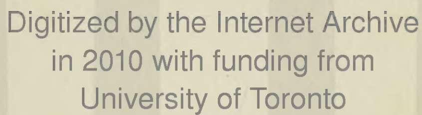
MINISCENCES OF INDIA AND ORTH QUEENSLAND

ROBERT GRAY

Robert Gray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REMINISCENCES OF

INDIA AND NORTH QUEENSLAND

BAILEY-GUARD, SHOWING BREACH THROUGH WHICH HAVELOCK'S TROOPS ENTERED

REMINISCENCES OF INDIA AND NORTH QUEENSLAND

1857-1912

BY

ROBERT GRAY

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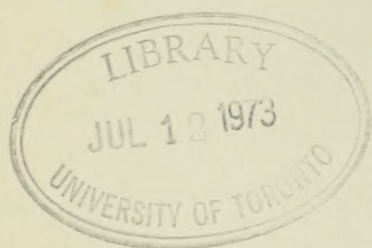

DEDICATED TO MY WIFE

WHO WAS THE FIRST WHITE WOMAN

AT HUGHENDEN

PREFACE

So much has been written about the Indian Mutiny, both in history and fiction, that it is with considerable diffidence the writer offers the following jottings from diaries and reminiscences of a subaltern for the perusal of the public.

The incidents recorded with regard to Queensland refer principally to a phase of life which has passed away, commencing as it does in the earlier 'sixties, when much of Northern and Western Queensland was practically unexplored. Possibly this story might have been embellished to make it more interesting reading. This, however, the writer has not attempted. He offers at the close of the book some suggestions and remarks with reference to North Queensland at the present time as a field for emigration.

The Illustrations are reproduced from sketches made by the author. The map being on a small scale gives but little idea of the contour of the country, nor does it show many of the numerous tributaries of the various rivers, etc.

R. Gray.

London, 1912.

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'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view
And robes the mountain in its azure hue,
Then with delight we linger to survey
The promised joys of life's unmeasured way.

Thomas Campbell.

SOME EPISODES
IN THE INDIAN MUTINY

CHAPTER I

Embarkation for India—State of affairs on arrival—
March through Oude.

The summer of 1857, at all events on the southern slopes of the Sussex Downs, was a particularly lovely one. Kingley Vale with its ancient cedars, the high downs in the direction of Goodwood, whence the eye of the onlooker rested on an expanse of undulating country dotted with clusters of trees, such as perhaps England alone can produce, were in all their glory in the early summer of that year, whilst to the south the English Channel gleamed like silver, calm and peaceful.

The garrison at Chichester, where the depots of the 9th, 20th, 22nd, 37th, and 97th regiments were quartered, were busy drilling their recruits with old soldiers of the Crimea amongst them, whilst amongst the 22nd were some of the seasoned veterans who had fought under Sir Charles Napier in Scinde.

Sir Colin Campbell was daily expected to inspect the troops. At that time he was, if I remember rightly, Inspector-General of Infantry, and there

was considerable anxiety amongst the subalterns in view of the questions it was reported he would subject them to. This ordeal they were not, however, called upon to go through; the news from India, which travelled more slowly in those days, soon swelled from disturbing rumours to alarming details. There was more important work on hand for the old General of the Highland Brigade of Crimean renown, than inspecting regimental depots.

The headquarters of my regiment were at Aldershot, and it was soon under orders for India. I was detailed to remain at the depot at Chichester, but this arrangement not falling in with my views I obtained a few days' leave, went up to Aldershot, and after proceeding with the battalion to Portsmouth, succeeded in embarking on the strength of the regiment which sailed in August 1857 in the *James Baines*, a clipper ship of about three thousand tons. The 20th regiment left on the same day in the *Champion of the Seas*, both vessels belonging to the Black Ball line, and the two ships reached Calcutta within a day of each other. The two regiments had been in the same brigade at Aldershot; and the Duke of Cambridge had inspected and harangued us there on parade, bestowing equal praise on each regiment.

At this time the embarkation of troops was of almost daily occurrence, and the sorrowful

faces of wives, mothers and daughters watching their departure, the stately ship slowly leaving the wharf, the bands playing appropriate airs, are sights and sounds which do not readily pass from memory.

After some one hundred and twenty days of the ordinary routine on a troop-ship with twelve hundred troops, including two companies of the 42nd, the muddy state of the water indicated that the Hoogly was not far distant. Who amongst those present and still in the land of the living does not remember the excitement with which the approach of the pilot steamer was viewed ? What would be the news ? Was the Mutiny over, and nothing left for us to do ? The papers handed to us by the pilot were eagerly scanned. We read of the relief of Lucknow by Generals Havelock and Outram, the death of the former, the preparations for the second relief under Sir Colin Campbell, and Wyndham's fight at Cawnpore. We learnt finally that Lucknow, for which Sir Colin was awaiting reinforcements, still remained to be taken. It seemed that we should still see some fighting and help in the winding up of the great campaign.

We were towed up the river, the *Jason* steering somewhat erratically behind us. Picturesque Garden Reach was passed, and we dropped anchor abreast the town of Calcutta somewhat late in the

afternoon. The next morning ere the morning star had disappeared the drums beat the reveille ; the gleam of the rising sun shone on the brass helmets of a dragoon regiment marching by threes along the esplanade bordering the river, whilst 'faint from further distance borne' came the strains of some regimental band.

We were some little time in Calcutta, a portion of the regiment being quartered in the 'Madrissa.' At that time a sepoy regiment was doing duty in Calcutta, carrying ramrods in lieu of muskets, the men of fine physique contrasting favourably in this respect with many of our young soldiers recruited from Belfast to the regiment, which being the Earl of Ulster's regiment was largely composed of Irishmen.

Our next move was to Raneegunge, the terminus of the railway at that day, about one hundred miles from Calcutta. The air there was crisp and clear, and it seemed difficult to realise that we were in a country the heat of which is proverbial.

After a day's delay, I and Jimmy Shaw, another officer of the regiment, with a few men and a major of the 84th in charge of the detachment, proceeded by horse dâk to Benares to arrange quarters for the regiment. The moon was shining brightly when, tired of the confinement of the vehicle, I got out and walked across the bridge

leading into that city of ghauts, shrines, monkeys, and narrow streets, from which in bygone days Warren Hastings had extricated himself with such difficulty.

Late in the evening we put up at a large building where a number of officers belonging to various corps were assembled. On the following day we were directed by an officer of the Quartermaster-General's department, to some native infantry barracks, which we began to put in order for our regiment. Near at hand was a bungalow in a fair state of repair, in which we took up our quarters and established our mess. Whilst we were sitting and discussing matters after our evening meal, an elderly officer entered the doorway. 'Good evening, gentlemen,' he said, 'I have brought a few oranges for your European soldiers. I am Colonel S., president of the Permanent Court-Martial sitting here for the trial of mutineers. I have lost two brothers in this Mutiny, and am not likely to lean to the side of mercy.' In course of further conversation he remarked, 'There are some men to be blown away from guns to-morrow morning, and a native officer to be hanged. If you take any interest in such proceedings, you had better come down and see them.'

We did so, and the calm indifference with which these men met their death could not be surpassed.

It was soon given out that our regiment was to march through from Benares to Lucknow, dispersing such bodies of rebels as might be met with. General Franks appeared upon the scene shortly after our regiment had arrived at Benares. This officer, who had been well known as the commander of the 10th regiment, was tall and of stern demeanour and a rigid disciplinarian. He was generally dressed in a long dark coat, not quite of the ordinary regulation pattern. He was accompanied by his adjutant, Lieutenant Havelock, the late Sir Havelock Allan.

We had in the regiment a Quartermaster and Paymaster, who were not quite so slim and active as they had been during the last winter before Sebastopol. Together they would perhaps have turned the scale at thirty-two stone. These two gentlemen had laid their heads together and invested in an old buggy with a quiet old horse. Our camp had been beautifully pitched, the lines were perfect in precision, but alongside the tent occupied by these officers was the buggy. Whilst sitting in my tent with another officer of my company, we were startled by a voice exclaiming in stentorian tones and in forcible language, 'Havelock, what is that thing doing in the lines? Never have I seen such a thing in camp before.'

The owner of the voice was General Franks. The result was that the two officers had to dispose

of the vehicle and pursue their journey on ponies, their feet in proximity to the ground.

Our line of march was by Kotram, Jerripoor, Ghesiva, and Badshapoor to Sikandra, where we bivouacked, it being understood that some eight thousand rebels with fourteen guns were in front.

The following morning a reconnaissance was made, but having no cavalry beyond a few mounted police, the General awaited the arrival of two squadrons of the Bays and some Horse Artillery, expected from Allahabad. These arrived during the day.

At daylight on the following morning an advance was made covered by skirmishers. The country in our front was lightly timbered, but at the distance of a few miles a dense jungle covered the fortified village of Nusrutpore, a position of some strength in which the rebel force was posted.

About half a mile from this jungle, on the outskirts of which was a deserted indigo factory, our columns deployed into line. The guns were somewhat advanced and opened fire with shrapnel, probably with the object of making the enemy disclose his position, whilst skirmishers advanced to the edge of the jungle. However, no return fire was drawn, and at this moment our line was ordered to retire. I was carrying one of the colours. One of the colour-sergeants, a big Irishman named O'Connor, who

had served with the regiment in the Crimea, raised on my neck the thick leather band which it was customary to carry in order to support the pole on occasions when the colour was unfurled. 'What are you doing that for?' I asked. The sergeant replied, 'Sure, it might save your neck. I hear these rebel sowars are very handy with their swords.' I thought to myself, 'This man knows something of war; I wonder if these sowars will show themselves.' However, no rebel cavalry came near us, nor was there any return fire. The line was halted, and breaking into open column we marched to our right round the jungle, keeping it several hundred yards on our left. It was not until we had proceeded some distance that puffs of smoke rose from the centre of the jungle, and a few round shot passed through our columns.

During the afternoon we were in rear of the position, which the enemy then commenced to evacuate. Guns and cavalry hastened to the front, our infantry forming into line across the plain, whence a full view of the rebels was obtained, the Bays in pursuit.

The affair was over with the trifling loss of nine wounded, whilst the Bays cut down a good many of the rebels.

We had a fatiguing march, fifteen hours in all, before reaching our camping-ground of the previous night, and on our way there, when the bugle

sounded every half hour for the short halt of five minutes, almost every man in the column lay down where he was and slept.

It was late at night when we reached our camping-ground where the baggage had been packed under sufficient guard, and then congratulating myself upon not being told off for picket duty, I was asleep almost immediately.

We had at this time with us a battalion of Ghoorkas, sent by Jung Bahadur, the ruler of Nepaul, making up our force to fourteen hundred men, with six guns. The detachment of the Bays, much to the disappointment of the General, returned under orders to Allahabad.

We had made about seventeen marches through a fertile country, well cultivated, and the crops of peas and barley, green, uncut and deserted by their owners, sustained a certain amount of damage. The weather was not hot, and the nights were cold enough for blankets. We were joined about this time by the 10th and 20th regiments, and more Ghoorkas, bringing up our numbers to about five thousand five hundred men, including two companies of Royal Artillery and a detachment of Madras Artillery. The 2nd February 1858 found us at Budlipoor, where we halted several days, probably waiting for instructions from Sir Colin Campbell. Pony races and sports were indulged in, and the Ghoorkas showed

their adroitness in severing the heads of buffaloes at a single blow with their 'cookeries.'

The brigade was harangued by General Franks, and we were soon on the warpath again, making long tedious marches, with varied experiences whilst on rear and baggage guards on dusty roads. The distance over which the baggage extended was surprising; from head to tail it must often have been ten or twelve miles, and as the baggage of each regiment, so far as I remember, was guarded by not more than one company, it seemed strange that the rebels, who were not deficient in cavalry, never came down upon us.

Our daily routine was as follows: The bugle sounded at an early hour: then came the clicking of innumerable mallets knocking loose the tent pegs. The tents collapsed, and the men got their coffee and a piece of bread. Next the beasts of burden were brought from the lines where they had been picketed, and were ranged beside the tents. Whilst their loads were being adjusted, the elephants gave utterance to childish cries, and the camels to their guttural noises. Men chaffed the Mahouts and camel-drivers in soldier's Hindustani. The blazing straw threw a glare upon the scene, accentuating the darkness of the night beyond.

Again the bugle sounds. The troops rapidly fall in in front of their respective lines. The

advance guard marches off; skirmishers are thrown out on the flanks, and sometimes the brigade is on the march before a glimmering in the east denotes the approach of day.

Then begins the work of the baggage guard, the hastening of drivers to yoke their bullocks, and the starting of the encumbrous procession.

The rear guard is ready waiting the departure of the last of the baggage, and sometimes are to be seen rebels taken in arms going to their execution. With ropes round their necks, mounted on elephants, they are suspended to the nearest tree, the drop from the elephant rendering death instantaneous.

In connection with these executions I once witnessed a curious incident. A prisoner was being examined by a group of officers sitting beneath a peepul-tree. With them, I remember, was Venables, a well-known indigo planter, who had rendered conspicuous service on the outbreak of the Mutiny, and had since joined our small troop of mounted men. I was standing on the outskirts of the group of officers, when I heard our senior surgeon, Barry, remark of one of their prisoners, 'Look, his hair is turning grey.' Going close to the man who had been told that his life was forfeited, I distinctly saw streaks of grey forming in his hair.

I have already mentioned that we had been

joined by the 10th and 20th regiments. Although the 10th had been knocked about a good deal in the neighbourhood of Dinapore, it was then a fine-looking regiment, composed of old soldiers who had served in the Punjab campaign, and it stood out in marked contrast to some of the regiments which had only a leaven of old soldiers, having been filled up with recruits on returning from the Crimea. The physique and steadiness of this regiment was remarkable. They turned out spick and span at the shortest notice. As instancing their physique, I may mention an incident that occurred when halted for a day or two on one occasion the Brigade was out for drill. The 10th regiment was next to my own, and attached to the 10th was a young officer, who, like many others on arrival in India, found his sepoy regiment had mutinied. Most British regiments had a few of these young officers attached for duty. In the course of a formation the officer I refer to, who was certainly not of large stature, was uncertain where his place as a supernumerary should be, so he said to the colour-sergeant of his company, 'Where am I to go?' 'Go and stand under that man's pouch,' said the sergeant. At that time the large ammunition pouch was carried just below the small of the back.

A few marches from Budlipoor brought us to Chauda, where was a body of rebels under Banda

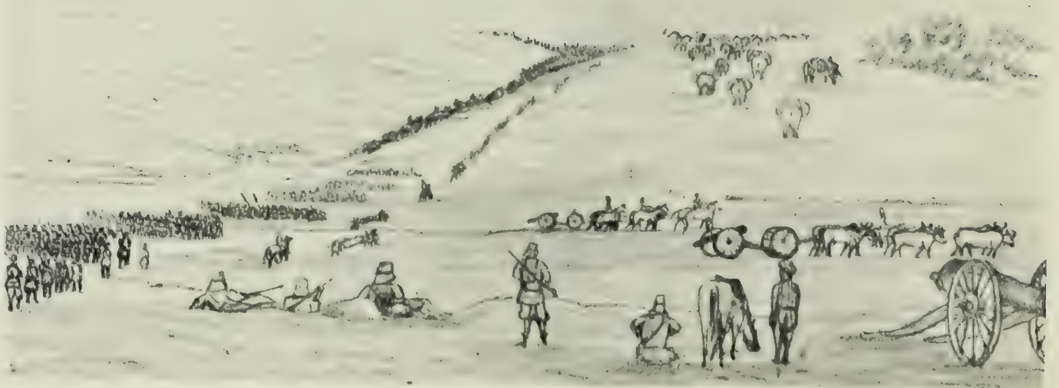
Hosein. They were said to be eight thousand strong, including two thousand five hundred regular sepoys, and had eight guns in position, but they made a poor stand, and were soon in full retreat, leaving several of their guns. We followed them up for three miles as far as the village of Rampura. Then after marching to our left we reached some rising ground beyond a village named Ummeerpore. The sun was getting low, but in the haze as our regiment formed up into line we saw about a mile distant a large body of rebel troops, their front extending across the plain, with jungle on each flank. A solitary horseman emerged from the jungle on their left flank, and riding well out in front of their line came galloping towards us followed by a few shots. The rider was Havelock, who galloped in to make his report to the General.

Whilst our troops were forming into line, guns opened with round shot and grape on our right front and flank. The Ghoorkas were on our right, and the amount of ammunition they expended in a continual roll of musketry would have led to the belief that a determined attack was being delivered in that direction, but beyond a few rounds from the guns from the edge of the jungle there was no return fire.

The enemy would not give us the opportunity of coming to close quarters, and as we had no

cavalry to round them up they retired in the dusk of the evening. Their guns were silenced after a short cannonade, and we bivouacked where we stood. One of their guns sent a round shot occasionally rolling amongst us, but little harm resulted.

We had now entered the Province of Oude, and happening one morning to have no immediate duty, I was sitting on the banks of a river, I think the Goomtee, watching the troops crossing. Beside me was an officer attached to the Ghoorkas, enjoying a snack of cheese made from goat's milk and some bread and butter, whilst he gave me an account of the battle of Chillianwalla, at which he had been present. The head of the brigade, marching in fours, was disappearing over the crest of the slope on the other side. Elephants with a couple of heavy guns were crossing the river. The last man of the column had tucked up his trousers and was in mid-stream. The narrow causeway approaching the river was blocked by the baggage of one of our regiments, and my companion and I were struck by the energy and method displayed by one of the subalterns on baggage guard, my friend remarking on his zeal. I often thought of this occurrence when I saw this officer shortly afterwards made adjutant of his regiment, then become the trusted staff officer of a commander-in-chief, and afterwards



GENERAL FRANK'S COLUMN CROSSING INTO OUDH

reach the higher grades in the profession.[1] There is in an incident of this kind encouragement to a young officer to reflect that real efficiency may apparently pass unnoticed at the time, but when men are wanted by those around him, some of whom may succeed to a command, so surely do they look out for men who have shown themselves capable and trustworthy to assist them.

We now heard that a rebel force was assembling at Sultanpore, lately a cantonment of some importance—the revolt of the troops there is, I think, described in Kaye's *Sepoy War*—and our march was directed towards this place, where it was said that a large force awaited us under a special leader who had been sent from Lucknow to take command of it.

We encamped on the night of the 21st February within a few miles of the rebel lines. The Adjutant-General of the force, Havelock, had by some means or other managed to mount a few men from each regiment, perhaps a score all told, and although some of them rode with their trousers working up towards their knees, still they were a serviceable lot of men, and perhaps were the first instance of mounted infantry being used in modern times. We were under arms at an early hour, formed up in line of columns, each regiment at deploying

[1] The late Sir Owen Tudor Burne, Major-General, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I.

distance, the General with his staff and mounted men well to the front reconnoitring, and a considerable number of skirmishers also to the front with the Horse Artillery. The country was fairly open, but sufficiently timbered and undulating to prevent an extended view.

The skirmishers and guns having come in touch with the enemy, the march of the column was directed towards the extreme right of the rebel lines. The European Brigade here then formed line to the right, and a general advance was made. The enemy apparently had not till then realised that the attack would be made from this quarter, and hurriedly endeavoured to bring some of their guns to bear upon us. A shot passed over our colours, causing some one near to make some exclamation which brought out a reprimand from the brigadier-colonel, Evelyn of the 20th, who was riding in front of the line a little to the right of our colours, talking in the ranks not being proper at such a time. This fire, however, soon ceased. Major Innes, who here gained the V.C., and others who had reached these guns, cut down the gunners. The rebel line had been taken in flank. They made all haste to retire, and Franks having no cavalry to send in pursuit, the affair was over.

On the following morning, when the troops were drawn up preparatory to resuming the

march, the General rode down the front of my regiment in no amiable mood. 'You 97th,' he remarked, 'nearly got me shot yesterday morning. Your skirmishers retired in a hurry,' and pointing to myself added, 'and I believe that young officer was at the head of them.' I naturally felt sore at this, and on the first opportunity complained to Colonel Ingram, who was commanding the regiment.

The following morning a staff officer rode up to me and said, 'The General wants to see you.' Wondering what was up I marched up to where the General was standing, surrounded by all the commanding officers, and saluted. The General was saying to them, 'Well, gentlemen, we shall be joining the commander-in-chief's camp in a few days. We shall have to get shaved and trimmed up a bit.' As many of them had beards of considerable growth, they did not seem to appreciate the remark. Turning to me, he said, 'Well, sir, I think I must acquit you of what I said yesterday morning. I am told you were not with the skirmishers.' 'No, sir,' I said, 'I am one of those unfortunate individuals who carry the colours, and have no chance of getting to the front.' This seemed to tickle the fancy of those who were standing round. 'That will do, sir,' said General Franks, 'you can rejoin your regiment.'

