price. My brother will lend you his, if you desire it.

Nothing that has occurred here for many years has thrown such a gloom over the whole of the Australian Colonies. We are generally, perhaps, a cold, unfeeling people, but there are few whose hearts have not been touched by this sad event.

It is scarcely possible that you, accustomed as you are to the green pastures, the shady lanes, and crystal springs of dear old Devon, can realize to the full extent the sickening hardships they had to endure, or the cruel disappointment under which even they at last gave way. I cannot conceive a situation more heartrending than theirs must have been on their return to Cooper’s Creek, to find the depot abandoned. They had succeeded in accomplishing the glorious feat which so many brave men had tried in vain to accomplish; they had endured hardships which might make the stoutest heart quail; they had returned alive, but footsore, worn out and in rags, to where they might have hoped for help and succour; they were on their way to where honour and glory, well and nobly earned, awaited them; and now they must lie down in the dreary wilds of an

almost unknown country, and die that most horrible of all deaths, starvation, They must have felt, too, that, worse than even this death itself, the fruits of their labours would, in all probability, perish with them, their fate remain unknown, and the glorious page of the world's history which they would have written would be buried in oblivion, and all this—-*all* this because

'Some one had blundered.'

It has been decided that the remains are to be brought to Melbourne and have a public funeral. Monuments are also to be erected to the memory of the brave fellows:—

"These come too late, and almost mock whom they are intended
to honour."

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Poor Wills! you will remember him as a boy. It has occurred to me that Totnes may wish in some way to perpetuate the memory of one who perished so young and with such honour in a noble cause. Should it be so, I have asked my brother to be there with something from me. Every good man must deeply regret his loss, and sincerely sympathize with his relatives and friends.

> Your hero has passed to no ignoble grave;
> He died not ere a deathless fame was won;
> And earth must count amongst her true and brave,
> The brave and patient Wills, Devonia's son.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

Robt. *Watson*.

To the Editor of the Totnes Times.

. . .

To the editor of the Totnes Weekly times.

Melbourne, November 26, 1861.

By this mail, I have sent you the public journals of this city, containing detailed accounts of the Exploring Expedition, despatched hence on the 20th August last, to find its way to and return from the Gulf of Carpentaria. Only one of the party has succeeded in accomplishing this unparalleled undertaking, three having fallen victims to hunger and disease. R. O'Hara Burke was the leader of the Expedition, and W.J. Wills, a native of Totnes, and son of a physician from your locality, was the second in command, observer and astronomer. The Expedition had visited the Gulf, and had returned to Cooper's Creek, where a depot had been formed, but unfortunately broken up only six hours before the return of the weary travellers. Their disappointment at finding such to be the case, you must gather from Wills's journal, which was the best kept of the party, and is replete with information of the country through which they passed. To Mr. Wills, senior, the loss of his favourite son is a sad blow, under such distressing circumstances; yet, amid all, young Wills was full of spirit to the last, and his final entry in his journal must have been made just six hours before he breathed his last. For him and for them, the colonists in Australia have shed tears of sorrow, and the Government have given instructions that their remains are to be brought to the city, and interred with all the pomp and solemnity befitting such an occasion. A sum of money is voted by Parliament to mark specially the event by erecting an obelisk in some conspicuous part of the city, most probably in face of one of our Parliament Houses. A number of Devonians,

however, have resolved to subscribe, and with the consent of the municipal authorities, wish to mark the event more especially in his native town; and it is thought the Plains, at Totnes, is a suitable place for the erection of such a monument. To that end, subscription lists will be opened in our principal towns, and by next mail I hope to report that satisfactory progress is being made. The school where he was educated (Ashburton), conducted, too, by a Totnes man, Mr. Paige, has not been forgotten; and as there are schoolfellows of Wills's in this colony, they also intend bearing testimony to his worth by placing a tablet, with the consent of the trustees, in the Grammar School of St. Andrew's. None more worthy exists in that ancient hall of learning.

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In conclusion, I would just remark that the continent has been traversed from north to south, but there is yet the important feat of crossing from east to west. For whom is this wreath reserved? Is it to be won by a Totnes or an Ashburton man, or one from this country? Time will decide.

I remain,

Yours truly,

John Lavington Evans.