We captured about twenty-one guns in the engagement at Sultanpore, and they presented an imposing appearance when parked in our lines, as some of them were of large calibre. Continuing our march, they were all destroyed before the rear guard left the ground. The road we took had evidently been followed by some of the fugitives. Dead bodies of sepoys, drums, musical instruments, and debris of one sort and another marked the line of a hurried retreat. One horrible spectacle I saw on emerging from a village. Suspended to a tree by the heels was the charred body of a native. A fire had apparently been lighted beneath him, and the poor wretch, who was probably punished as a spy, had evidently suffered a lingering death.

It was late in the evening when our rear guard marched into camp, the glare of burning villages illumining the horizon, the smoke ascending in dense masses, of which I was often reminded when encountering the appalling bush fires with which I afterwards became familiar in Western Queensland.

During this march through the fertile Province of Oude, we had been well supplied with rations. The supply of cattle in that district had not previously been tapped ; the beef was of fair quality, and we were supplied with droves of cattle at several points by native contractors, who did not

despise the commissariat rupee. The country was almost invariably level, well cultivated and picturesquely timbered.

We could now hear the heavy boom of the siege guns at Lucknow; Outram in his entrenched camp at the Alumbagh repelling attacks made upon him by the force in Lucknow.

These sounds which we could hear in the still morning air made us doubly anxious to reach the scene of operations. Having been some time without any detailed news, we only knew that Sir Colin Campbell was preparing to make a general advance on Lucknow from Cawnpore, with the object of its final capture, and that we were to join him at a certain date.

Our march was continued for several days without interruption, until one morning the advanced guard perceiving a cloud of dust in the front, the word rang out down the line 'Cavalry and Horse Artillery to the front.'

It was, however, soon perceived that friends and not foes were approaching. The morning sun glittered on the spear heads of the 9th Lancers, and soon a squadron of that magnificent regiment rode up. The men and horses, though with uniforms and accoutrements showing signs of service, were all trim and workmanlike in appearance, both men and horses evidently in fine training, and conveying to the spectator that sense

of power and confidence which somehow fills the observer when viewing a seasoned regiment. These men had brought despatches from the commander-in-chief, and were to accompany us to Lucknow.

On the morning of the 2nd March it was known that a fort called 'Dowralie,' visible to the right of our road, was occupied by some rebels. Our General not liking to leave them unmolested on his flank and rear, sent forward two companies of the 97th, under Major Chichester of that regiment, and some sowars and light guns to take the place. The fort, however, was strong and surrounded by a ditch, a bridge leading to the main entrance. It was soon apparent that, loopholed and defended as the place was, it was not so easy to get into it, and a brisk fire was opened on the attacking force. The gate, however, was ultimately blown in and the assault made, but we lost an officer, Percy Smith, and several men in this business.

On the following day we remained halted within seventeen miles of Lucknow.

CHAPTER II

Join main army under Sir Colin Campbell—Siege of Lucknow and subsequent events—Central India—Mooltan—Visit Australia.

On the 4th March 1858 our brigade joined the main army before Lucknow. Being myself on baggage guard that day it was late in the evening when my company joined the remainder of the regiment, and took up its position in the line. On our right was the Dilkoosha, an ornamental building, though invisible in the darkness. With arms piled, our front covered by pickets, the guns with their fuses lighted, the division in line of battle bivouacked for the night.

The night was cold. I shared my cloak with Hudson, a brother officer, but with the incessant noise of the guns about two thousand yards in front, the novelty of the situation, and speculation as to what would turn up on the following day, our slumber was only intermittent.

An hour before daylight the division was under arms. With the glimmer of morning light the cannonade seemed to freshen, everything below was in gloom; the flash of guns from right to left alone perceptible, the rebels perhaps thinking

that by constant fire we should be scared from attacking, but dawn came on apace. The first glimmering of light showed mist and smoke rising in distant places, and soon here and there some dome of apparently burnished gold caught the first rays of the morning sun; then tall minarets, domes and shapely buildings set amidst luxuriant trees formed a panorama as interesting as it was beautiful. From the rising ground on which we stood, the extensive city of Lucknow lay spread out before us. On our right front the Martiniere, the Chutter Munzil, Kaiser Bagh, and other places, the names of which had been in every mouth, were pointed out; whilst behind the earthworks and fortifications covering the southern front of the city, were the rebel troops.

On our right, in front of the Dilkoosha, were the sailors of H.M.S. *Shannon* with their heavy guns, under Sir William Peel; on the left of our division, extending in rear and far beyond the Mahomed Bagh, were the troops under Sir Colin Campbell and General Outram.

The army was soon in motion, taking up new positions assigned to the different divisions. Hodson with his red turbaned irregular cavalry passed our front, whilst we were *en route* to take up our position to the south of the Mahomed Bagh; artillery, British and native infantry of Outram's division passed *en route* to cross the

PEEL'S GUNS BEFORE LUCKNOW

Goomti and take the eastern suburbs of the city.

Our tents had been pitched and camp formed on the south side of the Mahomed Bagh, and not being on duty C. Macdonald and myself, having obtained permission to leave the lines for an hour or two, strolled down to Sir W. Peel's battery, which was somewhat in advance on the left front of the Dilkoosha. At the time of our arrival there, our pickets down towards the Martiniere were being relieved, and the rebels kept up a brisk fire on the relieving companies, some of the 42nd, whilst running down and taking advantage of what cover they could obtain. The sailors had some heavy guns, and their shot sent up clouds of dust when they struck the embankments along the front and flanks of the Martiniere.

In order to obtain a better view we went to the top of the Dilkoosha, whence we could see better into the defences. The fire was too heavy for our foes; they were evidently losing men and their guns were becoming disabled. There was one gun on the flank of the Martiniere nearest the river, which the rebels worked very cleverly. It was afterwards discovered that they ran the gun up an inclined plane to an embrasure to fire, and then immediately withdrew it. One shot from this gun thrown high in the air dropped

amongst the 34th regiment, which with their arms piled were in rear of the building. That gun was not silenced when we left.

We spent that night in our camp, and whilst sitting in our tent at dinner—we had no regular mess at that time—although our camp was supposed to be out of range of the enemy's fire, some missile struck and killed my horse picketed outside.

On the following morning after pickets had been withdrawn, we occupied the Mahomed Bagh on our front, a fine lot of trees covering an area of perhaps three or four hundred yards square, surrounded by a mud wall on the top of which on two sides facing the rebel entrenchments we soon placed sand-bags where practicable, and loopholing elsewhere soon made the place defensible.

The enemy's line of defence was distant about eleven hundred yards, but by taking full sights with our Enfield rifles, we could see our bullets knocking up the dust in their embrasures, whilst it was not safe for them to show themselves on the parapet.

Our position was to a certain extent searched by guns on our left, but though their shot came swishing through the compound, the damage was almost entirely confined to the trees.

The sepoys seemed in fairly good heart at this time. Their bands played every afternoon, and wound up with 'God Save the Queen.'

This sort of thing went on for a few days, during which, however, we were much on outlying picket in contact with the rebel lines, and also supported an attack made by the 20th regiment and some Ghoorkas on our left. Some advance was made in that direction, and the village or suburb was held by a portion of our regiment.

Sir James Outram, meanwhile, had from the other side of the Goomti been shelling night and day, and on the morning of the 9th, the Highland Brigade, supported by the 53rd and 91st, advanced across our right front to the assault. This, however, appeared to be the signal for the rebels to vacate the Martiniere, and ere the assailants reached the entrenchments, we could see the defenders hurrying out with their baggage to the rear.

On the 13th my regiment moved down to relieve the 53rd, and encamped for the night under shelter of the Secundra Bagh, where at the relief of Lucknow under Sir Colin Campbell, much slaughter had occurred. We were screened from direct fire, and the rebel gunners having evidently run short of shell, we passed a quiet night. The want of shell was apparent from the first, whilst in the Mahomed Bagh several stone shells and brass utensils were thrown up in place of the real article.

From this resting-place we moved off on the

following morning, through the suburbs in our front in the direction of the Kaiser Bagh, avoiding as much as possible the musketry fire which opened upon us from neighbouring houses and enclosures. After threading several streets, we found ourselves in proximity to the Kaiser Bagh. We found a small breach in a wall on our left, several companies passed through, and we were soon in the centre of one of the squares.

In those days the Kaiser Bagh (the King of Oude's Palace) consisted of a number of large squares approaching in size some of the London squares, but beautifully laid out with lawns, shrubs, and artificial water, crossed by marble bridges, with here and there marble summer-houses exceedingly luxurious, of considerable size, handsomely decorated and gorgeously furnished.

Alongside one of these marble buildings our Grenadier company under Colonel Brown, who had safely crossed and re-crossed the shot-swept glacis of the Redan in the Crimea, and my own No. 2 formed up, sheltered for the moment from the well-sustained musketry fire with which we were greeted from the further end of the square, the gilded domes of the more imposing buildings in the square standing high around us in the glittering sunlight.

It was evident that we should do no good remaining where we were, so after a short consulta-

tion between the lieutenant-colonel, Leigh, who was with us, and our two captains, the Grenadier company was taken forward by Brown, who, taking a rifle from one of his men, led the way. He was shortly afterwards bruised on the shoulder by a bullet. My company was directed to make for the buildings at the side of the square on our right, where a gateway and staircase were visible. To do this we had to cross some seventy or eighty yards of intervening space well swept by bullets. 'Off you go,' said Colonel Leigh. Venables, commanding my company, not liking to lead a helter-skelter movement, said, 'After you, Colonel,' and across we ran, bullets swishing past us pretty freely, but no one was hurt.

Finding this side vacated, and not knowing what to do in an isolated position, we threaded our way through the buildings in a direction parallel to that taken by the other company, and formed up with other companies of the regiment alongside the main palace on the northern side, where several companies had arrived. The Colonel, Ingram, had been shot through the head, and several men were wounded.

It was evident if the rebels were to be driven out, some systematic line of action would have to be adopted, and the companies were told off in different directions to work through the buildings. My company was sent back to enter from

the rear the line of buildings on the left side of the square we had first entered, and to work through them until we met some of our other companies working round from an opposite direction.

On reaching the point indicated, we entered through a large archway and ascended the staircase to the first floor, the pioneers breaking through the partition walls, when no entrance was afforded by doors or balconies. In one of these rooms a stone spiral staircase led down to the ground floor at the bottom of the steps ; the muzzles of several muskets protruded, the owners evidently in readiness for any one descending. Whilst I was considering whether I ought to take some of my men down, an artillery officer, Colonel Strange, if I remember rightly, came along, and said, 'Oh, I will soon shift those fellows.' Sending one of his men for a couple of shells, a hole was made in the floor, and on arrival of the shells he lighted first one and then the other and pitched them through the hole, where they immediately exploded. Those who were not killed by the shells bolted out into the open, and were immediately chopped up by some of Brazier's sihks, who were close at hand. Our Sergeant-Major was unfortunately shot through this hole.

We did not make much further progress that afternoon, and remained during the night in

the buildings. Our men had rations in their haversacks, and our bheesties supplied us with water.

At daylight next morning we continued our progress through the buildings, meeting with little opposition. Some swordsmen in one of the rooms were soon disposed of. When we reached the next square a regiment of irregular cavalry was drawn up in squadrons within twenty yards of us. As no one amongst us was sufficiently acquainted with the language to interrogate them, we could not ascertain whether they were friends or foes. The native officers with their swords drawn, riding in front of their squadrons, would make no reply to our questions in English, so they got the benefit of the doubt and soon marched off leisurely by threes.

Pushing on towards the corner of this square towards the close of the day, in a small enclosure we came upon several companies of a native infantry regiment, red coated sepoys; their regimental number has escaped my memory. They were shot down almost to a man. The other wing of this regiment suffered heavily from one of our companies coming through the buildings on our right, joining this at right angles.

There was much loose gunpowder about during our progress on this afternoon. A large building on our left was blown into the air, and a very heavy

explosion was prevented on our right front by the bowling over of a sepoy, who with a burning brand in his hand was making for a building, on the ground floor of which, as we soon ascertained, was an immense quantity of loose gunpowder. On the following day, whilst gunpowder was being emptied into a large well somehow an explosion occurred, A scorching rush of flame came up the well with a loud report, singeing some grass near, and causing us to scatter rather hurriedly.

During the first night in these buildings every one was much on the alert. Sepoys were lurking in the buildings, and a man could hardly stir without being challenged. Our losses in the two days were light, though Colonel Ingram, Sergeant-Major Turner and six men were killed, and one officer and twenty-five men wounded.

One of our companies encamped on the top of one of the buildings was subjected to rather an absurd panic. One of the officers of the company had a native servant, who went by the name of Nebuchadnezzar. A subaltern in the company who was rather given to talking in his sleep, suddenly awoke, and seeing this native close by him, fired two shots at him with his revolver, fortunately missing him. Some startled soldiers cried out, 'The enemy is upon us,' and there was considerable confusion in the

darkness. A company of the 10th in the neighbourhood hearing the shots, also opened fire in the direction of the tumult, and it was some little time before order could be restored.

The night was a strange one. Fires broke out in different directions, the dropping fire of musketry which broke out suddenly at intervals, the flickering of the shells making their circuit from the mortars across the Goomti searching the city in our front, the howling of the dogs or jackals, the metallic sounding bang of the jingalls, the continual bugling of the rebels sounding the advance, all tended to make a scene not readily forgotten.

The destruction of property was considerable, and there was some plunder: Sikhs, Ghoorkas and European regiments were in occupation. Sacks of rupees, silver ingots, jewellery, beautiful embroidered shawls and silks in all directions; the burning rooms covered with dead bodies, carpets and lounges stained with blood, immense candelabra pier glasses starred and shattered by the bullets of a reckless soldiery, beautiful sets of china with the King of Oude's arms on them, boxes of plate turned over and smashed by the butt ends of the muskets of Ghoorkas and Sikhs; what they could not carry away was ruthlessly destroyed.

On the 16th we pushed on further into the city

as far as the Residency. Here, leaving the battered 'Bailey Guard' on our right, we occupied a position from Phillip's bungalow to the Vizier's palace on the Cawnpore road, the latter place occupied by our headquarters. A few rebel marksmen kept up a fire in our front, but they were soon sought for, and driven off or otherwise disposed of.

While we were holding this post, an event occurred which might have led to very unpleasant consequences. One of our patrols brought to our headquarters some men who appeared to be on a looting expedition. In the absence of the regimental interpreter, a Madras man was employed with the object of finding out all about them. The man apparently, as it turned out afterwards, was not competent as an interpreter, and the conclusion arrived at was that they belonged to the rebel side. They were condemned to be shot, and were ranged up against a wall in the Vizier's palace, for execution. Fortunately at this moment an officer connected with the Ghoorkas rode through the gateway.

'Hullo,' said he, 'what on earth are you going to do with those men?' 'Shoot them,' replied the officer. 'Shoot them?' said the other. 'Do you know who they are? Why, that man there,' pointing to one of them, 'is Jung Bahadur's cook. Know him well.' 'I don't know

who they are,' said the other. 'Our patrol found them looting, and the Colonel has ordered them to be shot. You had better see him about it.'

The Colonel was at once sought for, the matter explained, the men scolded by the Ghoorka officer and released. They were, however, considerably scared, and did not appear again in our neighbourhood.

We had an officer in the regiment, an Irishman named Morgan, who was continually on the prowl looking out for personal encounters, and whilst one or two of our companies were picketed in Phillip's bungalow, he came strolling along the road from headquarters on our left. 'What are you doing there?' said the subaltern on duty. 'What business is it of yours?' said the Irishman. 'My orders are,' said the other, 'not to allow any one to pass this way, and if you persist in doing so, I will report you.'

Whilst this altercation was going on, a sepoy with a red coat and native wrappings in lieu of trousers, popped out of a house about a hundred yards in front, and dropping on to one knee, commenced to take a careful aim at our Tipperary man. 'Look out,' cried my friend, 'that fellow will bag you.' The Irishman presenting that portion of his anatomy not generally made prominent when addressing another, awaited

the result. The bullet flattened against the wall, and our friend immediately started in pursuit. The sepoy not waiting to re-load, re-entered the building, but whether our man caught him I do not remember.

Whilst at Phillip's bungalow we were visited by an officer of the 79th, whose regiment was in occupation of the great Immaum Bara on the further side of the Residency, and on returning with him we crossed the Residency, meeting Sir Colin Campbell, Sir James Outram, Sir E. Lugard, and some of their staff, apparently inspecting the position.

Our next move was through the deserted city to the Moosa Bagh. The heavy firing we had heard in that direction denoted the escape of a large number of the force which had been in possession of Lucknow. We reached our destination late in the evening, relieving a Highland regiment, our headquarters remaining at Ali Nucky Khan's palace on the banks of the Goomti.

On the following morning at an early hour, Sir Colin Campbell came suddenly to see us. The whole place had been left in an untidy condition by the Highland regiment we had relieved, and arriving as we did after dark, we had had no time to clean up. Sir Colin Campbell, however, would listen to no excuses, and the result was we were ordered extra parades for a week. The

place was soon in apple-pie order, and the distance of all places within range carefully noted.

The engineers were busy blowing up buildings in the neighbourhood which would afford shelter to an enemy. Venables and myself had quarters in a room in one of the corner towers. A little engineer officer who had been through the Residency siege came up to us and said, 'I have laid a mine in this archway crossing the road alongside of you. You had better stand aside whilst the powder is being fired.' We accordingly stood clear of the windows through which a few bricks came flying.

At the Moosa Bagh the main building consisted of several high stories, turrets with spiral staircases giving access to the roof, where we pitched our mess tent. An extended view overlooking the Goomti river and the northern side of the city was obtained from this point. A large enclosure with high walls at the back had been at one time laid out in gardens, enclosing also other buildings, some of which were turned into officers' quarters.

One of our officers, C. Browne, had a clever horse, which on one occasion he brought up the spiral staircase, on to the roof where our mess tent was pitched, and successfully took him down again. This building, however, was fatal to one of our officers. Assistant-Surgeon Dumbreck

somehow in the night managed to step out of one of the windows, and fell seventy feet on to the steps below.

And now commenced a dreary time. It was the middle of April and the hot weather had set in. With a detachment at the Moosa Bagh our regiment remained shut up in Ali Nucky Khan's palace—a large group of enclosed buildings alongside the Goomti, and although at times we heard distant cannonading, there was but little to relieve the monotony of the time. The men, particularly in the low buildings, when morning parade was over, suffered greatly from the heat. Our main guard one day was relieved three times, the men having been stricken down with heat apoplexy or fever, and deaths were of daily occurrence. The death rate in the garrison averaged, I believe, sixty per week, and with the wet season cholera was more or less rife amongst us.

After being laid up for about six weeks, I obtained leave to go to Cawnpore for a few days, and stopping half way at Raneegunge, remained a day or two with the 20th regiment. It was very apparent how much healthier the 20th were under canvas than our men were in Lucknow. Two of their officers had rather a narrow escape a few days before my arrival. They were out shooting at a short distance from the camp, and had one pony between

PART OF THE RESIDENCY, LUCKNOW

them to carry the game, when suddenly a troop of sowars issued from a village and made for them. The two at once jumped on to the pony, and turning his head towards the camp galloped off as fast as the pony could take them, followed by the sowars, who pursued them almost into camp.

At Cawnpore the buildings adjacent to the historic well were evidently in much the same condition as they were when left by Havelock's men on their march to Lucknow, whilst General Wheeler's entrenchments surrounding the dilapidated barracks had been rendered still more insignificant by the summer rains.

With the cooler weather the health of the troops improved, but we had lost many men when reinforced by a detachment from England towards the end of the year.

On the 12th January 1859 we marched for Banda, reaching that place on the 26th of the same month. A native infantry regiment had mutinied here. Bungalows and barracks were in ruins. Many of the Europeans had been protected by the Nawab of Banda in his fortified palace. The Commissioner Mayne had induced the Nawab to remain loyal. However, his followers were not to be trusted, and it having been judged prudent to leave, the Europeans marched out of the fort, the Commissioner holding a pistol

to shoot the Nawab with when he walked out, if any resistance was offered. The Assistant Commissioner here was Mr. Crosswaith, now Sir Charles Crosswaith. Most of the fugitives, I believe, made good their escape and joined General Whitelock's column.

I accompanied two of our companies to Kirwee, relieving two companies of the 43rd under Captain Colvin. The place was noted for the large amount of prize money which had been captured there. The country abounded with antelope and small game; a few leopards and wolves, and a good many hyenas. One morning early I saw on the top of a hill on the outskirts of a village some six or eight hyenas enter between some rocks. On climbing to the top I found small beads and necklaces such as are worn by native women and children, in considerable quantity distributed about the narrow entrance to the cavern which these animals had entered. Whether these ornaments had been placed as peace offerings or had belonged to bodies carried up there, I could not ascertain.