. . .

A correspondent to the Bendigo Advertiser concluded a long letter with the subjoined paragraph:—

Poor Wills, the martyr, whose history of the journey is all that is left to us, is deserving of a nation's tears: his youth—his enduring patience—his evenness of temper, which must have been sorely tried—his lively disposition even in extremities—his devotion to his leader—all tend to stamp him as the real master-mind of the expedition, and as such let Victoria be justly proud of him—let no false delicacy keep the memory of the noble youth from the pinnacle it is so justly entitled to.

. . .

The Mayor of Totnes, J. Derry, Esquire, in compliance with a requisition from many of the principal inhabitants, convened a meeting at the Guildhall on the 31st of January, 1862, which was most numerously attended. Eloquent speeches were made, extracts from the letters of Mr. Watson, and Mr. Lavington Evans, were read, and the following resolutions were unanimously passed:

1. That this Meeting is of opinion that a Memorial should be erected in Totnes to the late Mr. William John Wills, who perished at Cooper's Creek on his homeward journey, after, with three others, having for the first time successfully crossed the great Island Continent of Australia.

Perhaps when the subscriptions were received they would be able to decide what form the memorial should assume. It had been suggested that a tablet should be placed in the church, but he, Mr. Cuming, the mover, rather demurred to this: the church would not be a conspicuous place for it; and as many would subscribe who did not attend the parish church, he thought the Plains, or some other public site, should be chosen, but it would be well to leave this matter for the present an open question.

2. That a committee be now formed to solicit subscriptions for the purpose of carrying into effect the last resolution, and that such committee consist of the following

gentlemen:—The Mayor, Messrs. Bentall, Kellock, Cuming, Presswell, Heath, Windeatt, Watson, Michelmore, Condy, Clarke, Ough, Endle; with power to add to their number.

3. That as soon as the subscription list is completed, and the Devonshire men resident in the colony have communicated their wishes and intentions to the committee, according to the intimations expressed by them, the committee be requested to call a meeting of the subscribers to decide on the character of the memorial to be erected.

The subscriptions at Totnes have been very liberal, and are still open. Mr. Watson and his family contributed most liberally. The Duke of Somerset gave ten pounds. Each of the members, Admiral Mitchell, and various others five pounds; but the character of the monument has not yet been decided on. At Ashburton Grammar School a memorial has been erected, Mr. Lavington Evans and his brother contributing ten pounds from Australia.

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At the annual meeting of the Royal Geographical Society of London, held on the 26th of May, 1862, Lord Ashburton awarded the founder's Gold Medal to the representative of the late Robert O'Hara Burke, and a gold watch to King. These were handed to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, who attended in his public capacity as Secretary of State for the Colonies, and undertook to deliver them to the respective parties, with many justly eulogistic observations. Lord Ashburton read a paper on the progress of geographical science, and Sir R. Murchison, in the course of a notice on Australia, suggested that that portion which had been explored by Mr. Burke should be hereafter called Burke's Land. But it so happened that my son's name was neither mentioned nor alluded to in the published proceedings.

At the first meeting of the Society for the present season, held on the 10th November, 1862, and at which I was present, Sir Roderick Murchison introduced the subject of Australian exploration in his address, in a manner quite unexpected by me. The next day I received the following official communication, which embodied the substance of what he had said, and nearly in the same words.

To Dr. *Wills*.

15, Whitehall Place, 11th November, 1862.

Sir,

At the first meeting of the Council of this Society, during this session, I brought under the consideration of my associates, a statement of the distinguished botanist, Dr. Mueller, of Victoria, to the effect that the friends of your deceased son were dissatisfied on finding that Mr. Burke, the leader of the late expedition to the Gulf of Carpentaria, had received a gold medal, and that Mr. King had received a watch, whilst no testimonial of the services of Mr. Wills had been presented on the part of the Royal Geographical Society.

Permit me to assure you that when the award of the gold medal was made, every member of the Council, as well as myself, who proposed it, felt that to your son alone was due the determination of all the geographical points, by his astronomical observations, and that therefore the honour should be shared between the leader and himself.

Continuing to entertain the same sentiments, and regretting that the rule of the society prevented them from granting more than one gold medal for an expedition, the Council have authorized me to offer this explanation to you, in order that it may be preserved as a memorial.

As nothing less than a medal could have been adjudicated to so good a geographer as your lamented son, so I trust that this explanation, and the words, which fell from me

last evening at the general meeting, in eulogizing his valuable services, may prove satisfactory. Rely upon it, that his merits will never be forgotten by my associates and myself.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very faithful servant,

(Signed) *Roderick Murchison*,

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President of the Royal Geographical Society.

P.S. This letter shall be printed in the Proceedings of the Society.

. . .

I replied thus:—

To sir Roderick Murchison,

President of the Royal Geographical Society.

27 Arundel Street, Strand, 18th November, 1862.

Sir,

It was with much satisfaction that I received your letter of the 11th instant, acknowledging the appreciation by yourself and the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, of the merits of my lamented son in the Burke and Wills Exploring Expedition in Australia. That he, and he alone, was the only one who had the least pretension to the title of geographer, is manifest; —therefore it is not strange that Dr. Mueller and my friends in Australia should feel somewhat annoyed in the matter of the Medal.

I am not surprised that it should have so happened under the circumstances. The motto ‘Sic vos non vobis’, would be appropriate for him in memoriam. The clothes, for the want of which he died, so amply provided by himself, were worn by others; the land discovered has been called exclusively by another name;—the Gold Medal should follow.

Still I am grateful for your well-expressed remarks at the meeting of the 10th instant, and for this written testimonial of the 11th, from yourself and the Council.

I have the honour to be,

Sir Roderick,

Your obedient and humble servant,

William Wills,

Father of the late Explorer.

. . .

Several poetical tributes in honour of the adventurous dead were published in Victoria. I select one which appeared in the Melbourne Herald, on the 1st of December, 1861.

Thelost explorers.

'Tis but a little lapse of time
Since they passed from out our sight;
Their hearts with hope were buoyant,
And each face with gladness bright;
And many were the fervent prayers
That in safety they might go,
Through a hidden land to the distant strand
Where ocean billows flow.

Theirs was no gay adventure
In some softly pleasant place:
They left home's quiet sanctitude
To meet a hostile race;
To carve a passage through the land,
That down its channels wide,
With a joyous start might flow a part
Of the restless human tide.

Across bleak stony deserts,
Through dense scrub and tangled brier,
They passed with hearts undaunted,
And with steps that would not tire;
Through morass and flooding waters,
Undismayed by toil and fears,
At their chief's command, with salient hand,
Fought on the pioneers.

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Battled with cold and famine,
Battled with fiery heat,
Battled o’er rocks till a trail of blood
Was left by their wounded feet;
Battled when death with his icy hand
Struck down the body of Gray;—
‘Onward!’ they said, as they buried the dead,
And went on their gloomy way.

Now gather round your household hearths,
Your children by your knee;
’Tis well that they should understand
This tale of misery.
’Tis well that they should know the names
Of those whose toil is o’er;
Whose coming feet, we shall run to meet
With a welcome *never more*.

Tell how these modern martyrs,
In the strength and pride of men,
Went out into the wilderness
And came not back again;
How they battled bravely onward,
For a nobler prize than thrones,
And how they lay, in the glaring day,
With the sun to bleach their bones.

Tell how their poor hearts held them up
Till victory was won;
How with fainting steps they journeyed back,
The great achievement done.
But of their anguish who may know,
Save God, who heard each groan,
When they saw no face at the trysting place,
And found themselves alone!

Left alone with gaunt starvation,
And its sickly brood of ills,
Stood Burke the sanguine, hopeful King,
And the hero-hearted Wills;
Sad and weary stood the pioneers,
With no hand to give relief,
And so each day winged on its way
As a dark embodied grief.

Who can guess the depth of agony—
That no mortal tongue may tell—
Which each felt when slowly dying
At the brink of hope's dry well!
Deserted, famished garmentless,
No voice of friendship nigh,
With loving care, to breathe a prayer
When they settled down to die.

Yet God be praised, that one dear life
Was held within His hand,
And saved, the only rescued one
Of that devoted band
Who went into the wilderness,
In the strength and pride of men:
The goal was won and their task was done,
But they came not back again.