Tantia Topee at this time was still at large, and a wandering band of budmashes were occasionally reported to be in our neighbourhood. On returning one evening from Banda, some fifty miles away, where I had been in company with a brother officer on a few days' leave to attend

the Garrison races, on approaching our encampment, which was in a lope of mango-trees about two miles beyond the Kirwee fort, we met a soldier escorting a native cart. On asking what he was doing, he replied, 'Sure the inimy is coming down on us, and we are all ordered into the fort.' My companion, who was captain of the man's company, having explained to him pretty forcibly he was talking nonsense, we rode off to the fort, where there was considerable bustle. The camp equipment had all been brought in, a detachment told off to remain in charge, and the remainder were preparing for a march, a few camels had been secured to carry ammunition and the men's coats, and before midnight we were well on the way to the hills, a company of a Madras regiment with us.

Our march was occasioned by news which had been brought to the Collector, who accompanied us on an elephant, that two railway engineers had been murdered near a village some forty miles distant by a band of Dacoits. We had a toilsome march throughout the night over basaltic country impracticable for vehicles, and at daylight the men being rather knocked up, a halt was made whilst the neighbouring village was requisitioned for food. After a feed of hot chupattees, a few fowls and thick milk with some sugar, we continued our march through the rough

basaltic country. Early in the afternoon, whilst following the road along a stony creek, we came to the spot where the engineers had been attacked, a small village lying beyond. We were informed by the villagers that, as we anticipated, the budmashes had decamped the previous day. Failing therefore to take them by surprise, we returned to Kirwee and took up our quarters during the rainy season in the fort.

On the 14th November I joined No. 2 column Bundlecund Field Force, as staff officer under Colonel W. W. Turner, C.B., in pursuit of Feroze Shah and Ferzund Ali. This force, consisting of two companies 97th regiment, headquarters of 22nd Punjab Infantry, and 4th Irregular cavalry, had left before I could join them. However, riding after them with a trooper or two by Kalinger Fort, Rewa and Punnah, I succeeded in overtaking them at Nyagong. Meanwhile the column had succeeded in cutting up some of those they were in pursuit of.

This part of the country being hilly, wooded and rough, is picturesque and full of game, but unsuited for vehicles. Our baggage had to be carried on camels and elephants.

I spent an evening with the Punnah Raja, who furnished me with an escort. His palace was inside the usual fortified walls, on the bastions of which guns were mounted ; his house was well

furnished in European style. He had a considerable library of books, many of them standard works, in addition to many printed in Persian and Nagari characters; and a large assortment of musical instruments mostly in glass cases, for ornament, not for use.

The Raja was a keen sportsman, and before leaving drove me through his preserves.

At Rewa I met and was hospitably entertained by Captain Osborne, who happened to be in that neighbourhood in the earlier days of the Mutiny, and induced the Raja to remain staunch to the British. He was only a subaltern in the Madras army at the time the Mutiny broke out, and his prompt action met with the praise it deserved.

Several columns were co-operating with ours, and the rebels having been effectually dispersed we returned to Banda.

In February 1860 our regiment marched to Jubbulpore. I obtained leave to remain behind to read up for the Hindustani examination which was to be held in a few weeks at Allahabad. My companion was Captain Pym of the 75th, who in order to retain his staff appointment was also going up for the examination. I mention the incident, because during the fortnight we remained there one of those singular coincidences we sometimes hear of occurred.

We put up at a comfortable two-storied build-

ing, just outside the town, on the Kirwee road, a large tank of the kind so common in India alongside of it. My friend and I were sleeping in the same room. One morning my friend appearing very doleful, I asked what was the matter with him. He replied, 'My father is dead.' 'There is no mail in,' I said, 'how do you know?' 'He came to my bedside last night,' he replied, 'and said "Good-bye, Charlie."' I pooh-poohed the idea. However, when the mail came in some weeks later, his father had died at the time the occurrence referred to took place.

After passing the examination at Allahabad, I started to join the regiment via Mirzapore, starting from this place on a pitch dark night in a mail cart amidst tremendous rain, thunder and lightning. The driver somehow managed to keep the road. Before daylight, however, things had improved. The road was good, and some of the forest scenery in this part of India is very beautiful. On emerging from it one saw long lines of flowering trees extending for miles on each side of the road; innumerable squirrels crossed the road, apparently trying to see how close they could pass in front of the horse without being run over.

Jubbulpore was then, and probably still is, a favourite station, the Nerbudda river flowing within a few miles, its jungles abounding in game,

large and small. At some seven or eight miles distance the river flows through beautiful marble cliffs, and I remember seeing on the face of them the mould of the foreparts of two full-grown elephants, side by side, as if they had been embedded when the marble was in a plastic state. The representation was so perfect and natural, that it could hardly be the work of any human hand.

So many people have written of shooting expeditions that I will not attempt it here, beyond relating one encounter with a tigress, under rather exceptional circumstances.

I used occasionally to get a week or ten days' leave and proceed to the jungles with a brother officer, Lieutenant Safford, who afterwards commanded the regiment.

On one occasion whilst seeking a tiger which we knew to be in a ravine, the Shikari posted me on the bank just where a cattlepad came out of it. However, not thinking it quite good enough to stand where I should not see the beast until close upon me, I took up a position about twenty-five yards to the left alongside a tree. After we had been waiting about ten minutes, whilst the beaters were working up, the tigress came to the top of the bank with a bound, and cantered along the path I had left. I let fly at her, but the bullet struck her too far aft to stop her. We had, there-

fore, to hunt up on foot the wounded animal. On our beating her up, she broke through our beaters, and went up some rising ground amongst long grass and light jungle. Forming line we marched in her direction. Suddenly within twenty yards she rose and came bounding towards us. My friend had on a suit of khaki, dyed green. He reckoned green was a good colour for the jungle. The tigress seemed to be of the same opinion. She made straight for him. He gave her the contents of both barrels and I one without stopping her. Fortunately I had reserved one barrel and let her have it behind the shoulder, just as she sprang at my friend and sent him and his rifle spinning. This shot, however, was so close that it turned the animal round and she landed on her side. This gave my friend time to get up before the tigress recovered herself. For a second or two she glared at us, we standing without a move. She then turned her head, and seeing one of our men carrying my spare rifle, pounced upon him. It was some minutes before we could re-load and finish her. The man was badly mauled, but recovered with the loss of a leg.

In the following September I proceeded to Delhi, and joined the 4th Sikh Cavalry as acting adjutant, Lieutenant John Watson, V.C., commanding, now General Sir John Watson, G.C.B. The

second in command was Lieutenant R. Low, the late General Sir R. Low, G.C.B. I remained with them till the following summer, our time being occupied until hot weather set in with drill, manœuvres, and pig-sticking in the Berarce jungles.

After a few weeks in the hills with Nicholas of the Bengal Artillery, during which we had reached the Spiti valley by a snowy pass, I was overtaken by an order from the Adjutant-General's department, appointing me adjutant to the 7th Bengal Cavalry. Our intention had been to proceed to Ladak. I reluctantly left my friend to proceed by himself, and marched back to Simla, and thence pushed on to join the 7th, which was coming down from the north. I met them at Rawulpindee, Major T. F. Wilson, C.B., commanding, afterwards General T. F. Wilson. The rainy season had just commenced. We at once marched via Pind Dadun Khan to Mooltan, crossing the Jhelum, Chenaub and Ravee, rivers mostly in high flood and some of them of great width, and a wet trip we had, our camps sometimes being inundated with water, spreading beyond the banks nearly up to the horses' bellies, until we reached the rainless belt of country down towards Mooltan. This dry country was covered in all directions with small tiles, showing that at some former period the country had been thickly popu-

lated, but with the exception of these tiles and remains of canals, not a trace remained to show that the country was other than virgin soil.

Major Wilson had been Military Secretary and Adjutant-General to Sir Henry Lawrence during the siege of the Residency and the battle of Chinhut, and had many interesting details to relate.

Speaking of Sir Henry Lawrence and the affection which every one had for him, he said Sir Henry's mind was so much preoccupied with his duty and thought for others that he was often quite unmindful of himself, and his staff had to look after him in many ways, particularly that he did not go about in the blazing sun with his head covered merely with a small forage cap.

On reaching Mooltan, a perfect oasis in the desert, we were met by Colonel Fraser Tylter, commanding the 9th Bengal Cavalry. This officer had been Havelock's Quartermaster-General in his advance on Lucknow.

There were also in garrison here the 101st Bengal Fusiliers, 29th Sikh Infantry, and some artillery. The Sikhs were commanded by Colonel Gordon, the late General J. J. H. Gordon, C.B., military secretary at the India Office. He had been attached to my regiment as interpreter when marching through Oude. At Mooltan our regi-

ments used to parade and drill in the same neighbourhood, and we used to watch opportunities for charging down on him before he could get into square, but he was always on the alert. On one occasion, on returning from a distant parade where there was good ground for manœuvring free from dust, he formed square on a bridge we had to pass, and in taking a troop higher up the canal in order to get in his rear, the ground not being favourable for rapid movement, a company of his ubiquitous Sikhs came up at the double on the other side whilst we were floundering through the canal, and evidently thinking it a good time to pay us off for our constant charges, and for putting a little reality into the game, commenced pricking our horses with their bayonets before I could get their native officer to stop them. Fortunately no serious damage resulted, but the Sikhs did not like being played with, and our men were of a different race.

After some months of cantonment life in Mooltan and seeing no prospect of active employment, I turned my attention to Australia and New Zealand. Some of my friends had visited those parts and their descriptions were attractive, and officers were leaving India to settle there. So obtaining six months' leave I started down the Indus in the river steamer *Outram*, reached Kotree in five days, thermometer 108

degrees in the shade, thence by rail to Kurachi and by s.s. *Coringa* to Bombay, thence by s.s. *Orissa* to Ceylon.

Meeting, however, the full blast of the monsoon, which commenced on the day of departure, the steamer was retarded, and on our reaching Point de Galle, the Australian steamer had gone. It was not till the following month that I was able to sail from Ceylon in the s.s. *Northam*, her decks piled with coal for the voyage. I arrived at King George's Sound seventeen days later.

After spending a few months in Australia and making an attempt to visit Queensland, which failed owing to the steamer breaking down, I returned to India, taking with me a wife.

I found on reaching India that alterations had been in progress, and in order to retain my appointment, it would be necessary for me to join the staff corps and sacrifice the money which had been paid for my commissions. Not approving of this, and as there appeared to be no immediate prospect of active service, we returned to Australia about May 1863.

EARLY DAYS
IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

CHAPTER III

Queensland in 1863, difficulty in obtaining information—Mount McConnel—Purchase sheep—E. Henry goes out west with Devlin—Stock sent out west—Blacks troublesome on the Burdekin river.

QUEENSLAND in 1863 had only a few years previously been separated from New South Wales, and, in fact, the former colony was still frequently spoken of as Moreton Bay. The explorations of Burke and Wills, and subsequently Landsborough and Buchanan, Walker, Mackinlay and others, had turned the attention of those wanting pastoral lands in the direction of the Barcoo river and Northern and Western Queensland. My intention had been in the first instance to go to New Zealand, but meeting by chance soon after arriving in Sydney my cousin Ernest Henry, a well-known northern pioneer, and explaining my intentions, he at once said, 'Oh, Queensland is your colony.' The incident of meeting him seemed peculiar and somewhat opportune, so I turned my steps northward.

Queensland north of the 23rd parallel of latitude was at the period of which I am writing a comparatively unknown country. Glowing

accounts of fine rivers and luxuriantly grassed country had reached Sydney, but reports were very conflicting. Even Jock McLean, a well-known Darling Downs squatter, whom I met at the Australian Club in Sydney, could get me no reliable information, and the few who did know anything about the country were chary of telling anything.

Determined to investigate for myself, I left Rockhampton for Bowen in the s.s. *Eagle*, of 30 horse power, Captain Harley in command. I was travelling in company with Ernest Henry, for whose country on the Burdekin I was bound, and among others on board were Sydney Davis of Peak Downs. Falling in with the trade wind after leaving Keppel Bay, in about thirty-six hours we entered Port Denison, the farthest settlement north at that time. Bowen the township there had not been long opened for settlement, stock having been taken overland on to the tributaries of the Burdekin. A port being much needed for the landing of supplies and shipment of produce, Bowen was selected and was at that time a busy little place, several stores and hotels doing a brisk business, and squatters arriving almost daily from distances varying from fifty to two hundred miles, to fill in application forms for land and make declarations of having stocked the country. It was necessary to place twenty-

five head of cattle or a hundred sheep per square mile upon the land before licence to occupy was granted. After remaining a day or so to purchase horses, which were rather expensive, a fairly good horse costing £20 to £30, we left for Mount McConnel, my cousin's station. Camping the first night at Bodes station on the Don river, we reached the Bogey river on the second night, where we were hospitably entertained by a Scotch family of Macdonalds, who had a cattle station amongst the hills some forty miles from the coast. The nights were cold at this time of year, and the mornings frosty with vapour rising at sunrise from the creek below, in which, however, we had a bathe, and after breakfasting we started on our ride in the crisp morning air, under the cloudless sky of the Queensland winter.

The country we had traversed on the previous day was the ordinary coast country of that part, much of it sandy with a light pipeclay soil, covered with long coarse grass, and plentifully timbered with white stemmed gum-trees, the monotony varied by small patches of black soil country with better grass. Here and there were sandy gravelly ridges with sandalwood-trees growing amongst box and white gums.

Riding through country of one or other of the above mentioned types, before noon we reached Strathmore station, prettily situated on the bank

of a creek, with the main Leichardt range standing up and looming blue in the distance.

This station had been occupied some twelve months previously by Selheim Touisant & Co., and stocked with some twelve thousand sheep and some cattle. Shearing was in progress when we arrived, and the sheep turned out from the shed looked white and clean upon the plain. Fencing had not come into vogue in those days, and the sheep were shepherded. The season was a good one and every one was busy, and looking forward to the future. At lunch the talk alternated from the opening up of new country to the American War of Secession which was then raging. Afterwards we pushed on and camped on the banks of a running creek at the foot of the range, where grass and water were plentiful for our horses, the hills standing up in front of us some twelve hundred feet high.

On the following morning, in crisp and bracing air, we ascended the range and followed a track through open forest country, on which J. Earle and his brother had formed a cattle station. About noon we reached their bark humpy, and fared well upon good corned beef, damper, and pickles, the property of the occupant, who no doubt was out amongst his cattle. Blacks were fairly numerous amongst these ranges. The cattle had not long been brought to the place,

and under such circumstances a man was generally out from daylight till dark. A cattle station provided a free and independent life in those days, and a healthy one. With markets for fat bullocks fairly good and the herd increasing, it was a pleasant life too, not, however, without trouble sometimes from the inroads of blacks, who would too often spear and scatter the cattle, whilst in summer bush fires were sometimes destructive and difficult to contend against. It is a phase of Australian life which has in a great measure passed away. Fencing and settlement have altered the style of management. Cattle are quieter under better control, and the mustering of wild cattle, like the handling of sheep in yards at lambing time, is almost a lost art.

Leaving Hidden valley we followed a marked tree line, passing Mount Wyatt to the Selheim river, a tributary of the Suttor. We followed this creek down until we arrived at Mount McConnel homestead, which was prettily situated on the right bank of the creek.

The following morning Ernest Henry and I rode over to the Burdekin river, twelve miles distant, near the junction of the Suttor and Selheim, where the cattle were depastured on black soil plains, alternating with timbered ridges on both sides of the Burdekin, which is here a fine stream with long deep reaches of water well

supplied with fish; and, being above the falls where the river breaks through the range, it is free from alligators. From a low hill across the river, a good view of the surrounding country was obtained. The smoke of the fire from a camp of blacks curled upwards in the evening air, under the distant hills. Well watered and well suited for cattle, we had yet to discover that the country was not suited for sheep. My cousin had some on their way up from the south, and I determined to purchase some and join him in the experiment.

Taking with us an old Scotch overseer, Willie Muir, we travelled up the Suttor and Belyando to Eaglefield station, then owned by Dr. Wilkie, who had sheep for sale. Late in the evening of our arrival, C. Featherstonhaugh came in, and asked if he could have some supper. I think he was after the same sheep, so that my chances of a deal were not improved by his arrival. Sheep in those days were valuable. However, in the end I purchased eighteen hundred young ewes for eighteen hundred guineas; these ewes or most of them had been bred, I believe, by Mrs. McNab.

Sheep drafting in those days had to be done by hand, and my lot had to be monthed and picked out of some twelve thousand sheep. There were no proper drafting yards or swing gates to facili-

tate the work. Dr. Wilkie was short of rations and could spare only a few pounds of flour for the men who were to travel with the sheep, so leaving the overseer and a couple of men with the flock, we pushed on after the first day, trusting to luck for something to eat on the road home. Having a big kangaroo dog with us and revolvers, we secured an old man kangaroo the first afternoon, and had some very good kangaroo-tail soup for supper. On the following day, many stray cattle being about in the scrubs, we rounded up a mob and secured a fine unbranded calf, which was very good roasted, though we had no salt. Of course this was not a strictly legal thing to do, but in those days in the Suttor scrubs one hundred miles or more distant from any supplies, we had at all events reasonable excuse.

In due course the sheep arrived at Mount McConnel, and as no shepherd was procurable for a time, I had to shepherd them myself. I made a yard for them below the junction of the Selheim with the Suttor river on the edge of a black soil plain.

Shortly afterwards I obtained a shepherd, but I had to camp with him every night, as he would not stop by himself on account of the blacks. Shepherds were occasionally being murdered by them, and the Belyando and Suttor river blacks had an evil name in this respect.

We had a light dray and tarpaulin under which to sleep, and at dawn the butcher bird would commence his melodious warble announcing to us that it was time to be stirring, and to put the ashes of the fire together to cook our breakfast. With the first appearance of the sun the air would be filled with the harsh cry of the cockatoo and the chatter and warble of birds in great variety, fluttering amongst the foliage of the high trees whose topmost leaves, stirred by an imperceptible breeze, glistened in the morning sun. The aggressive crow, with his head on one side, would watch our preparations, whilst the perky butcher bird hopped round on the look-out for some chance bit of meat or crumb of damper. On the other side of the river lay a *terra incognita*, hilly and rough, for we were on the outposts of civilisation.

Returning to camp one evening, I found it deserted, no fire, no shepherd, no sheep in the yard. The shepherd had evidently deserted ; his kit had gone. Nothing could be done that night, but on the following morning I was in the saddle as soon as it was light enough to follow the tracks. On the other side of the river there was fairly open forest country, ridgy, but with little patches of good feed, where occasionally for a change we used to put the sheep, and they had been headed across the river on the previous morning.

Riding continuously throughout the day, sometimes losing the tracks on the hard ground, and picking them up again by circling round, about an hour before sunset I came across the first lot of sheep, and soon discovered what appeared to be the remainder all looking full and satisfied, and camping—a good sign that no dogs or blacks had been amongst them. There was, however, no sign of the shepherd, so putting the sheep together, I camped with them. An occasional dog howled in the distance, but did not disturb the flock.

Starting next morning as soon as the stars were off the sky, and steering in the direction of the head station, I succeeded in getting the sheep yarded before dark, and on their being counted found none missing, but I did not bless that shepherd who had departed so unceremoniously without leaving any rations. Fortunately water was plentiful.

We were at this time quite in ignorance of the country to the west of us, but on our journey back from Eaglefield in the Suttor scrub we met Messrs. Hill and Burket, who had just come in from the west, and they accompanied us to Mount McConnel. They had left one of the party, Bloxsome by name, far inland, crippled with rheumatism and unable to move. He was, I believe, rescued some months later. They left

him in a gorge of the tableland country, afterwards part of Fairlight run, giving him all the rations they had, and a supply of sun-dried horse. From the conversation of these gentlemen, we were, however, impressed with the idea that there was plenty of fine unoccupied country out west. They had travelled from the Thompson river to the Flinders following Landsborough's tracks, but it was only with the persistency of a press interviewer that we succeeded in extracting information. We learnt enough to make us consider the advisability of pushing up the Cape river, and going out on to the western watershed. However, several months slipped away without our doing anything in this direction. In the meantime a mob of sheep had been taken up the Cape river, a tributary of the Suttor, by Messrs. W. Kellett and Spry, who formed the station of Natal Downs.

Ernest Henry's sheep also arrived at this time from the Dawson, and as the weather became very threatening, my cousin demurred to undertaking the expedition west, in the face of the wet season which seemed to be approaching, so as soon as shearing was completed I made arrangements to go south and bring back my wife, having first engaged a couple of men to put up a three-roomed cottage and kitchen at the cattle station on the Burdekin.

A day or two before I left an overseer of Mr. Hennings, Mr. Devlin by name, suffering much from rheumatism, the effects of exposure, arrived with a black boy from the head of the Gilbert river, where he had been searching for country, and gave us a long account of his travels. He had, so far as I can remember, made his way from the Burdekin river, and returned by a similar route. His account of those regions was not promising. Much of the country was uninviting, and none suitable, he said, for sheep, though he had seen some fair cattle country, but the blacks were very numerous and inclined to be troublesome. After my departure it appears that Mr. Devlin so far recovered that he made up his mind to start for the west country, and Ernest Henry, not liking to lose the opportunity of securing some of the land of which rumour was favourable, made up his mind to accompany him. And so they set out, taking some fresh horses and another black boy, and a supply of rations. Following up the Cape river and Amelia creek, and passing Billy Webb's lake, they crossed the Sandstone desert and the heads of the Thompson, until the valley of the Flinders met their view from the edge of the tableland, and Jardine valley lay before them with open country to the west as far as the eye could reach. This valley was named by William Landsborough, the explorer, who

writes in his journal, 'The country in this valley described is most beautiful.'

After reaching the present site of Hughenden township, there was no occasion to go farther. Hundreds of square miles of open plains extended in a south and south-westerly direction, without a hoof of stock to tread the grass which waved in all the luxuriance and freshness of an early wet season. Their object was now to return as soon as possible in order to obtain stock to put upon the land. The wet season broke upon them in its full force, but they made their way back as best they could for some three hundred miles through flood and bog, until they reached Mount McConnel. No time was to be lost in securing some of this country, for by this time John Oxley and Henry Betts with five thousand sheep, and Sheaffe and Walpole and Walter Hays with cattle were approaching, and Stewart and Macdonald with sheep were also on the move in search of western country. So, hastily gathering eight hundred head of cattle, E. Henry, accompanied by one of the Morissets and Jim Ryan, with a dray load of supplies and a strong team of bullocks, and several employees, at once made a start for the Flinders. The rain was heavy and the trip a difficult one. Creeks were up and the ground was boggy, which made the country almost impassable. However, the

Mount McConnel cattle had the lead; those behind could travel no faster, and moreover were dependent upon Ernest Henry for the direction, and his cattle having ploughed their way across prairie plains, which were impassable for the dray, descended into Jardine valley, a little to the south of the present railway line, at a place named by our bullock driver, the 'Devil's Eyebrow.' The camp was formed on rising ground at Mount Arthur.

Sheaffe and Walpole and Walter Hays, with their cattle, deployed past within the next few days, and occupied country farther down the river, which is now known as Telemon, Marathon and Richmond Downs. Sheaffe, whose brother, Captain Sheaffe, was for a short time, I think, police magistrate in Bowen, had a fancy for Greek names, and he indulged it on several other stations taken by him farther west.

Oxley and Betts turned off farther back, proceeding up the Cape under the guidance of W. Rankin—'Scotch Willie.' On one occasion, keeping to one of the tributaries instead of the main river, they had to retrace their steps, and lost some time. The creek along which they travelled was subsequently named 'Betts' Mistake creek.' They eventually followed the main river up, and met with a rough and awkward crossing at the Flinders river, near Oxley creek. Then

striking westerly, they came to a creek, which led them down into the Flinders country by one of the Sandy creek gorges, between Glendower station and Wongalee. Then finding the country occupied at Hughenden by Henry's cattle, they struck across by Wongalee, and occupied Fairlight, but they had much trouble with their wagon, and had to lower it by ropes in places, when coming off the tableland.

Subsequent to the events related I returned from the south, bringing some horses overland from Rockhampton, which I had brought from Goulburn in New South Wales. On the voyage to Rockhampton our steamer, the *James Paterson*, bumped on a rock off the Clarence river, into which river we had then to go and tranship the cargo.

On my way from Rockhampton I travelled as far as Lotus creek with Mr. Sheridan, who then owned Lotus creek station, and was afterwards police magistrate at Cardwell. On reaching Mount McConnel I found the house I had been erecting on the Burdekin nearly completed. Soon afterwards, therefore, I rode down to Bowen to meet my wife, who had arranged to follow me. Meeting her there, we started from Bowen on horseback with several horses carrying the packs. Buggies had not been seen in those parts at this time; things generally were in a primitive con-

dition ; goods from the steamers were landed in lighters, and a horse and cart entering the sea brought off passengers and their baggage from the boats. However, such inconveniences were to be expected in those days with a new country in front of us awaiting development, with all its unknown possibilities.

On leaving Bowen the first afternoon we did not get far, our packs being heavy and bulky and the horses erratic in their movements, and rather disposed to scatter our belongings in the salt pans outside Bowen. The second night we encamped within a mile or two of Strathmore station. The dew was heavy and the night chilly, and it had been a long day's ride for my wife.

On the following morning, whilst I was away in search of the horses, the sun had risen and dried up the dew. We had not been sufficiently careful of the fire, which set the grass alight, and when I returned to the camp with the horses, to my horror I met my wife exclaiming that the tent and many of our things had been burned. Had it not been for the kind assistance of a traveller who happened to be near, things would have been much worse. As it was my wife lost some valuable portions of her wardrobe, including a crinoline, which was a most necessary article in those days, and her ingenuity was afterwards severely taxed to manufacture one. However, she suc-

ceeded, but it was some time before she was able to procure a new crinoline. After this untoward event we went on to Strathmore, and found Mr. Selheim, by whom we were hospitably received, and we spent the remainder of the day there effecting repairs.

The following night we camped in the range. The night was cold and my wife was tired after a long ride, when an hour after dark we spread our blankets alongside a blazing log fire, which we found near our friend Jim Earle's homestead in Hidden valley. A couple of figures lay rolled up in blankets alongside the fire, and after pitching our tent I discovered the blankets contained E. Henry and his black boy. After an hour's conversation, the former, who was generally in a hurry when travelling, said he had rested long enough, and as the moon was shining brightly, sent his boy for the horses, and wearing his blanket as a cloak, rode off.

We reached Mount McConnel on the following evening, and found Arthur Henry at home. The table was spread and we sat down to a supper of excellent station beef, and camp oven bread, a cheerful fire blazing in the large open fireplace, for the night was cold and frosty.

After spending a day or so here inspecting the sheep, and hearing about what was going on, I went over to the Burdekin to hurry on the completion

of our dwelling, and a week or so later a married couple I had engaged in Bowen having come up with a dray which was bringing station supplies, we settled down in our new homestead overlooking the river, with its long reaches of water, the banks lined with ti-trees (in appearance something like the weeping willow), rocks and islands jutting out in the channel of the broad river, also covered with the same description of trees. In spring these trees are covered with scented blossoms, whilst in the deep pools below black bream and other fish were plentiful. To the north and west were picturesque hills and the range separating us from the Ravenswood country in the distance.

During the winter months of 1864 I spent the time in putting the cattle together and getting in outsiders. Some of these were very fat, and as these cattle were seldom far away from their Brigalow scrubs, they were not easy to get. Once in the scrubs they would race for half a mile and then lie down with their tongues out, and had to be left for another occasion. I never saw fatter cattle than these running between Stoney creek and Mount Graham.

The blacks at this time fortunately left us alone, though we had to be continually on our guard, and it was not safe to move about much without a revolver, and my wife had her own. Their fresh tracks appeared occasionally in the neigh-

bourhood, and amongst the ti-trees in the river their wet foot-marks would sometimes be seen.

The Currs, who had a station thirty miles farther up the river, experienced a very formidable attack, which might have easily been disastrous. Montague Curr lived with his brother, Marmaduke, and his wife. The latter, who used to milk the cows, told me his brother was out one morning after some horses, but for some unaccountable reason on this particular occasion he himself was late in turning out, a most exceptional occurrence. The blacks were almost at the door when the servant girl rushed in from the detached kitchen exclaiming, 'Blacks, Blacks.' He had barely time to seize a firearm before the leading darkies were at the door, and spears came rattling in. He and Mrs. Curr opened upon them with effect. Mrs. Curr, however, was grazed on the wrist by a passing spear. The brother returning about this time and coming to their assistance with his firearms, the blacks retreated to the river. They were followed up and did not renew the experiment of attacking Curr's station, one of the neatest and tidiest little places to be seen anywhere, not a thing out of place, and no bones or unsightly debris lying about, as there often are on a cattle station, and on a sheep station also sometimes.

During our residence on the Burdekin we had

few visitors, and with the exception of the people belonging to neighbouring stations we saw no travellers. Forbes of Collinton station owned Ravenswood station adjoining us up the river, and called once or twice when passing. Maurice O'Connell, who perished miserably some years later out west, after suffering from want of water, was surveying in our neighbourhood at this time, and the native police, under Sub-Inspector Uhr, visited us occasionally whilst on their patrol duties, and Alfred Henry spent a few weeks with us.

I think it is generally supposed that the native bear does not exist in North Queensland, but I have evidence that it does. On one occasion when riding with Bobbie Smith, who used to come over to assist at mustering and branding, we were searching the country in the neighbourhood where the Burdekin breaks its way through the range in a rough and impassable gorge full of immense boulders. A great waterfall was supposed to exist where the river makes its exit. Whether this is so or not I do not know. Possibly by this time some one has explored those regions fully. One reason for thinking there must be a great fall is that whilst below the range the Bowen river and Burdekin have plenty of alligators, so far as I am aware there is no authentic instance of one being seen above the range. George Audry of Ravenswood, who was with us one day, came

up from the river declaring he had seen an alligator, but so far as I know no one else has ever seen any.

However, to return to the bear, on the day above mentioned, when approaching the bank of the Burdekin on the north side, I looked up at the trees in front of us, which were very large and high, and called Smith's attention to a bear which was running up one of the trees. We saw the animal distinctly, and on reaching the first fork he sat in it looking down at us. Many years later one or two specimens were found at the heads of the Thompson and Flinders rivers, but I never could find out that the blacks on the Flinders had seen any. As they fall an easy prey to any one hunting them, they may have been plentiful in former days and destroyed by the blacks.

There are several birds in the north common to India and Australia, notably the common kite, the magpie, the magpie-dove, and the bronze-wing fly-catcher, who burrows in the ground about an arm's length and makes her nest.

The summer of the year 1864 set in early, hot and dry, the cattle were well in hand, so assisted by the man I had with me, we commenced splitting rails for a horse paddock, but I always had an objection to this sort of work—handling a maul on timber when not free in the grain, particularly with the thermometer a hundred degrees

in the shade, and twenty or thirty degrees more in the sun, is not a job which many amateurs hanker after. However, we put up a few hundred yards before the wet season set in, sufficient to form one side of the intended paddock.

The Burdekin came down in flood when the tropical rains set in, and the cattle improved in condition and did not require much looking after. We attempted a little gardening, grew cabbages, lettuces, and pumpkins on the bank of the river, and beyond a weekly ride with my wife to the head station for our mails, there was not much to relieve the monotony of the routine. The time, however, slipped away pleasantly enough.

When the wet season was over we made arrangements to send more cattle out west, but it was not till June 1865 that we succeeded in getting them started, Ernest Henry and myself preceding them. Our object was to secure more country beyond Hughenden, which name he had given to the locality to which the last mob of cattle had been taken, a name of interest to us as being the name of our English home on the maternal side. The native name 'Mokāna' not being procurable at the time, the established precedent was adopted of giving English names.

In going out we followed the route previously taken. Camping one night in the neighbourhood of Torrens creek, we met a man coming in

with one of Kirk and Sutherland's bullock drays. He told us in the course of conversation, that having followed a creek down farther ahead, called Skeleton creek, he had seen some fine waterholes, 'fit to float a 74,' as he described it.

On our reaching Bullock creek rain set in, and whilst camped there we discussed the advisability of having a look at the country we had been told about, and decided that I should push on to Hughenden, get some fresh horses, and taking Rudolf Morisset, who was in charge there, have a look at the country. If desirable the cattle could be turned off on arrival in the necessary direction. With this object in view, I therefore went on with one of the Macdonalds of Cambridge Downs, who had been travelling with us. Along our route the skeletons of sheep were lying in considerable numbers. Ten thousand sheep had been taken along this route bound for Cambridge Downs in the previous summer, which had been a dry one. The sheep had suffered much for want of water, and many had died from eating the poison bush. The men and horses also had a rough time with them. On the occasion of the final disaster they camped at sundown, about three miles from the waterhole for which we were making. When the sheep had settled down in their camp, H., who was in charge, said to the men who were very tired, 'You sleep;

I will watch the sheep.' However, unfortunately H. dropped off to sleep also.

At dawn of day not a sheep was in sight. Not knowing that water was in front of them, the whole mob had made off helter-skelter back into the wilderness, making for the last place they had watered at. Many dropped along the route; every mud hole along the track for miles was full of smothered sheep; wild dogs split up the remainder, and the bones of the retreating ten thousand for many months afterwards lay scattered through the wilderness.

The night we spent at the waterhole on Skeleton creek, so named probably in consequence of the catastrophe recorded, was a very unpleasant one, Rain had set in again and having no tomahawk we could get no dry wood for a fire. The night was cold, as it often is on that tableland in the winter months. We had, however, two blankets, with one of which we made a sort of tent, and tried to keep warm under the other, but the night was not altogether a cheerful one, and alongside of us a heap of stones marked the grave of a young man who had recently been killed by the blacks.

On the following afternoon we reached Hughenden, and the next day, having procured fresh horses and rations, accompanied by Morisset and a black boy I returned to Skeleton creek. We followed the creek down about as far as the

present Lammermoor homestead. The country was of a mixed character, fine well-grassed plains back from the creek, but much grass seed on the frontage. We here met Little with a herd of cattle making his way out to the Gulf country, and as he told us that for miles it was of the same character, and as in those days people turned up their noses at everything except open downs country, we turned our backs upon it, and struck out towards Prarie creek, and so lost the opportunity of acquiring a very fine cattle run.

On leaving Mount McConnel, I had made arrangements with Arthur Henry that my wife should reside at the head station during my absence; but thinking it likely she would return to her own place, and not feeling satisfied about the isolated position of it, seeing that the blacks could not be trusted, I reluctantly turned back across the desert country, E. Henry having agreed to go on and occupy the first available land. This he did, taking up the country now known as Burleigh on Cambridge creek.

I started on my return journey when the moon rose, and a native dog apparently out of curiosity followed at my horse's heels for about twenty-five miles. Of two shots which I fired at him ineffectually, he took not the slightest notice. In the morning when I stopped at daylight for breakfast, he sat opposite about twenty yards off. A

third shot, however, had more effect, and he came no farther.

On getting back to Mount McConnel I found my wife had gone back to her own place. The blacks had committed several murders in the neighbourhood, notably at Conway, where some of the Mount McConnel sheep were occupying the country, and they had established such a scare amongst the shepherds that it was difficult to get men to undertake the work. It was necessary to visit each shepherd daily, and ride round the country they were shepherding on, to establish some degree of confidence, and two flocks were located at each hut, so that the men might have company at night, but after several shepherds had been murdered and the body of one of them laid on his own camp fire, men could with difficulty be induced to take the risk. Here and there some tough old hand with a sagacious dog would hold on. These men had great faith in their dogs, but the less seasoned amongst them said they were not going to risk their lives for thirty bob a week and tucker.

Consequent upon this state of things I had to look after my own sheep. They had been lambed at the other station, and now had a fair number of well-grown lambs amongst them. Arthur Henry and the overseer had enough to do to look after the others.

As with the exception of a man and his wife, we had no one at the river, I put up a yard close at hand so that I might be at home at night. During the day, rifle in hand, and taking a book or review, I shepherded the sheep. Grass and water being plentiful they gave no trouble, but it was necessary to be careful and not let them split up, as the grass was fairly long, and looking for lost sheep would only complicate matters. In addition, one never knew where blacks might be lurking. On one occasion when I was sitting down against a tree, a boomerang struck the tree and dropped on to my head. The weapon, however, was not a heavy one, and was probably sent by way of a joke.

People residing in those districts at the present day, where only a few deteriorated specimens of the aboriginal race remain, may think I am exaggerating when I say that during the 'sixties probably ten to fifteen per cent. of the white population lost their lives at the hands of the blacks. An officer who was in the native police at that day told me he put the percentage at from twenty to thirty. And certainly many a traveller on those lonely roads about the Suttor, Belyando and Burdekin never reached his destination. The population was a scattered one. Within a radius of a hundred miles from Mount McConnel, there were probably not two hundred white

men and perhaps six women at the time I refer to.

Much has been written and said about iniquities perpetrated by the native police in the early days of colonisation in North Queensland, more particularly by those who had no personal experience of what was going on at the time. I have no hesitation in saying that it is difficult to see how a small and scattered population of white people could have continued to occupy the country with their flocks and herds, if an organised body of black police under European officers had not been available to protect them. The police officers of that day had a difficult duty to perform. It was essential that the blacks should be prevented from destroying life and property if white people were to be allowed to occupy the country, and this could not be done without a certain amount of bloodshed. In some instances, no doubt, the punishment dealt out to the aborigines, not only by the police but by white settlers, may have been excessive, but some of the stories which have been related will be taken with a grain of salt by those who were in North Queensland in the 'sixties and 'seventies.

CHAPTER IV

Move out West—Pioneer settlers—Old shepherding days—Bowen—Townsville and incidents at Hughenden.

During the early part of the year 1865, my brother Charles, who had a year or two previously been engaged in running the blockade between Liverpool, Nassau and Wilmington with Hobart Pasha, paid us a visit.

Shepherding one day as it happened within sight of the track between the two stations, I saw some travellers passing, and thinking there might be some chance of a shepherd, I hailed them with the usual ‘coo-ee.’ On their approaching, I saw Ernest Henry in company with my brother, who had left his ship in Calcutta and come over on a visit to Australia. After a short interview I desired them to ride on and send out the only man I had to mind the sheep. On his arrival I cantered in on his horse.

After some little delay in making arrangements for the care of the sheep in my absence, my brother having agreed to join me in taking over Hughenden station, he, my wife and I rode down to Bowen, and proceeded to Sydney to complete the arrange-

ment. Having fixed up matters there satisfactorily, I returned to Mount McConnel, leaving my wife in the south, and made arrangements to proceed to Hughenden to take delivery of the place, and to ascertain the best route to take the sheep out, the desert road being quite unsuited for the passage of this class of stock.

Leaving Mount McConnel in November 1865, I travelled up the Burdekin by Ravenswood station, about thirty miles from the junction of the Suttor and Burdekin; this station owned by Forbes of Collington, was managed by Terry, assisted by John Cuthbert Carr, George Aubrey, and Atkins and wife. After him was named Atkinvale near Townsville, where he became a successful dairyman. From Ravenswood I travelled to Curr's station, Pandanus creek, and Burdekin Downs to Dalrymple. Here I remained a day with Maurice O'Connell, who was Crown Lands Commissioner at that time. He had a comfortable residence on the bank of the river, and was busy making maps of his surveys. Poor man, he lost his life a year or so afterwards, as previously mentioned.

Whilst I was staying here, Mytton, of Cooper and Mytton, came over to see the Commissioner, and obtain some information respecting the country higher up the Burdekin. He had just arrived on his way out looking for country, and

his cattle, some twelve hundred head, were on the flat on the opposite side of the river, where they had camped on the previous night.

There was at this time a track from Bowen by the lower Burdekin to the crossing of the Burdekin at Dalrymple, and the stock which had been taken out to the Fletcher and Clarke rivers and other tributaries of the Burdekin, all came by this route. The Hanns, Ross of Reedy Lake, Robert Stewart Daintree, the Allinghams, James, and the Annings, also Messrs. Thompson, Muirson and Jamieson, who settled on the extreme heads of the Flinders so far as I remember, had all come this way.

I had brought on this trip with me a man highly recommended as an overseer, and whilst I was staying with Maurice O'Connell he had visited the public-house, and supplied himself with a bottle of gin. As he already had sampled the public-house liquors too freely, we had some difference of opinion as to the advisability of carrying this extra supply. Eventually I secured the bottle and pitched it amongst the stones. We camped that night at Reedy Lake station, then managed by Andrew Ross. This place was at that time stocked with sheep. We met here two Victorians going to inspect Mount Emu station, with a view to purchase, and travelled in company with them to Southwick station.

During the journey, these two gentlemen rode off occasionally to look at small mobs of cattle, which were looking well and appeared to meet with their approval. They were pleased to inform us they had not seen such cattle outside Victoria.

The following day we travelled as far as Nulla Nulla station, managed by James, who kept a large tarantula alive under the glass of his clock. He had been a good deal in America 'before the war,' and had much to say about it. The subject, of course, was of considerable interest, and there were several ex-generals and colonels about northern townships at that time.