We cannot break their calm, grand sleep,
By fond endearing cries;
We cannot smile them back again,
However bright our eyes;
But we may lowly bend the head,
Though not asham'd of the tears
We sadly shed, for the lowly dead,
Cut down in their bloom of years.

And laurel garlands, greener
Than war's heroes ever bought
With the blood of slaughtered thousands,
Shall by loving hands be brought;
And sanctified by many prayers,
Laid gently in their grave,
That the coming race may know the place
Where sleep our martyr'd brave.

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—F.M. HUGHAN.

. . .

Concluding observations.

The narrative I have felt called upon to give to the public, founded on an unexaggerated statement of facts, with many of which no other person could have been so well acquainted, is now concluded,—with the natural anguish of a father for the loss of a son of whom he was justly proud, and who fell a victim to incapacity and negligence not his own. Still, I have no desire to claim merit for him to which he is not entitled, or to abstract an iota from what is justly due to others. The Report of the Royal Commission is to be found at full in the Appendix; unaccompanied necessarily by the mass of conflicting evidence, trustworthy, contradictory, misinterpreted or misunderstood, on which it was based. The members who composed that court were honourable gentlemen, who investigated patiently, and I have no doubt conscientiously. But there were many present, with myself, who witnessed the examinations, and wondered at some points of the verdict. We find the judgment most severe on the leader who sacrificed his life, and whose mistakes would have been less serious and fatal had his orders been obeyed. There is also a disposition to deal leniently with the far heavier errors and omissions of the Exploration Committee; and an unaccountable tendency to feel sympathy for Brahe, whose evidence left it difficult to decide whether stupidity, selfishness, or utter disregard of truth was his leading deficiency.

It now only remains to sum up a brief retrospect of the active spirit of discovery set astir, and not likely to die away, as a sequel to the great Burke and Wills Expedition, for by that name it will continue to be known. We have already seen that the Victoria steamer, under Commander Norman, was sent round to the Gulf of Carpentaria to search for the missing explorers, had they reached that part of the coast; and to expedite and assist land parties in advancing, southwards, to their aid. Captain Norman suffered some delay by the unfortunate wreck of the Firefly, a trader, laden with horses, coals, and straw; and having on board Mr. Landsborough and party, who were to start from the Albert river, or thereabouts. This wreck occurred on the 4th September, 1861, on one of the group of islands to the north, called Sir Charles Hardy's Islands. On the 7th, they were found by Commander Norman, and through his great personal exertions, ably seconded by his officers and crew, he got the ship off, with the greater part of the horses and coals, and nearly all the stores.

On the 1st of October, they reached the mouth of the Albert. On the 14th of the same month, Landsborough started for the head of that river, as far as it was navigable, in the Firefly, under the command of Lieutenant Woods of the Victoria; and on the 17th they were landed about twelve miles up the stream. It was past the middle of November before Mr. Landsborough resumed his onward course; and as his explorations had little to do with an endeavour to discover the tracks of the Victorian Expedition, although he

gained much credit by his exertions, it is unnecessary to detail them more minutely here. I shall merely say that he followed a course south by east, skirting the country rather more to the westward than the track followed by previous explorers, and eventually reached Victoria.

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Mr. Walker, despatched overland from Queensland, reached the Gulf on the 7th of December, 1861; and reported that he had, on the 24th of November, found well-defined traces of three or four camels and one horse, undoubtedly belonging to the Victorian Expedition, and making their way down the Flinders. With his usual characteristic, he started again on the 11th of December. Mr. Walker, with his party, consisting chiefly of natives, did good service in his progress through Queensland; for when the report reached Melbourne, through Captain Norman, that he had discovered the tracks of the camels so near the sea, it furnished satisfactory evidence of the correctness of my son's journals, although the fatal news of his death and that of his commander had been long received. There were not wanting ungenerous cavillers to insinuate doubts that he and Burke had been at the Gulf. This inference they sought to establish from an expression in one of the few of Burke's notes preserved, to this effect: "28th March.—At the conclusion of report, it would be well to say that we reached the sea, but we could not obtain a view of the open ocean, although we made every effort to do so." At the extreme point they reached, about fifteen miles down the Flinders, the tide ebbed and flowed regularly, and the water was quite salt. The very simplicity of Mr. Burke's remark shows that it was made by a man not given to lying or deceit. Mr. Walker followed the return tracks for some distance, but lost them at about 20 degrees of south latitude, and then struck off direct east for the Queensland district, to inquire, and get further supplies for a new start. At Rockhampton he received the fatal intelligence which had been sent round by sea from Melbourne; and also the news of the discovery of King by the gallant Howitt, to whom all honour is due for his labours in the cause.