Apropos of American colonels, I am reminded of the late Augustus Morris, a well-known pastoralist in New South Wales, and a good talker. At the time of the Philadelphia Exhibition he went as one of the Commissioners from New South Wales. He told me that on the morning after his arrival at San Francisco, to his horror he saw in one of the leading newspapers an announcement, 'Colonel Morris of New South Wales interviewed,' followed by an account of a long conversation with that distinguished officer. On his proceeding to Philadelphia, one of his American friends, said, 'Well, the President (General Grant) will be here to-morrow, and I will introduce you in due course.' My friend said, 'That is all right,

but do not introduce me as colonel, because they will only laugh at me in New South Wales.' 'All right,' said the American.

The following day when he was going up with other notabilities to meet General Grant, the American introducing him said: 'Your Excellency, allow me to introduce Major Morris of New South Wales.' My friend protested that he was not a major, or even a full-blown private. 'Never mind, Major Morris,' General Grant said, patting him on the shoulder, 'you ought to be highly complimented. We have plenty of generals and colonels in this country, but very few majors.'

However, to return to our journey, the country we had been passing through consisted of black soil plains, alternating with red basaltic plateaux, ascending gradually towards the high land separating the eastern and western waters. Much of it was stocked with sheep, for which it was afterwards found to be unsuitable, but not before much money was lost in the experiment. On this country after the wet season the spear grass matures, presenting its barbed seeds. The sheep become covered with spikes, like hedgehog spines which penetrate the body of the animal and cause death. This grass is so intermixed with the better kinds that unless possibly under the closest form of settlement, which might permit of its being

cut and put into a silo, sheep cannot profitably be grown on this country.

Following up Limestone creek, we reached a deserted station called Cargoon, which had been taken up by James Gibson. The country becomes more heavily timbered as the watershed is ascended and the head of the Flinders reached in the neighbourhood of Reedy springs, so called because numerous springs issuing from reedy flats are here met with. In summer the bed of the lower part of the river consists of a large expanse of sand, which is no doubt to some extent supplied with water from these springs.

We remained the night at Reedy Springs station, then lately taken up by old Mr. Anning, a Devonshire man who had been many years in Victoria, and who now with old Mrs. Anning and their sons and daughters, were living in a couple of comfortable log huts in the primitive style prevalent in those days. This part of the country is high and the night was fairly cool.

The next day as we ascended the tableland, Mount Emu soon came in view, which is one of two mountains standing up from the basaltic tableland. Its summit, probably three thousand feet above the sea, is distinctly visible from the western plains seventy to eighty miles to the south. The mountain stands on a high plateau two thousand to two thousand five hundred feet high, which

extends northwards to the Lynd river and Herberton nearer the coast, where on account of the altitude the fierce heat of summer is moderated and the climate is more adapted to European constitutions, the thermometer seldom rising to a hundred degrees in the shade.

At the time referred to, November 1865, all this country, as well as the western country was stricken with drought. At Mount Emu station there was no surface water, and the thermometer stood at a hundred degrees in the shade. This was too much for our Victorian friends. It was an unfortunate time for inspecting stations. They made a short excursion on the following day, and decided that they would not invest in that locality.

On looking into one of the huts on the afternoon of our arrival, I saw a man lying on one of the bunks fast asleep, quite unconscious of the flies which were—well, fairly busy. His face seemed familiar, and on his waking up I found that he was Stewart of the 79th, whom I had last seen in the Immaum Bara at Lucknow. He was then the owner of Southwick station on the Fletcher river which we had passed. His homestead, though awkwardly situated on basalt and black soil, commands a lovely view of one of the few perennial streams in the north, extending in this locality into a lake covered with water-

lilies and teeming with wild fowl of all descriptions—grebe, waterhens, ducks, geese and black swans. Beyond at the end of the valley, Mount Stewart stands up blue in the distance. My friend, who was returning from some other country he had out on the Flinders to the north of Telemon station, was travelling by night on account of the heat and resting during the day, an arrangement which is, perhaps, more comfortable to the rider than to the horse. Bush horses do most of their feeding at night. In the daytime under a hot sun after picking about a little, they seek the shade of the nearest tree, and standing head to tail lazily flap each other's eyes and doze. In fact, Queensland horses so long as the heat is dry do not seem to be affected by it when travelling during the day, so long as they get turned out for an hour at midday, and plenty of grass and water are available at night.

The following day we left for Fairlight station, then owned by Oxley and Betts. The weather was very hot; the road was stony and waterless, and the distance was about forty miles. I had to ride a borrowed horse, a jogging colt, for people do not always lend their best nags, and this, together with the lack of water, made the journey very unpleasant. Unluckily the plan of carrying water-bags had not at that time come into vogue.

The next day we followed the creek down some

distance, and then struck over the basaltic table-land dividing the valley we were in from the Flinders country. The view from the top of this range is an extended one. As far as the eye could reach nicely timbered country and downs could be seen, but most of the country was evidently suffering from drought, though the plain beneath us looked green as a barley field. This appearance, however, we found on descending was caused by roley-poley, a useless weed, which, however, has under stocking almost disappeared.

We reached the homestead at Hughenden about sundown. Grass there was none within four miles, though a little water left in the creek supplied the homestead's requirements, as well as those of the thirsty throats of myriads of galahs, corellas, pigeons and smaller birds, whose various cries were almost deafening.

Morisset, who was in charge of the place, had a horse hobbled and tethered on two or three dry tussocks of grass, which had been luxuriant some months previously when there had been water in the little swamp they grew in. This horse was used daily for bringing up the rest of the station horses from a place three miles down the river where there was a little grass. So next day we got horses and camped out to muster and square tail the cattle, which were then depastured about

fourteen miles up the river. Thunderstorms had fallen there, and everything was looking green and fresh, presenting a remarkable contrast to the country lower down. Fortunately the cattle were fairly well together, and we brought the bulk of them down to the only yards at Hughenden and square tailed them before letting them go. However, Rudolf Morisset in charge was very conscientious, and there were several small mobs which he knew were missing, in particular an old magpie cow which generally had others with her. It took ten days to find this black and white animal, and she was not much to look at when we did get her. However, she counted in payment and so did the stores on hand—flour, tea, sugar, painkiller, and last but not least Holloway's pills, the latter a delicacy much sought after by old shepherds in those days. Over the value of these things we had considerable difference of opinion, but they were finally adjusted, and I started back for Mount McConnel to see after other matters. Taking fresh horses we pushed out for the desert country in the direction of Billy Webb's lake, camping the first night at Torrens creek. The weather became very threatening; black clouds rising rapidly from the west betokened a tropical storm which soon burst upon us in all its fury.

We had built up a big fire, and, carefully piled,

it outlived the rain, which, accompanied by the usual tropical thunder and lightning, came down in a deluge. My friend, more wideawake than I, stripped, and having rolled up his clothes stowed them under the pack saddle, and put them on dry when the rain ceased. I slept wet, and got a touch of fever a week later in consequence.

On our arriving at Mount McConnel the weather set in cloudy and threatening, and on the 11th January 1866 we had the first burst of the wet season. Nothing could be done towards getting my sheep out until after the lambing, so in company with Arthur Henry and Morisset I left on a short visit to Bowen to make some financial arrangements and obtain supplies. The rainy season had well set in; creeks and rivers were in flood. At the Bowen river we found a ferryman with a small punt, into which we put our saddles and things, and after some considerable manœuvring amongst the ti-trees managed to make our horses string out and head across the river, which was about a hundred yards in width at this point. The river had an evil reputation for alligators. Arthur Henry said he would swim, and did so, but as the punt was there, I made use of it.

When the punt came back the next time, it brought Daintree, the geologist, and first Agent-General for Queensland, whom we had left on the

other side, and whose horses came over with ours, he having come up whilst we were in the water persuading the horses to cross. On joining us he said: 'You fellows got out of that place in time. When you got into the punt and were clear of the trees a large alligator rose to the surface in the place where you were putting over the horses.'

On reaching the township of Bowen in Port Denison, I found some rams were in quarantine on Stoney Island, brought up by a Mr. Mackinlay from C. B. Fisher's flocks in South Australia. These rams were in high repute at that day, and as they appeared to be excellent sheep, I secured a couple at thirty pounds each, and left them until their term of quarantine should be completed.

On returning to Mount McConnel, I took the lambing in hand, or rather the supervision of it, riding out from the station every morning before sunrise. Passing a waterhole on my way out one morning, I came across a traveller who was just getting his horses ready for a start. 'Good morning,' I said, 'which way are you travelling?' He replied, 'I have been out to take up that country this side of Hughenden on Skeleton creek.' This was the country which had the waterholes capable, as our acquaintance before mentioned stated, of floating a 74,

and the man I was talking to was Robert Christison. I told him I should be glad to have him as a neighbour, and we then parted for the time being. By the way, I think our friend who spoke of the waterhole was the Hon. W. O. Hodgkinson, many years afterwards Minister for Mines in Queensland, and who at the time we met him was engaged by Kirk and Sutherland to travel with their bullock team across the desert, and show the driver short cuts. He had been one of Mackinlay's party in his trip across the continent of Australia, I believe. He was, therefore, probably considered an expert in bush travelling, but I doubt whether the bullock driver pulled off the track to make any short cuts.

As soon as my supplies came up from Bowen I started off my team for Hughenden. The bullock driver having brought down the bullocks for the purpose with their yokes and tackling, I procured a dray, wagons not being much in use at this time. I also sent up a supply of fowls, as there were none at the station.

For some weeks lambing occupied my attention. The custom then was to lamb in yards. In the morning all the young lambs were carefully caught in a crook by the hind leg, and drawn towards hurdles which were formed into pens ready for their reception in different parts of the yard. This was generally done by the man in

charge of the flock. The bleating ewe followed her lamb into the enclosure. If disinclined to follow, she also was crooked and put in with her lamb. When all the lambs had been so disposed of, the gates were thrown open, and the flock allowed to draw quietly out. Any ewes lambing during the day out on the run were carefully dodged down to the yard in the afternoon; together with the ewes and lambs left in the camp the ewes were in at dinner-time. Each day's drop was kept separate until the following day, when they were moved off to the second strong mob, leaving the ground they occupied clear for the next day's lambs. The second strong mob were moved off periodically to join the mobs containing the oldest lambs. Sometimes exceptionally good results were obtained from this mode of lambing, as much as one hundred per cent. being marked. With careful men almost every lamb was saved, but great patience and considerable skill were required. Young ewes sometimes would not take to their lambs, until they had been penned up with them for a day. Sometimes a ewe would die, and another ewe had to be induced to take to her lamb, or a lamb would die and another lamb would be given her to bring up. Men used to get at that time thirty shillings a week for this work and rations, and often a percentage on the lambing in addition. Many men followed up this

business as much as they now do shearing, and it gave a good deal of work in a district when shearing was not on. Moreover, they had very clever dogs of various sorts. One man I remember had a fine kangaroo dog which used to be invaluable to him when shepherding a mob of ewes and lambs. In the daytime lambs slept a great deal, and at sundown, when it was time to collect the flock, the dog would go all over the ground searching under tussocks of grass, and would seize any sleeping lamb, bringing it to the flock in his mouth, and then scour round for more. The men who followed this business were peculiar and had many quaint ideas. One old fellow told me he had been a cadet in the Hon. East India Company's service in the year 1829, and his father, he said, had been one of 'Goldsmith's country parsons, passing rich on forty pounds a year.' The old shepherd, however, is now as extinct as the moa. Since the introduction of fencing, he has been succeeded by the man who helps to muster and lamb mark, who generally speaking knows little or nothing about sheep or how they should be handled in yards. The sheep often suffer in consequence from hasty driving and crushing and rushing them through yards, unless the overseer with them knows his business and takes care that it is properly carried out.

I now thought it time to get up the two rams I

had purchased in Bowen, as their term of quarantine had expired, so I sent down a man who had for some time been on a station in my neighbourhood. He took a spring cart with him and a couple of cheques for expenses. A week elapsed and I had no tidings of the man, so after about a fortnight I thought I had better go down to Bowen and see what had become of him. On reaching the port I inquired at one of the hotels for my friend, and was informed he was in the billiard-room. There was at this time about Bowen an ex-captain of —— Regiment, who was perpetually talking of the exploits he had been engaged in under Lord Mark Ker. I entered the billiard-room and found these two kindred spirits together playing billiards. 'Hullo,' I said, 'how is it you have not brought up those rams?' 'Oh,' said my friend, 'I am waiting for Captain ——.' I said, 'Well, you can hand over those cheques and wait for him.' One of the cheques was returned, and finding an old Scotch overseer, Willie Moore, I gave him charge of the rams and spring cart, and the rams soon arrived.

Collecting my sheep and horses I engaged a few men, and on 19th June 1866 started off the sheep for Hughenden by the Burdekin route to Dalrymple, and then went to meet my wife who was coming up to Bowen. Having procured a buggy from the south, my wife and self started after

the sheep in a well-laden buggy, the load including two tortoiseshell cats, which my wife brought from Goulburn in New South Wales, for there were no cats on the Flinders, and the rats were troublesome. These cats travelled out very comfortably, though we had to tie them up at night on the journey. They were soon mothers of a numerous progeny; one of them by the way had an inveterate habit of kittening in the tea chest.

We passed the sheep, including eighty-six rams, which were travelling well, most of the grass seed having fallen.

Before leaving Hughenden I had taken the precaution of riding out in the direction of Mount Emu. Morisset had told me I would never get a road that way, through miles of basaltic country. However, from what I saw I thought we would, so directed the overseer, whilst I was away, to take a couple of horses and a cart and strike across towards the basaltic plateau, until he reached the road leading from Mount Emu to Fairlight, and trail a log from thence into Hughenden. This he did.

On our way up we met with heavy rain at Nulla Nulla, which lasted through the night, and as we ascended the higher country the weather was exceptionally cold, so much so that after driving all the morning, we were glad to sit in the sun by a fire at midday. At night near Cargoon our

blankets were stiff in the morning with frost, and a thin coating of ice lay on the waterhole in the creek, extending some distance from the margin.

On reaching Mount Emu station, we met Henry Betts; he pooh-poohed the idea of our getting a buggy across the basalt by the line I intended to take, and pressed us to go to Fairlight, saying he would send the buggy down his creek and round by the Flinders road on a wagon. However, knowing he had plenty of use for his dray, and not liking to be deterred, we turned off to the left on meeting the log track at the White Cliffs, twenty miles. The country was very rough, basaltic, but by proceeding very slowly and carefully, we were able to get down on to the good country at Wongalee without any breakages.

Arrived at this station I sent the man we had brought with us back to Mount McConnel for his wife, and he brought her and their small boy up on horseback. In the meantime I had branded up the cattle and commenced putting up yards for the sheep and a bough shed to shear under.

The rain we had on the road had not extended to the west, and water in consequence was becoming scarce; but fortunately after a strong wind from the east, there were two days' heavy rain, a most unusual thing in August. It filled up every waterhole, made most luxuriant grass, and carried us on till the summer storms set in.

On our way up the country we had met a carrier, Jack Shepherd, who was going down with an empty bullock dray a few miles on the coast side of Mount Emu, and I arranged with him to come out from Townsville, with loading along my new track for £23 per ton, with wool back at half price. He made a good trip up, arriving soon after the sheep reached Hughenden. I had fixed a bough shed and a tarpaulin and some yards near our main waterhole, where there was then a tree marked by Walker the explorer. The number of sheep which arrived at Hughenden was about three thousand, including lambs. Soon after the sheep arrived, some six or seven men who had been shearing sheep for the last year or so on the outskirts of civilisation, came over from Fairlight, and said, 'We hear you want your sheep shorn.' After some parleying, things not being quite to their liking, I arranged with them to take the wool off. One of them was an old sailor, a Dublin man, another a German, who was either a deserter or had left his country to avoid military service, the remainder were English and Scotch. The Irishman was a wit in his way, and had a nickname for all the employers in the neighbourhood. Speaking of some of them, he said, 'Lads, do you know what so and so's coat of arms is?' As they were unable to reply, he said, 'Why, a rampant counter jumper on a field of calico.'

About this time we were visited by the Rev. James Hassal, who remained with us a few days, and was the first minister of religion to visit the district. He held one or two services at which our small congregation attended. His brothers had brought out a small but excellent herd of cattle, but as the country they were occupying was found to be overlapped by Hughenden and Fairlight runs, they were ultimately elbowed out.

On the 4th December 1866, not having heard from my agent in Bowen about my wool which I had managed to send down, I determined to go and see what had become of it, as unpleasant rumours had reached me. My wife and Mrs. Tierney, our cook, were the only white women then out on the Flinders; the country was in rather a lawless state, and the blacks might give trouble at any moment. However, my wife agreed that I had better go, so taking a couple of horses I left just as the heavy thunderstorms peculiar to that season of the year were commencing, and within a few days reached Townsville, two hundred and thirty-six miles distant.

Townsville was then in its infancy, and it is doubtful whether it ever would have come into competition with Bowen except for a quarrel between Mr. Black, the agent for Towns and Co., and the leading merchant in Bowen. The latter thinking that he could rule the rates of carriage to some

of Towns and Co.'s stations, in the direction of the Burdekin, was so domineering that a serious quarrel resulted between the two. The upshot was that Mr. Black said to the other, 'You shall suffer for this. My men know of a creek to the northward, much closer to Woodstock than Bowen, and I will advise Captain Towns to send his next schooner up there with our loading.'

Thus owing to hasty words resulting in a quarrel, Bowen with all its natural advantages of a harbour, easy to be defended, and an unsurpassed site for a city, has fallen into decay, whilst Townsville without any natural harbour, or site for a township, in a more sultry climate—in fact, with almost everything against it—has developed into a place of size and importance. The money which has been lavished on it, if spent in Bowen, would have rendered it one of the most attractive places in Queensland, for it lies open to the trade winds which blow during eight or nine months of the year and moderate the heat, which in Townsville away from the beach is continuous. The town is shut in by rocks from which the heat radiates as from a furnace, making it exceedingly trying to the European constitution, and in a great measure causing the constant change amongst the residents of that northern town. I remember the late Bishop Barker on a visit to Bowen about the year 1876, when raising funds for the estab-

lishment of the North Queensland diocese, remarking, 'Bowen is like a beautiful lady without any dower. She has many admirers, but few proposals.'

At the time referred to, Townsville was not in a flourishing condition; passengers by the monthly steamer were either landed on the slippery rocks, or stranded waiting for the tide to enable the small launch or boat to float over the bar, which blocked the entrance to a mangrove-fringed and alligator-infested creek on the banks of which a wharf or two had been erected. The influence of Towns and Co., as represented then by Mr. Black, was predominant, and on the bank of the creek on what is now known as Ross Island, some scattered cotton bushes were growing. These, I believe, enabled that firm to obtain an extensive grant of land, which, however, without their enterprise might have remained in its pristine state.

Land in Flinders Street was not expensive, and from the present site of the Imperial Hotel to where the Union Bank now stands, a distance which included the whole length of Townsville, buildings were by no means coterminous. I remember confidingly lending a gentleman £25 to purchase one of the vacant allotments. I fancy I can see him stepping the width of it now. However, he was not successful in business from various causes, and I did not get my money back.

Mr. James Gordon was Commissioner of Customs, also Police Magistrate. On Sundays he officiated as a minister, holding divine service in the Court House. The principal house of business was that of Clifton and Aplin, who with others had migrated from Bowen.

Cotton growing as an industry was not followed up. With the cessation of the American War and the large quantity supplied by India, the value of the article declined, and land on the Pioneer river, Mackay, having been found suitable for sugar growing, the labour of South Sea islanders was turned in that direction.

After waiting upon Towns and Co.'s agent for a day or two, I secured a passage by the *Black Prince*, and after twenty-four hours of more or less successful navigation, landed at Bowen. I found the bank had taken possession of my agent's premises and stock. As for the wool it had been sent to Sydney and sold by the agents, and I suppose eventually helped to swell the small dividend which the estate paid, as did likewise a pro note which I had left with them for safe keeping.

After some days spent in contemplating the advisability of going to law, and nearly getting run into an action for slander over it, and having been pressed to establish my claims in a pugilistic encounter with a partisan of the opposing side, I

began to think I had better go back and see how my wife was faring, and how the few sheep I had left were progressing. Having been away much longer than I intended, I was getting anxious about my wife, more particularly as one of the shepherds I had left had a bad record, and there were some rough and lawless men about, such as are generally to be found on the outskirts of civilisation.

I therefore purchased a couple of horses in Bowen, and started with Anderson, the mailman, passing Salisbury Plains station, then I think occupied by one of the Antils, and thence by Inkerman to Townsville.

In Townsville I met Stewart, of Stewart and Macdonald, in those days commonly called 'Black Stewart,' though later his hair became very white. He had an interest in Cambridge Downs, in addition to a station on the Dawson, and we arranged to travel out to Hughenden together.

We found the Burdekin in flood when we arrived, so putting our saddles and swags into the ferry boats, we sent our horses across in the water. As we neared the opposite side I saw the mailman who had just come down the country standing at the edge of the water with a sort of complacent smile on his face. I had noticed before the sort of self-satisfied smile which comes over some people when they have bad news to

relate, and I had a foreboding that this man would not look so pleased unless he had something unpleasant to communicate, so prepared myself for what might come.

As soon as I stepped ashore, he said with a pleasant smile, 'I suppose you know what has happened at your station. The overseer has been shot, and Mrs. Gray is over at Mount Emu.' He could give no further details.

We rode that afternoon to Southwick, thirty miles, having come about twenty miles. I was riding a little black half-bred Arab, bred by Captain Rossi at Goulburn, a beautiful little animal, a large horse in a small compass, and as 'game as a pebble.' I had left him in Townsville whilst absent in Bowen. Leaving Stewart at Southwick with my packhorses, I rode on through the night to Nulla Nulla, then having ridden for eighteen hours, and not being able to travel farther without falling asleep. It was January and the weather was very hot, and I did not like to be hard on a favourite horse, so I hobbled him out, and slept till the morning star appeared. The horse having apparently spent most of his time grazing, and seeming as fresh as ever, I rode him on about fifty miles to Reedy springs, having covered one hundred and thirty miles in about thirty hours. The horse could have completed the journey, but I had not the heart to

take him farther. The only horse the Annings had available was a fat draught mare, so upon this animal I completed seventeen miles to Mount Emu station, arriving there late on the evening of 2nd January 1867. The next morning my wife told me what had happened, which I give in her own words.

'A travelling hawker selling spirits had camped at the station one night. The result was that the overseer and discharged shepherd were rather intoxicated, and the married man was quite drunk and incapable lying on his bed. The overseer went to the creek with the cart to draw water, and shortly after he reached the creek, I heard the report of a revolver, which I need hardly say greatly alarmed me. I looked out and soon after saw the cart approaching with the overseer sitting on the cart, and the shepherd walking alongside with the loaded revolver in his hand. I was standing at the door of my sitting-room and the married man's wife and little boy were in the room, the only people on the place except those already mentioned. The shepherd came up to me in a very excited state, gesticulating and denying that he had shot the overseer. I ordered him off the place, and every moment feared he might fire at me or some of the others. After standing for a short time, he went round to the kitchen and remained there for several hours.

In the meantime, at my suggestion, the mother sent the little boy of ten or eleven years of age round to coax the revolver from him. This he managed to do, and I immediately put it safely away, feeling intense relief that it was in my possession instead of his. The overseer lay down in his humpy and was suffering a good deal from the wound, which the woman and I bathed.

'At sundown an old trustworthy man, the old Indian officer above referred to, who was shepherding a flock of sheep, came home, and after many threats and angry words he managed to send the culprit off the place, and he and I sat up all night alternately watching lest the man should return, and also bathing the overseer's wound. We did not know whether he was dangerously wounded or not.

'The next day I sent the married man to Mr. Betts' station, twenty-five miles away, to ask him to come over for a day or two. When he arrived he extracted the bullet, which striking the chest had fortunately travelled round and lodged near the spine. The overseer soon recovered.

'After the dreadful shock I had experienced my nerves were completely unstrung, and I could not sleep at night. When E. H. arrived two or three days later, he arranged to take me to Mount

Emu station for change, and Mrs. Tierney accompanying us, we rode over there.'

With reference to this episode, I should mention that on our return to Hughenden and after debating what had better be done with reference to the affair, Ernest Henry said, 'Well, I am going across country to Peak Downs via Bowen Downs, the direction in which the man is supposed to have gone. Give me a pair of handcuffs, and if I come across him I will take him.'

Ernest Henry did overtake the man, and handcuffing himself to him every night took him some two hundred miles across country, and handed him over so far as I remember to the police in Clermont, and the man eventually was sentenced to two years with hard labour.

CHAPTER V

Cape River Goldfields—Shearing—Difficulty in procuring water for stock—Bush fires—Supply Cape River butchers with bullocks.

THE house we were living in at this time was rather a substantial one, built of horizontal slabs, many of which I dressed and put in myself, the frame having been erected by the overseer and a carpenter whilst I was away at Mount McConnel.

I had a few months previously engaged three men by contract to complete the walls and ceiling of the sitting-room, which they did, and with this we had to be satisfied, and it was not until the following summer that I managed to get the twelve feet verandahs completed with a shingled roof to them. A well-known shearer and bush carpenter named Matthews carried out the contract satisfactorily.

The men who had finished the first contract reckoned they had cut enough timber, respecting which their language was not altogether polite,—they were going prospecting for gold, etc., etc.

These men, however, did prospect to some purpose, and one or two of them obtained the Government reward for discovering the Cape

River goldfield on the country through which Betts and Oxley passed on their way out to the Flinders as before mentioned.

One evening on returning from my daily ride, I found two men with horses camped on the flat between the house and the creek, and as I had some reason to be suspicious of them I remained at home on the following day. They seemed to be watching the place and were well armed. Early next morning I heard a shot fired, and immediately afterwards a man rushed into the house crying 'Bushrangers.' Thinking this might be a ruse of some sort I caught him by the throat, and asked him, not in the mildest language, to explain. 'Here is my gold,' he gasped, handing over a belt, and exclaiming 'They have shot at me.' Having a handy rifled carbine always ready I was at the door in a moment. The men were outside on horseback, having pursued this man, who it appeared had arrived during the night. However, he was too quick for them. The two men then turned and galloped off—possibly they may only have intended to frighten him.

One of my neighbours, however, the late H. S., was rather badly 'stuck up.' He had been paid in gold for some cattle he had sold, and was sitting at the table after supper one evening when a man appeared at the open door and told him

to 'bail up.' My friend, though small and wearing spectacles, was as active as a kitten, and was at the man's throat in a moment. The two rolled on the floor together and my friend secured the revolver, but not before he had received a bullet which made four holes in a fleshy part of his body, whilst the cook who was in the kitchen, and ought, of course, to have come to the rescue, went rushing off to the men's hut, crying 'Roll up, boys, the boss is "stuck up."' Meanwhile the late owner of the revolver made off into the darkness. This same man some weeks previously called at my station with a bagful of native dogs' scalps, and in a weak moment I engaged to let him leave them in my charge whilst he went off in search of more. A good price—I think ten shillings each —was offered in those days for native dogs' scalps. He did not return to claim these articles, and for some time my wife complained that the atmosphere in my store was rather unpleasant.

The wet season of 1866-7 having been a good one and the country being newly occupied, a good deal of fever and ague was prevalent. Lambing was going on in April satisfactorily, but the men suffered much from the prevailing complaint. We were all more or less laid up with it. My wife had a severe and lengthened attack which she was unable to shake off, so I determined to take her to the coast and send her south. The

weather in May was exceptional. Thunderstorms which one seldom sees at this time of year were heavy and frequent, the country looking as green as an emerald.

On our departure from the station, everything went well until we reached the basalt country. The jolting of the buggy was then incessant, and after half a mile of it my wife was utterly prostrated and unable to sit up. Fortunately by a little manœuvring there was room for her to lie nearly full length in the bottom of the buggy, after which we progressed fairly well. On arriving at Mount Emu the next day, it being my turn for the shaking fits, we gladly accepted the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, basking in the warmth of a fire, and made a fresh start on the following morning. There was no qualified medical man in those days nearer than Townsville, consequently we had to rely upon our own medicine chest; but with the exception of fever and ague and a form of ophthalmia, generally termed sandy blight, there was no sickness, and accidents were of rare occurrence. We had, however, one travelling medico, who used to journey periodically from Mount Emu to Normanton, administering simple remedies for sore eyes, fever and ague. At the same time the doctor generally had a good horse or two with him, and combined his practice with horse dealing or assisting in

mustering cattle, repairing saddlery, etc., and as he always had a good fund of information with regard to events occurring on the different stations he visited, he was everywhere a welcome visitor.

After saying 'Good-bye' to my wife on the southern steamer at Townsville, I returned to Hughenden, and as the season was all that could be desired, the sheep doing well, and the blacks not giving the stockmen any trouble with the cattle, I thought the opportunity a good one for going over to the Cape River goldfields which had lately been opened, and to which men had been flocking from other places.

At Wongalee, about twenty-five miles from Hughenden, where I intended starting from, I met William Anning, who at once proposed going with me. Wongalee is overlooked by the desert tableland, which stands up some hundreds of feet to the eastward of it. We left this place on the morning of 2nd August 1867, and followed up a creek coming from the tableland, named Sandy creek, and striking out on the top in a north-east direction about noon, struck the Flinders, near its intersection by a creek coming through some black soil country on the tableland. The course of the river here being northerly, we thought it better to cross and continue a more easterly course. However, although we managed to reach the river by this creek, it was apparently very

difficult to get out on the other side. In one place where we succeeded, we found ourselves on an island with precipitous cliffs still between us and the southern tableland. A mob of blacks were busy hunting on the side we had left. We could see several of them chopping the trees for honey with their stone tomahawks, and hear them calling out to each other, though the only word I could catch was 'Wanganui.' They apparently had not seen us, and not wishing to disturb them we succeeded in getting our horses down again into the main bed of the river, a little higher up. The Flinders here for miles pursues its course between high sandstone cliffs, a hundred to a hundred and fifty feet in height, and as we could not get our horses out, we had to follow up the sandy bed of the river during the rest of that day. In places at this time of year there were waterholes frequently connected by a narrow stream, and in one place our passage was blocked by a large and deep sheet of water extending the whole width of the river bed. Under the left bank, however, there was a large fig-tree past which we were able to lead our horses. The tracks we saw and the debris of their camps suggested that there was a considerable number of blacks about in these gorges. At sundown we found a grassy point opposite a high red cliff, and we camped there for the night.

Next morning the travelling was somewhat easier, as in places we could get along the banks under the cliffs, and we crossed some remarkable flat sandstone rocks, where the blacks at some time or other had employed themselves in cutting out on the smooth surface representations of iguanas, men's hands and feet, and boomerangs, the footprints of emus and suchlike objects, and had evidently taken a good deal of trouble over it. We found that morning a very fine hole of water at the junction of a large creek on our right, and a few miles farther on passed Oxley creek. It was here that Oxley, Betts and Willie Rankin struck the Flinders on their way out to stock Fairlight. The banks were less precipitous after passing the junction of the creek, and it was quite practicable to get out on either hand. Following up the river bank we came across Charlie Hassel and Pat Maloney prospecting for gold. The last named man was one of the itinerant shearers who had undertaken to shear for me a few months previously. I was able to get two or three horse-shoe nails from him and secure one of my horse's shoes which had come loose. It was not necessary to shoe horses in the neighbourhood of Hughenden, but on much of the tableland country horses could not be worked without shoes.

Our friends here having given us directions,

we struck out from the river by Courtneys' mountains and proceeded down the Cape river watershed. Passing a black-capped mountain we eventually reached a place called Specimen gully, about forty-six miles. Before reaching this place, we saw two men coming towards us, one of them riding a very nice-looking grey which I at once recognised as a horse I had purchased from a Mr. Gorman, when he passed Hughenden some months previously with a mob of cattle bound west. We pulled up and said 'Good day.' 'That is a nice horse you are riding,' I remarked. 'Yes,' agreed the man, 'he is not a bad sort.'

'Where did you get him?' I asked. 'Oh, on Natal Downs,' he replied. 'Just so,' I said; 'that is my horse, and you had better get off, and let me take him.'

The man dismounted without any demur, and before I parted company with W. Anning on the return journey, he persuaded me to sell him for £25. The horse had disappeared shortly after I purchased him, and evidently had gone straight back to the place he came from.

In the neighbourhood of Specimen gully were many tents, and men were busy in the creek and neighbouring gullies washing the soil in tin dishes, while others were bringing dirt down on pack-horses to wash. A neighbouring squatter, Frank

Hann, was also here supplying the men with beef, slaughtering his cattle in a very primitive style and taking gold dust in payment. Another had set up a store, but as the young friend from Scotland who managed it seemed to go upon the principle that a digger's word was as good as his bond, the venture was not altogether a success, and I do not think another dray load of stores were sent out to replenish his stock.

After spending a day or two in this neighbourhood, we returned the way we came, and camped with our prospecting friends on the river. The next morning saying 'Good-bye' to William Anning, who went off in a northerly direction towards his station, I steered south-west for about thirty-five miles, and crossing Sandy creek on the tableland, descended on to the plain within a couple of miles of the outstation we had started from.

The season had now set in dry, and as it was the middle of September 1867 I wanted to get my sheep shorn before surface water disappeared, so that I had to leave taking cattle into the Cape diggings until I had more leisure.

At this time my neighbour, R. Christison, who was at Lammermoor on Skeleton creek with a few sheep, had been joined by two of his brothers. He had been over to see me and said he would like to get a few cattle on to his country. He

suggested that he and his brothers should come and shear my sheep, I to pay them for so doing in unbranded weaners, as soon as they could be conveniently mustered after the first good fall of rain. This arrangement suited me, so we began shearing on 11th September, and finished in somewhat less than five weeks, having had to knock off for a few days in order to move some of the cattle up the river for water. A month or two before shearing owing to the difficulty in obtaining white labour, I had obtained a few South Sea islanders, whom I had indented for when down in Bowen. They were from Lifu and Tanna. During the time they were with me (three years) they were very useful, made good shepherds, and were fairly good at lambing and bush work, but they did not thrive so well as on the coast alongside the salt water, and where a better supply of vegetables was obtainable. Several of my neighbours also employed kanakas, but eventually a law was passed restricting the employment of islanders to the coastal districts and sugar plantations, and as reliable European labour became more plentiful inland, we were able to do without them.

As soon as shearing was over, there having been no rain for some time, it was necessary to find water for the sheep. I had brought up an iron scoop thinking it would be useful in obtaining

water by scooping out the sand of the river, and with this object in view we yoked up a few bullocks and soon made a small hole in the sand. We quickly found, however, that this did not answer. The sheep rushing into the hole and through it soon made the water foul and refused to drink. Moreover, the water in the sand was apparently disappearing, and in one or two places where we tried to get wells, a very limited supply of water was obtained.

Since my efforts had been unsatisfactory, and the surface water elsewhere had nearly disappeared, I determined to move my sheep to the large waterholes on Skeleton creek, where my friends, the Christisons, were located forty to fifty miles away. There was no time to lose, for although we could get plenty of water for ourselves and horses, the main waterholes at which the sheep had been used to drink were little better than liquid mud. My overseer—the second I had tried—as soon as shearing was over, said 'Well, I reckon you are in for a dry time here. It is a dangerous place for sheep. I am off.' And he went, leaving me with a half-witted sort of cook and the kanakas.

However, shortly after his departure I engaged a very decent hard-working bushman, and determined to shift the sheep at once. Telling the cook to get some bread and meat cooked and

meet me at a certain place with the cart and a cask of water, I went down the river to fetch up a flock of sheep, which was running four miles away in charge of a kanaka. The other white man I sent to get horses for the trip. About four o'clock I had all the sheep in motion, and giving the muddy waterholes in the creek a wide berth, I hoped to reach the place where I had instructed the cook and the other man to meet me with the cart, the rations and other necessary equipment. On arriving, however, opposite the place where the sheep had been accustomed to water, the islanders and I found it quite impossible to induce the sheep to move further in the required direction, and the dogs we had were useless. The wind came from the direction of the damp and almost dried up waterhole. It was too much for them. They broke all along the line, the whole five thousand in the direction they had been accustomed to go, and rushed violently into the mud and slime.

Seeing that nothing could be done until the sheep had in a manner slaked their thirst, we adjourned for supper, seeking the cook and cart for that purpose. We returned after about an hour, having left one of the boys to prevent the sheep which had drunk from straggling off, and spent a considerable portion of the night in dragging out bogged sheep. It was no use

pulling out the lambs before their mothers, as they would immediately flop back alongside of them.

The question now was what could be done to save their lives ; although most of them had partially satisfied their thirst, they were evidently not in a condition to travel forty miles for water in hot weather, so I determined upon making another trial for water in the river.

F. Gordon McKean, who had been with us at Mount McConnel shepherding, happened to spend a day with me, and when discussing matters with him it occurred to me that if water was obtainable in any quantity, it would be at the junction of the Head station creek with the river. We had tried in the neighbourhood of it, but not exactly at that spot. Everything now depended upon our getting water there, so collecting the sheep we took them thither. Some of my neighbours had lost a lot of sheep under similar conditions some fifteen miles lower down the river, and I knew that even if we got the water the sheep would not drink it unless some kind of trough were provided.

We brought down to this place a few sheets of galvanised iron to form the sides of a well, and after clearing away the debris of leaves and sticks, we soon found water, and as the sand was deep it was evident we had struck at last a good supply.

Fortunately I had in store a roll of canvas, almost twenty yards in length, and whilst the well was in progress, I procured saplings and nailed them on to posts along the sand, and put the canvas between the rails to form a trough, placing saplings also above where the sheeps' heads would come, to prevent them from getting into the trough. Then placing a forked pole upright at the well with a long sapling slung to the fork, to one end of which a rope and bucket were attached, we had the satisfaction of giving the sheep a good drink early in the afternoon, and seeing them draw out to feed afterwards. Then with the object of providing a greater length of troughs, Charlie Hassel and I felled a couple of hollow trees which we found at a distance of over half a mile. Hassel was the part owner of some cattle which were running with mine, and he happened to turn up at this particular time. When the trees were on the ground with a cross-cut saw we cut them half through at intervals of about two feet, and then with axes chopped off the upper side. They were nearly full of earth brought in by ants, and required considerable trimming and cleaning out.

The working bullocks were miles away amongst the cattle, and we did not quite see how we could bring the trough to the well. Fortunately we had with the cart a staunch old draught horse,

though it seemed almost hopeless to expect him alone to draw these two heavy logs. However, the next day we brought him down with some harness and chains; and having cut a few short rollers, we raised one end of the trough, put a roller under it, and called upon the old horse to pull. As the trough came forward one of us continued inserting a roller; and though the progress was slow, and the halts were many, the grand old horse responded to each call as if he knew that the lives of the sheep were dependent upon him. After one of our frequent rests, my friend having smoked a pipe, seemed to take a more hopeful view of the situation. 'Nelson never was beaten,' he said as he got up, 'we will get the trough in yet.' So we pegged away, gaining a few feet at a time, and before dark we had those two troughs alongside the completed well. The next day they formed a welcome addition to the few yards of canvas, and we soon had the place in good working order with what proved to be at that time an inexhaustible supply of excellent water.

The above arrangements seem simple enough in the light of experience, but we were occupying new country, the conditions of which were imperfectly understood, and I had tried for wells in wrong localities before discovering the inexhaustible supply.

Matters were now placed on an easier footing, and the constant dread of being dried out had passed away. Fortunately grass was plentiful everywhere though somewhat dry. The winter rain had put nourishment into it, and we had at this time no bush fires which for some years afterwards almost invariably visited us in all their fury as summer approached.

We had no rain of any consequence during the latter part of 1867. October, November and December passed away, during which months the supply of water for our sheep remained undiminished. Emus, kangaroos, birds and occasionally a famished native dog visited the trough for water. The immense flocks of pigeons and galahs had disappeared, no doubt having migrated to some place where water was more plentiful; on one occasion I saw a rainbow or painted quail with other quail which visited us. An occasional traveller would come to water his horse at the troughs, and give us the news of the country he had travelled through. Clouds would sometimes gather up accompanied by great heat, and a few sharp cracks of thunder would be followed by a few drops of rain; at other times by violent dust storms. Once a misty rain fell for an hour or so, but did no more good than a heavy fog.

At this time the Flinders country was but little known except, of course, by the few who were

settled out there. It was generally looked upon as a *terra incognito.* The features of the country were entirely different from those of the country east of the range, the trees and grasses also different, and the soil generally a calcareous loam.

A horseman with a pack-horse used to deliver our letters and papers once a week at Fairlight station on the other side of the basaltic range, and except an occasional traveller, or a passing bullock team or two, we saw no one.

The country to the south and south-west stretched for hundreds of miles with no other occupants than a few kangaroos and kindred marsupials. The country now known as Afton Downs was deserted. Kirk and Sutherland, who took it up, had been dried out, and losing many sheep in an attempt to water them in the sand at the fifteen-mile bend below Hughenden, had moved farther west to the country now known as Marathon.