But Mr. McKinlay, leader of the South Australian Expedition, of whom I have already spoken more than once, has performed the most extraordinary exploit of all, and has traversed by far the greatest quantity of new ground, but not in the direction originally intended by the government that sent him. Failing in finding the traces of Burke and his expedition, McKinlay took more to the north and north-west between the 120 and 140 degrees of eastern longitude. Yet from some floodings which my son, it will be remembered, pointed out in his journal as occurring from indications on trees, McKinlay changed his course to north and by east until he reached the Gulf of Carpentaria, and then to south and by east, and crossed to Queensland, returning from Rockhampton to Adelaide by water. A glance at the map will show the courses of these respective explorers sufficiently for general purposes. Thus Queensland, by some mysterious influences in its favour, has reaped the whole benefit of these explorations at the least apparent cost. The land discovered by the Burke and Wills Expedition, now named Burke's Land, has been handed over to Queensland by the Home Government, up to Cape York, on the extreme north, in Torres Straits. This vast continent, west of 140 degrees, in which the South Australian, and West Australian governments have so much interest, is, with the exception of Stuart's Line, quite unexplored.

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It has been a subject of congratulation by some, that the misadventures, or more properly speaking, the gross errors connected with the Victorian Expedition, have led to results that amply compensate for the loss sustained. It is truly painful to hear, and not very easy for those who are deeply interested, to believe this; and I think the majority of all readers will consider that these losses might have been easily avoided.

The relatives of the sacrificed explorers have to mourn their fate, and the colony of Victoria has spent large sums of money, not for her own benefit, immediate or indirect, present or prospective. She, too, may exclaim “Sic vos non vobis.” Lucky Queensland derives the benefit; her boundaries are extended to 140 degrees of east longitude. A great part of this country, formerly supposed to be of a doubtful nature, is now known to be the finest land in the Australias, capable of producing cereals, wines, and tropical fruits; also a vast extent of ground fitted for the growth of cotton. A source of unbounded wealth is thus opened to that fortunate young colony: coals had previously been discovered there. She is also better supplied with timber and forests than the more southern districts. Victoria, with her capital, Melbourne, will have to wait for the extension of railways, marking her position as the centre of commerce, and will in time reap her well-merited reward. Melbourne will always represent the metropolis of the various colonies of Australia.

South Australia, so happy in her abundant produce of corn, wine, and mineral ores of copper and iron, is a most desirable colony, but a great portion of her interior being yet unexplored, her full capabilities cannot at present be estimated. There is no man more likely than John McKinlay, with his robust frame, his energy and activity, to carry out this great object, if the opportunity is supplied to him.

The Australias altogether comprise a country capable of conferring happiness upon countless thousands of the Saxon race. Everything is to be found, if the right people only are selected. Let them comprise youth, vigorous health, temperate habits, persevering industry, and morals based on sound Christianity, and their success and advancement in life is as certain as anything can be pronounced in this world of uncertainty.

While these pages are going through the press, the last mail from Melbourne informs us that Mr. Howitt was expected to arrive in that capital towards the middle of December, 1862, with the remains of Messrs. Burke and Wills. Arrangements are being made for a public interment of the most imposing character. If numbers can add to the effect, they are not likely to be wanting. Circulars have been officially addressed to nearly 250 public bodies and societies throughout the colony, inviting the different members to join in the ceremony. Replies have been received from by far the greater portion, stating their willingness and desire to join in this last testimony of respect for the lamented explorers. The monument, for which 5000 pounds has been voted by Government, is to be erected in the Reserve surrounding the Parliament House.

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APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

Instructions to leader.

Exploration Committee, Royal Society of Victoria, Melbourne, 18th August, 1860.