For several years after this time, in fact until the country became more fully stocked, as the summer approached the glow of distant fires could be seen after sunset for weeks, gradually coming nearer until the smoke could plainly be seen, and then a sheet of flame with a front sometimes miles in width, would come roaring and crackling down upon us.

With the limited number of hands at our dis-

posal, it was sometimes quite hopeless to fight these fires, and consequently perhaps two-thirds of the run would be as black as a coal in a few hours. The bareness of the country in proximity to sheep yards, and the routes by which sheep came in to water would enable us sometimes to turn the fire and save the yards and patches of country, but all this seriously militated against increase in the number of our sheep.

On the 16th January 1868, after great heat, heavy rain set in, enabling us to dispense with watering the sheep and to put them back at their proper stations, where they were up to their bellies in green grass. The time, therefore, seemed opportune for another visit to the Cape to make a sale of some cattle, so on the 28th of the month, the weather having cleared somewhat, and Tom Christison having come over to look after the sheep and kanakas during my absence, I started up the river in company with Charlie Hassel and Mr. Shives, who was on his way to Townsville.

The cattle up the river had been doing fairly well for some time past, and as it was advisable that the stockman, Campbell, should know the line of country between the station and goldfields, we took him also, leaving a black boy and a white man at the cattle station.

Following up the right bank of the Flinders, we struck in about forty miles an impassable

gorge, the Walker river, which I had passed when travelling in the bed of the river on a former occasion. Mount Courtenay and other hills at the head of the Cape river were at no great distance in front of us. Finding sufficient water for ourselves and horses amongst the rocks we camped for the night, though except young spinifex there was nothing for the horses to eat.

On the following day, a descent into the river being impracticable with horses, we made a detour of fifteen miles in a south-easterly direction through high country of a very poor description, and crossed a creek running south. Then going easterly about twelve miles, we struck another sandy creek after descending from a high tableland. As the grass was good and water plentiful since the rain, we camped here, though there was poison bush about. Proceeding on our journey early next morning, after travelling fifteen miles we met with an impassable red gorge which we followed until it led us into a creek which we afterwards named Warrigal creek. Heavy rain having set in and some of our horses being a little footsore, I determined not to chance any more stony country. The creek we were on was evidently a tributary of the Cape river, and was free from stones. By following it down we could strike the track leading from Natal Downs. We had no tents, and spent an uncomfortable night in

continuous rain. Everything was soaked, and after several futile attempts we gave up all hope of a fire. However, the following day we struck the road and reached Specimen gully before dark, and as the weather was still wet, we were glad to get shelter, sleeping on the floor of one of the stores. There were grog shanties about, but no accommodation houses at that time.

The next morning I met my friend, R. Christison, who had just arrived from Townsville. We spent a day or two looking round the place, which presented a very busy appearance. The creeks and gullies were lined with gold-seekers; there were rows of tents in all directions, and evidently a good deal of gold was being obtained. There was, however, only a limited quantity of supplies on the field, and in consequence of the rain flour was quoted at £100 per ton, with no great quantity available even at that figure.

Having arranged with one of the butchers to supply him with a mob of bullocks in a month's time, my stockman and self started on our return journey accompanied by Mr. R. Christison and a Mr. Fraser who was with him at the time. By going south about fourteen miles, crossing 'Betts' Mistake creek,' Warrigal, and Rocky creek, we avoided the rough country encountered on our journey in. Then going due west by compass for about thirty-five miles and crossing Torrens

and Bullock creeks, we reached Prarie creek on the third day, having blazed a line the whole distance. This road was subsequently adopted for traffic, and it follows much the same line as is now used by the railway. The weather was showery and cloudy, but having provided ourselves with tents, we did not find the trip unpleasant.

At the creek before mentioned we separated, Christison and Fraser striking down the creek for Lammermoor, whilst I made off in a northerly direction for Glendower, about twelve miles, and as the weather was again threatening proceeded to Hughenden, thirty miles, the same day. The next day it rained, but we succeeded in getting a beast to kill for rations. On the following day it also rained and the greater part of the night, but as the stockman and his black boy at the cattle station were short of rations it was advisable to send them up some flour, etc., so I started with a black boy and a pack-horse. However, as the river was up and almost a swim, it was not practicable to take the whole lot, therefore I sent on the boy from the second crossing with a portion and returned myself to Hughenden.

The next day the creeks and rivers were high, and rain was almost continuous for two days. On the nineteenth of February, the weather having cleared and the ground dried somewhat, I started

with Heber Betts and Hope to join the stockman in mustering the cattle. The country looked lovely, the grass luxuriant and waving in the breeze in the brilliant sunshine, in great contrast to the months of dry weather of the preceding year. During the succeeding day or two we scoured the back country on Bullock and Emu creeks, but found more mosquitoes than cattle. In order to get any sleep at night we adopted the usual plan of collecting dry cattle dung and laying a train of it to burn to windward of each of us, a plan which is generally successful in driving off the most vicious mosquito. We slept fairly well. The blacks, however, had left the cattle alone for a time, and we found most of them on the main river. The rest of the month we spent in branding up the calves and drafting out the fat bullocks required for the Cape butcher. The weather was very sultry. Horses and men perspired freely, but by the end of the month the herd was branded up, and R. Christison having joined me, we branded the weaners he was to receive in payment for shearing my sheep.

On the 29th February we started with the bullocks and weaners for Lammermoor. We encamped the first night at the foot of the range near the present site of Redcliffe station, but the cattle being very uneasy we started before dawn of day, reaching Coxon's creek by break-

fast time, about nine miles, and going on in the afternoon ten miles to the crossing of Skeleton creek. The next day, crossing grassed plains, alternating with spinifex ridges, we reached Lammermoor, which at this time naturally did not present the well improved appearance it subsequently did, as one of the largest and most highly improved cattle stations in Queensland. My friend had then a substantial and neatly erected log hut with loopholes for rifles, and a small but good cattle-yard and horse-paddock erected by himself and his brothers with the assistance of the tribe of blacks belonging to that locality who were glad to take payment in tobacco, rations and clothing. Christison was a very powerful man, and had great influence amongst the blacks.

The following day after leaving the weaners to be herded and broken in to their new beat, Christison and one of his brothers, William—who had as a gold miner witnessed the troubles at the Eureka stockade at Ballarat, and was afterwards drowned at the Dalrymple crossing of the Burdekin river—myself and a black boy, started with the bullocks for the Cape diggings. Crossing the extensive plains of the prairie country, we encamped the first night in the timbered country at Emu creek, where there was a shallow lagoon. As the bullocks had now steadied down, and

desired to feed, we went the next day a few miles only to Bullock creek. The grass was good there, and finding a lagoon about five feet deep, we enjoyed a bathe, though the leeches were somewhat troublesome. The nights were chilly for the time of year, 3rd March, but that part of the country is rather elevated. When I got up for my turn on watch, I felt something like a small ball in my pants, and on putting my hand down I pulled out a centipede about five inches long. It was neatly coiled up against my leg, where it had evidently gone to get warm.

On the following day, after crossing Bullock creek, we entered the desert sandstone country, a cheerless mountainous district, covered with a stunted description of eucalyptus with yellow bark and spinifex, instead of grass. This at an elevation of some fifteen hundred feet is the porous sandstone country, which by some geologists is considered to be the source of the water supplying the numerous artesian wells which have turned so much of Western Queensland into a land of flowing streams. It is no doubt a fact that this strip of country, averaging perhaps thirty miles in width, and extending for some hundreds of miles north and south, does absorb an immense quantity of water, the tropical rains being soaked up by it as though by a sponge.

But to return to our journey. Having only a

small mob of seventy-five bullocks or so to look after, we had no trouble with them, but discussed a variety of subjects: the early days of sheep farming in Victoria, when one of my friends induced a gang of sailors from Geelong to come and tackle the shearing at the Werribee during the rush to the Ballarat goldfields; the riots at Ballarat culminating in the assault of the Eureka stockade; Wellington's campaigns, and Warren Hastings in India, and contrasting small things with great, the difficulties of pioneering in Western Queensland, and inducing the southern bankers to adopt the idea that our part of the country consisted of something better than spear grass, six feet high, swarming with blacks and fever and mosquitoes, unfit for sheep, and in which if a man did not die of fever he would probably be speared by the natives. However, we all held fast to the belief that the country would be much sought after, though it might take some years to overcome the prejudice against it.

On the 7th March we reached the Cape and interviewed the butcher who came out to inspect. After some haggling and depreciatory remarks on the part of this important person who wanted to know why we brought over such a three-cornered lot with thighs like rabbits, he paid me for half of them, the number he had agreed to take. The remainder I could only dispose of in

exchange for flour, which, however, the purchaser failed to deliver on my sending over a team for it.

Whilst at this place we thought as a change from our dry beef and damper, we would indulge in a good square meal at one of the tents labelled 'Hotel,' so sitting down in one of these we found ourselves amongst rather a queer set rejoicing in peculiar names; amongst them I remember gentlemen respectively named Copper Nosed Bob, Jumping George, Gentleman L., and several other local celebrities. We got a good meal of freshly corned beef, bread and preserved potatoes, pickles, jam, etc., but were not disposed to linger when the meal was over.

Having occasion to visit the coast I said 'Goodbye' to my friends the Christisons, and made arrangements for a start.

CHAPTER VI

Revisit Sydney—Southern opinions of North Queensland—South Sea Islanders—Troubles with the blacks—Cyclone and floods.

WHEN I left the Cape goldfields, one of the storekeepers asked me to take down some of his gold, and being desirous of obliging him, I did so. Putting the heavy valise on one of my steadiest horses, I left Bailey's store at 11 A.M., and travelled till dark. Then turning off into the bush lest any inquisitive individual should be following me, I camped till the moon rose, when I went on till daylight, stopping only for breakfast, and reached the Burdekin river before noon. I placed the valise in the verandah of the public-house amongst the saddles, and remained there till the cool of the afternoon. At this time Commissioner Maurice O'Connell was still residing on the other side of the river. He had comfortable quarters, and was kind enough to ask me to remain a day or two with him, which I did, and leaving him on the 18th, I reached Townsville at noon the following day and handed over the gold. I do not know how much the valise contained, but judging from the weight of it, the value must

have been considerable. On the 26th the s.s. *Boomerang* arrived, commanded by Captain Chatfield, who afterwards lost his life and ship on the Newcastle bar. One hundred and thirty-nine diggers were landed, strong, fleshy-looking men from New Zealand, many of them with thick clothes on, perspiring freely, mopping their hands and faces with handkerchiefs, and asking what sort of —— country they had come to.

Leaving Townsville for Sydney on 1st April with a crowd of passengers, we reached Bowen the following day, and I took the opportunity of lodging an application for some more country in the neighbourhood of Hughenden. I arrived in Sydney on the 8th, and called upon one of the bankers, who told me he understood the Flinders country was only fit for blacks. The grass was six feet long and armed with prongs, and it was no country for stock or white men. However, after considerable persuasion and influence had been brought to bear, he consented to make an advance on my next clip. I mention this to show how difficult it was in those days to obtain any capital for developing that part of Queensland.

After spending some weeks in the upland country of New South Wales, my wife and I left for the north on the 17th June 1868. We had a lively lot of passengers—B. D. Morehead, Fitzgerald, the Melbourne brewer, and the Hon. J.

Robertson, who being an important personage kept the steamer waiting until he came off to it in Watson's Bay. We happened to be at Gladstone on a Sunday; the Rev. John Dunmore Lang, well known in New South Wales history, was also visiting the place. I attended divine service, and the doctor, who was a remarkable-looking personage, preached an excellent sermon. At Bowen, J. G. Macdonald, who had a nice place on Adelaide Point, drove in with a large brake and four horses to meet the Hon. John Robertson (afterwards Sir John Robertson), and my wife and self accepted an invitation to accompany them. We spent a pleasant evening at Adelaide Point, Sir J. Robertson making facetious remarks on the number of Mr. Macdonald's children, saying, 'It was enough to ruin any squatter.' Macdonald at that time was general manager for stations in which Sir John was interested; they comprised a large number of cattle stations scattered between Bowen and the Gulf of Carpentaria, most of which had been taken up by J. G. Macdonald, who also explored a good deal of that country. On the following day my wife and I proceeded in the steamer to Townsville. The conveniences for landing at this place were then very indifferent. A small asthmatic steam launch used to come off to meet the steamers and bring the passengers and mails ashore. A bar of rocks

extended across the entrance to the creek, and sometimes if it was near low water male passengers had to jump out and assist in pushing the launch over the obstruction.

Things are somewhat better at the present day, since much money has been expended in the formation of a harbour into which large steamers can be brought alongside of wharfs. Whether the best engineers' plans have been adopted I believe is open to doubt, but I understand the annual cost of removing silt is very heavy.

At the time referred to we had brought a married couple with us from Sydney, and after spending a day or two in Townsville getting ready for a start, we left early in July for Hughenden, whence horses had come down to meet us, old Mr. Cudmore going with us part of the way.

We reached Homestead on the 5th of July. This station had been stocked by Mr. Moore Dillon, Dr. Alleyne and others, with sheep for which, in common with most of the country on the eastern watershed, it was eminently unsuited. At Specimen gully, my stockman Campbell met us with some spare horses, which enabled us to push along quickly.

The nights were cold, and on crossing Torrens creek we saw heavy clouds towards the head of the creek, and vivid lightning. It was well we had crossed on the previous evening. In the

morning the creek was running strongly, though we had a clear sky, and water left in the camp utensils overnight was solid ice in the morning.

After crossing the Bullock creek on the following morning, we turned off in the direction of Glendower, but there being no track we only reached the big plain five miles from the station towards sunset, and the stockman who was ahead missed us altogether. Darkness was approaching, and a descent from the tableland in the dark was quite impracticable. We unharnessed the horses and prepared to camp for the night. We had very little water with us and none for the horses.

I had noticed two blacks on the edge of the plain watching us, so leaving the camp to reconnoitre I went to the edge of the tableland and looked down upon the valley of the Flinders. The sun had set and a gloom was spreading over the valley, which perhaps at this point was two miles in width. At the bottom was the river invisible through the trees. On one of the spurs below, about four hundred yards to my right, a fire was burning brightly, where the festive blacks were in all probability cooking the flesh of one of my bullocks. Under ordinary circumstances blacks do not make large fires.

On returning to camp I told the man quietly there were blacks about, and as the horses might

stray, having no water, we watched them alternately during the night. Early next morning, as soon as we had harnessed the horses, my stockman turned up, and after making a start we soon arrived at the bridle-track leading down to the station. We took the horses out of the buggy and lowered it by hand down the rough declivity.

At the hut and small yard which comprised the homestead, where only a black boy had been left, we found a mob of blacks in possession, but peaceably inclined. They requested that we should get a bullock in for them to eat. However, as I had good reason to believe they had already made free with my cattle, and as I also judged that with a ready compliance on my part their demand would be frequent, I declined to accede to their wishes, but informed them that they were free to hunt the game they were accustomed to without interference from me so long as they did not spear our cattle, or interfere with white men and their property. This they ultimately agreed to, but unfortunately the temptation to spear cattle was too strong for them later on.

On returning to Hughenden, we found that things had been progressing fairly well under the care of T. Christison, but it was now well on in July and no rain of any consequence had fallen since February 13th. The country was getting

dry and water disappearing, so we put down wells and troughs in several places in the river. For some reason or other—either because there was not at that day the same body of water in the sand, or because we did not tap the proper places, except at the well used in the year previously —there was considerable difficulty in obtaining a permanent supply of water. It is possible that there was not the same flow below the surface as could be tapped in after years, when the country drained by the river had been well stocked and hardened, causing the water to run off more freely into the river. We had not then discovered that by sinking thirty feet or so on the river flats, a good supply of water was obtainable.

We had several visitors during the month of July 1868. Mr. Gorman, who had taken some cattle down the Flinders, returned suffering from malarial fever; Mr. Betts of Fairlight and his sister occasionally visited us, and old Mr. Carson from Melbourne passed down on a visit to his son at Marathon. Murison of Mount Emu also passed, and a Mr. Patterson, a native of Bathurst in New South Wales, who said he had never seen the sea and was on his way to Townsville to look at it. He was a particularly pleasant man, and there was nothing about him to convey the impression that he had lived entirely apart from large centres of population. He was afterwards for a short

time with my brother at Glendower, who found him an excellent man amongst cattle. My brother told me that on one occasion when mustering far away back, Patterson and a black boy secured a good sized mob of rather rowdy cattle. In the evening when they had sobered down, Patterson sent off the black boy to tell my brother about them, whilst he held them on a plain. The black boy did not reach the camp till midnight. My brother wanted to be off at once, but the boy declared he could not find his way back as the night was very dark. They started at daylight, and at ten o'clock they found that Patterson had the cattle safe on the plain.

At the end of July we commenced getting in timber for a woolshed, T. Christison doing the bullock driving; the shed we had been using was of a very flimsy character, but as we had other things to attend to, the new one was not then completed. In the meantime I had the house finished by erecting a shingled verandah, extending on three sides of it, and covering in about one hundred and fifty feet, which made the place more habitable. The weather was dry and cold, and our large fireplace was in requisition every evening. We were well off for milk and butter, having lately broken in a new lot of cows for milking.

There were strong indications of rain from the 1st to the 5th of August, when the clouds dis-

persed, and the weather again became cold. My wife took advantage of it, and was able to do a good deal of riding with me about the run.

Having had no rain for nearly six months, we began using the troughs and wells for watering the sheep ; on the 18th, a cold and windy day, the sun appeared to give less light than usual, and in one of the rooms at the house where there was a hole in the iron roof from which a nail had departed, a ray of light came through, and the process of an eclipse of the sun was portrayed on the wall.

Some weeks passed away, and with the exception of the arrival of our teamster with a supply of stores from Townsville, an event which we had been daily looking for, there was but little to vary the routine of counting sheep, searching for lost sheep, and attending to the watering of the flocks.

At this time a good many South Sea islanders were employed on the stations on the Flinders. They had been introduced a year or two previously, white men having been scarce and shepherds' wages up to thirty-five shillings a week, exclusive of rations, so that with high rates of carriage in addition there was no room for profit. The saying at that day, therefore, amongst the men was that it was no use going out to the Flinders for a job ; you had to ride thirty miles for a drink of water,

and on going up to a station you were hunted off by kanakas.

On September 10th our hopes were again raised by very light showers, but on the following day the rain had all passed away, and the hot sun withered up the grass.

We had at this time a small garden, and by incessant watering we managed to rear a few cabbages, lettuces, etc. At this time a few travellers were passing out towards gold-bearing country farther north, and we had considerable difficulty in persuading them that these cabbages were not grown for their particular benefit.

I had recently heard from my brother Charles that he contemplated coming out to join me, and on 11th October he and my brother Mowbray arrived, the former accompanied by his wife, who had ridden with them the two hundred and thirty-six miles from Townsville. The heat at this time was intense, the thermometer standing at 106 to 108 degrees in the shingled verandah, during many hours of the day. The long-continued dry weather had parched up the grass and the ground was saturated with heat. This state of things continued until December 13th, during which time, however, we got in sufficient timber and completed our small woolshed of rather a primitive fashion.

My brother Charles had joined the stockman

up the river, where he erected a framework of saplings thatched with reeds, in which he and his wife lived until a comfortable cottage could be erected. The place, however, was none too safe, surrounded as it was by gorges from which the smoke of blacks' fires was frequently visible, circling up in the still evening air.

On the 13th December, however, showers fell along the mountains, and on the 17th December, to our great relief the dry weather was over, and partial but heavy storms brought on the grass.

Before commencing shearing, by way of giving my wife a little change, we drove down the river fifty miles to Marathon, where also we obtained a rope, which I had been promised for the wool press. On our way we stopped a night at the house of one of our neighbours. He was living very much *en garçon,* and certainly was not expecting ladies. We arrived about sunset, and as he came forward I said, 'I have brought my wife to see you.' 'You don't say so,' he replied; 'very glad to see her.' Supper was coming in, and my friend placed three match-boxes on the table by way of a tablecloth. The table not being snow white, he placed upon these match-boxes a fine damper, some good corned mutton, and pickles and mustard, which completed the menu. During these preparations, hearing a gulping sound like the noise of a small mill stream

over pebbles, I looked round from the three-legged stool upon which I was seated, and saw a large kangaroo dog with his mouth in a tin dish in which a couple of tins of preserved salmon had been placed. Our host, with an exclamation and a rush seized the dish, but too late to save the delicacy.