Sir,

I am directed by the Committee to convey to you the instructions and views which have been adopted in connection with the duties which devolve upon you as Leader of the party now organized to explore the interior of Australia.

The Committee having decided on Cooper's Creek, of Sturt's, as the basis of your operations, request that you will proceed thither, form a depot of provisions and stores, and make arrangements for keeping open a communication in your rear to the Darling, if in your opinion advisable; and thence to Melbourne, so that you may be enabled to keep the Committee informed of your movements, and receive in return the assistance in stores and advice of which you may stand in need. Should you find that a better communication can be made by way of the South Australian Police Station, near Mount Serle, you will avail yourself of that means of writing to the Committee.

In your route to Cooper's Creek, you will avail yourself of any opportunity that may present itself for examining and reporting on the character of the country east and west of the Darling.

You will make arrangements for carrying the stores to a point opposite Mount McPherson, which seems to the Committee to be the best point of departure from this river for Cooper's Creek; and while the main body of the party is proceeding to that point you may have further opportunities of examining the country on either side of your route.

In your further progress from Mount McPherson towards Cooper's Creek, the Committee also desires that you should make further detours to the right and left with the same object.

The object of the Committee in directing you to Cooper's Creek, is, that you should explore the country intervening between it and Leichhardt's track, south of the Gulf of Carpentaria, avoiding, as far as practicable, Sturt's route on the west, and Gregory's, down the Victoria, on the east.

To this object the Committee wishes you to devote your energies in the first instance; but should you determine the impracticability of this route you are desired to turn westward into the country recently discovered by Stuart, and connect his farthest point northward with Gregory's farthest Southern Exploration in 1856 (Mount Wilson).

In proceeding from Cooper's Creek to Stuart's Country, you may find the Salt Marshes an obstacle to the progress of the camels; if so, it is supposed you will be able to avoid these marshes by turning to the northward as far as Eyre's Creek, where there is permanent water, and going then westward to Stuart's Farthest.

Should you, however, fail in connecting the two points of Stuart's and Gregory's Farthest, or should you ascertain that this space has been already traversed, you are requested if possible to connect your explorations with those of the younger Gregory, in the vicinity of Mount Gould, and thence you might proceed to Sharks' Bay, or down the River Murchison, to the settlements in Western Australia.

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This country would afford the means of recruiting the strength of your party, and you might, after a delay of five or six months, be enabled, with the knowledge of the country you shall have previously acquired, to return by a more direct route through South Australia to Melbourne.

If you should, however, have been successful in connecting Stuart's with Gregory's farthest point in 1856 (Mount Wilson), and your party should be equal to the task, you would probably find it possible from thence to reach the country discovered by the younger Gregory.

The Committee is fully aware of the difficulty of the country you are called on to traverse; and in giving you these instructions has placed these routes before you more as an indication of what it has been deemed desirable to have accomplished than as indicating any exact course for you to pursue.

The Committee considers you will find a better and a safer guide in the natural features of the country through which you will have to pass. For all useful and practical purposes it will be better for you and the object of future settlement that you should follow the watercourses and the country yielding herbage, than pursue any route which the Committee might be able to sketch out from an imperfect map of Australia.

The Committee intrusts you with the largest discretion as regards the forming of depots, and your movements generally, but request that you will mark your routes as permanently as possible, by leaving records, sowing seeds, building cairns, and marking trees at as many points as possible, consistently with your various other duties.

With reference to financial subjects, you will be furnished with a letter of authority to give orders on the Treasurer for the payment of any stores or their transport, cattle, sheep, or horses you may require; and you will not fail to furnish the Treasurer from time to time with detailed accounts of the articles for which you have given such orders in payment.

Each person of the party will be allowed to give authority for half of his salary being paid into any bank, or to any person he may appoint to receive the same; provided a certificate is forwarded from you to the effect that he has efficiently discharged his duty.

The Committee requests that you will make arrangements for an exact account being taken of the stores and their expenditure by the person you place in charge of them.

The Committee also requests that you would address all your communications on subjects connected with the exploration to the Honorary Secretary; and that all persons acting with you should forward their communications on the same subject through you.

You will cause full reports to be furnished by your officers on any subject of interest, and forward them to Melbourne as often as may be practicable without retarding the progress of the expedition.

The Committee has caused the inclosed set of instructions to be drawn up, having relation to each department of science; and you are requested to hand each of the gentlemen a copy of the part more particularly relating to his department.

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I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed) *John Macadam*, M.D.,

Honorary Secretary, E.C., R.S.V.

Robert O'Hara Burke, Esquire.

Leader, Victorian Exploring Expedition.

. . .

APPENDIX B.

Victoria: By the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith.

To our trusty and well-beloved The Honourable *sir Thomas Simson Pratt*, K.C.B., The Honourable *sir Francis Murphy*, Speaker of our Legislative Assembly, The Honourable *Matthew Hervey*, M.P., The Honourable *James Forester Sullivan*, M.P., and *Evelyn Pitfield Shirley sturt*, Esquire, all of Melbourne, in the Colony of Victoria, *greeting*.

Whereas the Governor of our Colony of Victoria, with the advice of the Executive Council thereof, has deemed it expedient that a Commission should forthwith issue for the purpose of inquiring into all the circumstances connected with the sufferings and death of *Robert* O'HARA *Burke* and *William John Wills*, the Victorian Explorers: and *whereas* it is desirable to ascertain the true causes of this lamentable result of the Expedition to the said *Robert* O'HARA *Burke* and his companions; and especially to investigate the circumstances under which the depot at Cooper's Creek was abandoned by *William brahe* and his party on the twenty-first day of April last; and to determine upon whom rests the grave responsibility of there not having been a sufficient supply of provisions and clothing secured for the recruiting of the Explorers on their return, and for their support until they could reach the settlements; and generally to inquire into the organization and conduct of the Expedition: also, with regard to the claims upon the Colony of the surviving members thereof, and of the relatives (if any) of the deceased members: *Now know Ye* that we, reposing great trust and confidence in your integrity, knowledge, and ability, have authorized and appointed, and by these presents do authorize and appoint you, *sir Thomas Simson Pratt*, *sir Francis Murphy*, *Matthew Hervey*, *James Forester Sullivan*, and *Evelyn Pitfield Shirley sturt*, to be Commissioners for the purpose aforesaid: and for the better effecting the purpose of this Commission,

we do give and grant you power and authority to call before you such persons as you shall judge likely to afford you any information upon the subject of this Commission: and to inquire of and concerning the premises by all other lawful means and ways whatsoever: and this Commission

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shall continue in full force and virtue; and you the said Commissioners may, from time to time, and at every place or places, proceed in the execution thereof, and of every matter or thing therein contained, although the inquiry be not regularly continued from time to time by adjournment: and lastly, that you do report, as occasion may require, for the information of our Governor of our said Colony, under your hands and seals, all matters and things elicited by you during the inquiry under this Commission.

Seal of the colony of Victoria.

Witness our trusty and well-beloved *sir Henry Barkly*, Knight Commander of the Most Noble Order of the Bath, Captain-General, and Governor-in-Chief of our Colony of Victoria, and Vice-Admiral of the same, at Melbourne, this twelfth day of November, One thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, and in the twenty-fifth year of our Reign.

Henry Barkly.

By His Excellency's command,

(Signed) R. *Heales*.

. . .

APPENDIX C.

To his excellency sir Henry Barkly, *Knight commander of the most honourable order of the Bath*, *captain-general and Governor-in-chief of the colony of Victoria*, *and vice-Admiral of the same*, *etc*., *Etc*.

May it please your excellency:—

In conformity with the terms of Her Majesty's commission, we have made inquiry into the circumstances connected with the sufferings and death of Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills, the Victorian explorers.

We have endeavoured to ascertain the true causes of this lamentable result of the expedition, and have investigated the circumstances under which the depot at Cooper's Creek was abandoned by Mr. William Brahe. We have sought to determine upon whom rests the grave responsibility of there not having been a sufficient supply of provisions and clothing secured for the recruiting of the explorers on their return, and for their support until they could reach the settlements; and we have generally inquired into the organization and conduct of the expedition.

Our investigations have been confined to the above matters, the Government having already taken into consideration the claims on the colony of the surviving members of the expedition, *etc*.

We have examined all persons willing to give evidence who professed, or whom we supposed to possess, knowledge upon the various subjects of our inquiries: and we now, after mature consideration, submit to your Excellency the following Report:—

The expedition, having been provided and equipped in the most ample and liberal manner, and having reached Menindie, on the Darling, without experiencing any difficulties, was most injudiciously divided at that point by Mr. Burke.

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It was an error of judgment on the part of Mr. Burke to appoint Mr. Wright to an important command in the expedition, without a previous personal knowledge of him; although, doubtless, a pressing urgency had arisen for the appointment, from the sudden resignations of Mr. Landells and Dr. Beckler.

Mr. Burke evinced a far greater amount of zeal than prudence in finally departing from Cooper's Creek before the depot party had arrived from Menindie, and without having secured communication with the settled districts as he had been instructed to do; and, in undertaking so extended a journey with an insufficient supply of provisions, Mr. Burke was forced into the necessity of over-taxing the powers of his party, whose continuous and unremitting exertions resulted in the destruction of his animals, and the prostration of himself and his companions from fatigue and severe privation.

The conduct of Mr. Wright appears to have been reprehensible in the highest degree. It is clear that Mr. Burke, on parting with him at Torowoto, relied on receiving his immediate and zealous support; and it seems extremely improbable that Mr. Wright could have misconstrued the intentions of his leader so far, as to suppose that he ever calculated for a moment on his remaining for any length of time on the Darling. Mr. Wright has failed to give any satisfactory explanation of the causes of his delay; and to that delay are mainly attributable the whole of the disasters of the expedition, with the exception of the death of Gray. The grave responsibility of not having left a larger supply of provisions, together with some clothing, in the cache, at Cooper's Creek, rests with Mr. Wright. Even had he been unable to convey stores to Cooper's Creek, he might have left them elsewhere, leaving notice at the depot of his having done so.

The Exploration Committee, in overlooking the importance of the contents of Mr. Burke's despatch from Torowoto, and in not urging Mr. Wright's departure from the Darling, committed errors of a serious nature. A means of knowledge of the delay of the party at Menindie was in the possession of the Committee, not indeed by direct communication to that effect, but through the receipt of letters from Drs. Becker and Beckler at various dates up to the end of November,—without, however, awakening the Committee to a sense of the vital importance of Mr. Burke's request in that despatch that he should "be soon followed up,"—or to a consideration of the disastrous consequences which would be likely to result, and did unfortunately result, from the fatal inactivity and idling of Mr. Wright and his party on the Darling.

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The conduct of Mr. Brahe in retiring from his position at the depot before he was rejoined by his commander, or relieved from the Darling, may be deserving of considerable censure; but we are of opinion that a responsibility far beyond his expectations devolved upon him; and it must be borne in mind that, with the assurance of his leader, and his own conviction, he might each day expect to be relieved by Mr. Wright, he still held his post for four months and five days, and that only when pressed by the appeals of a comrade sickening even to death, as was subsequently proved, his powers of endurance gave way, and he retired from the position which could alone afford succour to the weary explorers should they return by that route. His decision was most unfortunate; but we believe he acted from a conscientious desire to discharge his duty, and we are confident that the painful reflection that twenty-four hours' further perseverance, would have made him the rescuer of the explorers, and gained for himself the praise and approbation of all, must be of itself an agonizing thought, without the addition of censure he might feel himself undeserving of.

It does not appear that Mr. Burke kept any regular journal, or that he gave written instructions to his officers. Had he performed these essential portions of the duties of a leader, many of the calamities of the expedition might have been averted, and little or no room would have been left for doubt in judging the conduct of those subordinates who pleaded unsatisfactory and contradictory verbal orders and statements.

We cannot too deeply deplore the lamentable result of an expedition, undertaken at so great a cost to the colony; but, while we regret the absence of a systematic plan of operations on the part of the leader, we desire to express our admiration of his gallantry and daring, as well as of the fidelity of his brave coadjutor, Mr. Wills, and their more fortunate and enduring associate, Mr. King; and we would record our feelings of deep sympathy with the deplorable sufferings and untimely deaths of Mr. Burke and his fallen comrades.

T.S. *Pratt*, *chairman*,

Matthew Hervey,

E.P.S. *Sturt*,

Francis Murphy,

J.F. *Sullivan*.

THE END.