Our friend did the best he could to make us comfortable for the night, and the next morning we reached Marathon station, then owned by the Carsons of Melbourne. The house here was good, having been erected by Messrs. Kirk and Sutherland, the former of whom understood building. The interior arrangements were superior, and from the verandah a pretty view of the undulating downs presented itself, with the river timber on the left. The walls of the house were double and filled in with soil. We remained here a day, and on the following day returned to Hughenden with the rope. The nights now became hazy, and with the thermometer at ninety-four and ninety-five degrees we had three or four days' rain. We could not shear up to this time for want of rain, and now we could not shear because of it. We were shearing intermittently through January and February, and it was not until the 25th April 1869 that we got the last of the sheep shorn. During January the mornings were generally fine. About two

o'clock heavy clouds would form in the west, and a thunderstorm follow of an hour or two's duration. The sky would then become clear and the frogs would croak in thousands.

We had engaged at this time Edward Palmer with a couple of wagons to take our wool away. He was commonly called 'Overland Ned,' having been one of Mackinlay's party on his journey from South Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria; he and his party used to go by the name of the 'Whistling Mob,' because in calling upon their horses to pull, they always did it by a whistle, and the absence of strong language which the drivers of teams sometimes indulge in was remarkable.

Our shearing was at length finished, and we were glad to see the teams cross the river with the wool on their way to the coast.

At the end of April we had some heavy storms, and also on the 6th of May, which was very favourable for the lambing.

In July of this year, 1869, travellers began to pass on their way to the Gilbert river goldfields in considerable numbers, some of them from Victoria and New South Wales. They used to come to my store to buy rations and supplies. Some of them, however, had very little money.

This year was one of the good ones. We had rain again at the end of July, and a heavy storm early in September, and during several days in

the middle of October and again towards the end of the month there were good showers from the north-west.

In order to avoid shearing again in the wet season, we commenced operations early in November. What the rainfall amounted to I do not know, but we seemed to have scarcely a month without rain. In the middle of this month we were delayed for a week by good showers from the south-west.

On the 24th, after more rain and amidst incessant croaking of frogs, my wife and I sitting in the verandah saw a man ride up to the slip rails of the horse-paddock on a grey horse. He was clothed in a red coat, and wore also a starched collar and a black tie, the whole turnout being most unusual in the bush. He rode up in front of us and said, 'My name is Webber, Frank Webber. Can I stay the night?' He stayed that night and many nights afterwards. Whether he was any relation of Lever's Frank Webber, I do not know, but he certainly was full of most entertaining stories, having an inexhaustible stock of good yarns which would have filled a volume. Before leaving us he starched and ironed his collars.

At the end of November the river came down in a strong stream, and this was soon followed by thunderstorms in December.

During a ride one day on Galah creek, a few miles to the north-west of the Homestead, I came across the first mob of blacks I had seen so near the place. Hearing the sound of some one chopping a tree I soon found a black gin up a tree cutting out honey—sugar bag as they call it. After some palaver she conducted me to her tribe across the creek. So far as I remember, I counted some sixty or seventy fine-looking black fellows in first-class condition and perfectly naked. One or two amongst them understood sufficient English to enable me to understand they wanted to be allowed to hunt on the run, to which I consented on their promising not to interfere with the cattle. These promises were made in the following manner:—'Bael (not) spear bullocky, sugar bag, possum.'

My brother, who was at the cattle station, was doubtful of the wisdom of this concession, but I did not see very clearly what else could be done. My neighbour at Fairlight had allowed them to come in there, and without waging war against them it did not seem practicable to keep them off the cattle country, which had already afforded them considerable shelter. Moreover, I thought it right to give them a fair trial, which, however, they afterwards took advantage of, though in the meantime they hunted freely up towards Glendower, capturing snakes and opossums galore in

places they had not for some time explored, and seeming generally to be having a good time.

On the 21st December, after a good deal of rain and wind, taking advantage of a break in the weather, and being desirous of sending my wife south for a few months to avoid the heat of the remainder of the summer, which she found very trying, we left via Glendower for Townsville, passing some of the blacks on the way. They renewed their former promises.

My brother and his wife by this time had erected a neat cottage and outbuildings at Glendower, and had an old ship's carpenter on the place, who was very useful in many respects. Reginald Macneil, afterwards well known in the north as an efficient police officer, was also with him, and in addition my brother had a black fellow and a gin. His wife had formed a small garden; a few flowers were in bloom, and geraniums in boxes. The verandah being also covered with creepers, which the constant rain had caused to grow luxuriantly, we spent the evening very pleasantly on the little gravel plateau in front of the flowers, overlooking the river and stock-yard, the moon lighting up the valley in front of us, whilst we discussed our plans for the future.

My brother's wife was a great rider, and although a risky thing to do with blacks about, she used sometimes to ride down to us, doing the thirty

miles in four hours, unattended, and armed with a revolver which I am afraid would not have been much use to her if the blacks intended mischief. The manner in which she used to remain at the Homestead, sometimes for ten days at a time, whilst my brother and his party were out mustering, was very plucky; it was a lonely spot, no travellers pass that way, and her only companion was frequently a black gin, when old Nairn, the carpenter, was away at his work.

The following day we harnessed three horses to the buggy, and sped away towards the Cape river, a black boy driving the spare horses. A few miles beyond Specimen gully, one of the wheels cracked with a sound like a pistol shot; nearly all the spokes had broken off short at the nave. Taking the horses out—fortunately we were going slowly at the time—I cut and trimmed two saplings, and placing them against the wheel in the form of a cross, lashed them securely to the nave of the wheel in the centre and to the felloes at the circumference. In this manner I was able to drive to a suitable camp, and brought the buggy back into the township next morning at Specimen gully, to the blacksmith, who put new spokes in the wheel at ten shillings each.

At this time Mr. Charters was Gold Commissioner and Police Magistrate on the Cape, and had his house on a little hill overlooking the town-

ship. He was a big heavy man and used to go his rounds on a big grey horse. He wore a long gold watch chain round his neck, and in hot weather generally rode with an umbrella. An orderly followed him at a respectful distance. His appearance generally reminded one of an oriental magnate. He was, I think, liked and respected. His name was afterwards given to Charters Towers, which goldfield at that time was stocked with cattle, and having seen Edward Cunningham on one occasion mustering in that direction, I believe it formed part of his run of Burdekin Downs.

After saying ‘ Good-bye ’ to my wife, who left Townsville for the south, I rode back to Glendower, arriving there about the middle of January 1870. Things were going on fairly well, though my brother said he had doubts about the blacks. Heavy rain had fallen since I left, but the country was now drier, and he hoped to take a good look round.

On following down the river the next day I was surprised to see only one mob of cattle, which were wild and started off for the scrub. Some miles farther on I struck the tracks left by cattle after the recent rain, with the tracks of blacks upon them; it was at once apparent they had been making a serious raid.

My brother Mowbray was in charge at Hugh-

enden. He said he had seen but little of the blacks since I left. My intention was to return on the following day to the cattle station and see what we could do. Heavy rain, however, set in during the night; the river and creeks were in full flood, and it was a week or ten days before I could reach Glendower by way of the Prarie tableland.

On arriving, however, I found matters were rather serious. My brother Charles reported that the blacks had been raiding the cattle in all directions. Not a hoof was to be seen anywhere; the cattle had been scared completely off the river, and their tracks were all making south.

When the weather cleared, four of us started out, including the black boy, who was driving the pack-horse with our blankets and rations, and a spare horse for each of us. After some days, during which we were in the saddle almost night and day, we succeeded in putting about a thousand head of cattle together, gathered from Prarie and Bullock creek, some twenty-five miles away, and as the country was very heavy in consequence of the rain which had fallen, and our horses had had enough of it, we were glad to make our way back with them to the station, where we had a capacious yard and dry ridgy country upon which to herd them in wet weather.

On my way back from Townsville I had arranged to deliver to one of the butchers on the Cape some

bullocks in a month's time, and as the time for delivery was approaching, I took out a mob from the cattle we had, and with my cousin, R. Macneil, started with them. The track from the Homestead for the first twenty miles crossed black soil plains, alternating with sandy ridges; then fifteen miles of hard red sandy soil brought us to Torrens creek. About twelve miles beyond this creek the track crosses some worthless country, covered with ti-tree and spinifex, hilly, and the soil a white sand. The ground being very soft the cattle followed the track in Indian file. On our descent on to a flat with soil of a pipeclay character, the light crust formed on the track gave way, and the leading bullocks were soon floundering as in a quicksand. The bullocks behind them seeing what had happened refused to go on. Some floundered on to ant beds, and nothing we could do would induce the others to follow. Off the track it was impossible to ride, as a horse would sink to his withers, though the crust was strong enough to support a man.

I spent the afternoon in trying to find a way round the bog, following the timbered higher ground, but it seemed quite hopeless. The result was we had to camp that night amidst the poison. Unfortunately we had only brought sufficient rations for an ordinary trip, as they were running short at the station and we hoped

to bring a load back. Not feeling justified in starving my friend as well as myself, and seeing it might take much longer than we had anticipated if we eventually succeeded in working round by another route, I most reluctantly turned back.

On the following morning, when we commenced to travel, several bullocks dropped from having eaten the poison bush, as if they had been shot; one in crossing Torrens creek staggered and fell, and being rolled down by the stream was soon drowned. One beast we left on the track; nothing would induce him to move off a sound piece of ground on to which he had struggled.

I was much annoyed at having to turn back, and the day after my return to the station I started by myself to see if there was any possibility of getting cattle into the diggings round by Mount Emu station, Cargoon and Lalsworth. At the last-mentioned place, which I reached in pouring rain, I found Frank Hann and Dr. Roberts. On the following morning the creek in front was a torrent, and as the banks of the creek had been cut quite perpendicular, it was quite hopeless trying to get a horse over.

For ten consecutive days rain fell, and during one night it blew with almost hurricane violence, shaking the hut we were inhabiting. We afterwards heard that a cyclone had half destroyed

Townsville. At length the rain ceased, but since the creek was still impracticable, and a horse was unable to travel off the track without sinking to its girths, I started on my return journey. The weather had cleared somewhat, but the road round by Reedy springs was very rotten in places, and I nearly lost my pack-horse on several occasions; even on the track he would sometimes sink to his girths.

On my return to the Flinders, which was a swim, I found the floods had been very heavy, the river being reported to have been miles wide between Richmond and the Cloncurry, and the loss of stock considerable. Some men came in later on and said they had been living for six weeks in a tree; the country had been under water on each side of them as far as the eye could reach, all creeks and rivers having been in flood owing to the continuous rain. It certainly exceeded anything I have seen before or since, and the floods no doubt were phenomenal—unfortunately we had no rain-gauge at that time. My friend, E. D. Donkin, who had Lara station at that time, some considerable distance down the Flinders, informed me that for a fortnight he was imprisoned with two other men in the roof of his house, during which period they only had a small quantity of flour to mix with the muddy water flowing beneath them. They managed to light

a small fire on one or two occasions by utilising a nail case into which they put a few of the battens supporting the roof. He assured me that his horses stood in water during the whole of this period, and the hair came off their bodies. On going in search of a shepherd as the water subsided, he was found in a bauhinia-tree, and all this man had to eat during this time was a dead fowl which happened to be washed into the tree.

My sheep at Hughenden had in the meantime been doing well on pebbly ridges, and by way of passing the time whilst the weather was clearing, the sun having appeared, I thought I would take a trip over to Fairlight station, get the mail and see how our friends on the other side of the range were faring. So taking a pack-horse with a bag of sugar we owed them, I crossed the Flinders and the next creek without trouble. The black soil plains toward the tableland were very heavy; my horses being fat felt the heat and exertion, and in attempting to cross Canterbury creek, which was running strong, my pack-horse bogged hopelessly, so unloading him, I carried the sugar back to the bank of the river. With some difficulty the horse then contrived to flounder out of the water, but was quite knocked up. The weather now had turned very hot and sultry; enormous banks of clouds were banking up to the eastward, portending a tropical downpour, so

placing the pack saddle and load upon my riding-horse, and driving the two in front of me, we ploughed our way back to Galah creek. By the time we completed the six miles intervening it was dark. The creek had evidently risen; the banks were almost perpendicular, and altogether it was not advisable to attempt crossing. Therefore I placed the sugar in a tree, and camped for the night, turning my horses up the creek in short hobbles, as I knew there were blacks in the neighbourhood, and I happened to see their camp fires down the creek on my right.

It perhaps is as well to mention that creeks and rivers in Western Queensland frequently present only dry sandy beds, alternating with shingle, or are watercourses cut through the loam of the soil in which there is little or no shingle, and are often dry for miles in the summer. With the summer rains a foaming torrent courses down, often flooding the country on each side. The creek I camped on this night partook of the former character; banks twenty feet high and gum-trees forty to fifty feet high lined the banks as pollards do the banks of an English stream, but there the resemblance ceases.

During the night it rained continuously; a saddle cloth is not much protection under a tropical rain, but the night was not cold. As soon as it was possible to see in the morning, I

got my horses up and inspected the creek, which was within a foot or two of the bank, and running like a mill stream. There seemed no landing-place on the other side worth mentioning. However, taking the horse I had packed on the previous day and slinging my boots round my neck, I mounted him and slid in. We at once went travelling down the stream, but the horse being a good swimmer took things easily. However, he could get no foothold on the other side. With some difficulty I secured the saddle and sent the horse sailing down the creek at the rate of about six miles an hour. He got out somewhere, because he turned up safe and sound a month or two afterwards.

Having my boots I was able to walk comfortably over to the Flinders, which fortunately not being in full flood I was able to swim without any risk, and I reached the Homestead in time for luncheon.

Of course these are only trivial incidents, and I only give them as instancing the sort of life we used to lead on stations in those days.

CHAPTER VII

Mustering cattle after they had been raided by blacks—Some droving experiences—Difficulty in procuring supplies—Visit of Rev. James Adams—Visit Goulburn and Twofold Bay district—Return to Hughenden—More floods.

As soon as the weather cleared again, and a dry crust formed on the ground, I left my brother Mowbray to look after the lambing and the kanakas, who at this time were doing the shepherding, and went up the river to see how they had been faring at the cattle station.

The Flinders was running in a good stream, and continued to do so throughout the whole year in consequence of the tremendous soaking the country had sustained.

The cattle we had previously mustered had to be let go when the heavy rain set in, and as the country was still in a very sodden state, and rations were running short, the opportunity seemed a good one to try and get in to the Cape goldfields, and see the butcher whom I had disappointed in the matter of supplying him with cattle.

On the track beyond Torrens creek, where the pack-horses were following me in single file with Macneil behind them, my horse pricked his ears,

and looking up I saw the bullock we had left weeks previously standing staring at us about fifty yards ahead, looking sleek and well. He had a beaten track of about a hundred yards along the path, and about the same distance up a gully where he used to graze.

On reaching the Cape we found Mr. Thornton of Tower Hill had managed to get in with a mob of cattle, having worked round the rotten ground from the south on the Lammermoor track, so that the butcher had not altogether run out of beef. Prices were not very high at this time, £4, 10s. and £5 being paid for bullocks. I managed to secure another order for cattle, and we started back with some light packs of rations. During the time the country was in such a boggy condition, our horses when travelling were terrified on finding themselves sinking. One horse, directly he found himself on soft ground, would sit on his tail like a dog and contemplate the situation before making a fresh start. He had very big feet and could travel where his mates had to be dug out.

About the beginning of April 1870 we recommenced our mustering in earnest. The cattle missing were distributed over a considerable area of country below the present railway line, and over an area of plains and sandy ridges extending from Skeleton creek in the west to Torrens

creek in the east, a strip of country about thirty miles in width intersected by several creeks and belts of scrub.

The cattle were very wild, having been thoroughly scared by the blacks; amongst them were a considerable number of aged bullocks and unbranded young cattle, forming a very lively lot to deal with. Our only chance of securing them was by wheeling them quickly and circling them in the direction of the open country, and although at times nothing would stop their splitting up in the gidya and whip-stick scrubs, we succeeded in mustering for some time at the rate of a hundred head per week. My brother had put up a small yard down Prarie creek, which enabled us to hold one lot until we secured another.

Our mode of operation was to go out on to one of these back creeks, and form a depot, leaving one man in charge of the camp and spare horses. Then at early dawn four of us would start out, one man carrying some cooked meat rolled up in a blanket, another some flour, another tea, sugar, etc., and a black boy tracking. Once we were on the track of cattle, we followed them till sundown, and unless we came across them we picked up their tracks on the following day, until we did get them. Sometimes we sighted them encamped in a thick scrub, and had to wait patiently until towards evening

when they would draw out to feed. Much depended upon being able to wheel them in open country, and let them have a good look at us before they got heated and their tempers were up. When handled in this way the cattle soon saw we were not blacks, and sobered down; when once in hand, however, we had to stick to them night and day until they were brought into the station and placed with those which were being herded.

The grass and water were so good and plentiful this year that we were able to keep the cattle in hand for many weeks, until we had mustered several hundreds of these outsiders. Some, however, had gone so far that nothing could be done with them until the water dried up, and they came into more accessible places. In the meantime we let the herd go again, putting them on to their proper beats.

Shortly after putting out the cattle I was camped with my brother one night about fifteen miles below the station, and on riding from the camp early on the following morning we heard an extraordinary noise. We were riding along the edge of a plain, and whilst looking about and debating the cause of the noise, we saw a light smoke and dusky moving figures on the far side of the plain where the timbered spurs of the tableland came down to the lower country,

distant from us about three-quarters of a mile. Blacks evidently amongst the cattle. Wheeling round we galloped across the plain, and charging straight at them came so suddenly upon them that they broke in all directions making for the rocks. One of them tried to wrest my revolver from me, but as I held the right end he did not effect his purpose. We could not follow them far, as the ground was impracticable for horses. On returning to their camp we found the remains of their repast, a considerable quantity of roast beef still at their fires.

We had for some time been petitioning the Government to send native police into our district, and shortly afterwards Harry N. Finch arrived with some half-dozen troopers. Taking up their quarters on the site of the present Chinaman's Garden at the junction of Station creek at Hughenden, they were soon on the tracks of any marauders.

In the year 1870 the runs in Western Queensland were held under the Act of 1864, by which leases were granted for fourteen years with the right of pre-emption, that is to say, out of each block of twenty-five square miles the lessee was entitled to purchase without competition two thousand five hundred and sixty acres at 10s. an acre, ostensibly for the purpose of securing improvements, but as the method of fencing in runs

for sheep had not then been adopted, and in making an application for the purchase of land it was necessary to state that certain improvements, generally fencing, had been carried out, it was not practicable to take advantage of this clause to any great extent.

Sheep farming at this date was not profitable owing to the class of sheep being inferior, the high cost of carriage, and the deterioration of the wool under the system of shepherding, by which the wool became impregnated with dust and dirt, and was spoilt and reduced in value.

Much of the country in the north having been stocked with sheep, for which the eastern watershed proved quite unsuitable, and the Gulf of Carpentaria equally so, the consequence was that in the early 'seventies from all this class of country the sheep that remained came pouring back towards the south for sale, and the whole of North-West Queensland fell into bad repute as a sheep country. Banks and financial companies refused to lend any money on northern stations, and for some years for want of capital to aid in developing this portion of the country, things were almost at a standstill.

With the exception of our own sheep and some belonging to Messrs. Greig and Nash of the Barkley tableland, none remained in the Burke district; the owners of Cambridge Downs came

by with their sheep, taking them south, and offered me the whole of Cambridge Downs run for a few hundred pounds. Towns and Co.'s sheep from the Gulf, and the Hanns' from the Bluff, all passed south. Fairlight and Marathon, which were owned by the Carsons, and Telemon followed suit, not that these two runs last mentioned were unsuitable for sheep, but the owners were tired of the uphill business. Marathon was sold to Courtenay, who had made money as a carrier, for six or eight hundred pounds, with a few head of cattle; the house must have cost nearly that sum. Afton Downs remained unoccupied, the country all lying idle for any one to occupy who had a little money and chose to take it.

These were depressing times, and we debated the advisability of simply holding on to cattle, as the others were doing. Our own district was evidently adapted for sheep and I was averse to giving in, feeling sure that the country would eventually assert itself. I made the remark 'We shall, I hope, some day have seventy thousand sheep on the place, and hear the whistle of the locomotive across these Downs.' These events came to pass, but took seventeen years to accomplish.

It was considered in New South Wales that the Flinders country and North-West Queensland were

no good except for cattle. It was known that thousands of sheep had been brought south; whether because the country was unsuitable, or sheep did not pay under adverse conditions, people did not stop to discriminate. The whole country got a bad name, and it was not until several years later, when some enterprising Victorians came up bringing Victorian capital for investment, that things took a turn. Victorians may be said to have rediscovered Western Queensland.

At the time I refer to, many lessees ceased to pay rent on a considerable portion of the runs. This was not a very safe course to adopt, and one of my neighbours discontinuing payment on the whole of his run, application was made by some one else who was wideawake, to have the country put up to auction by the Government. The occupiers not being on the alert apparently failed to see the notice of its approaching sale in the *Gazette.* The consequence was that the other neighbour purchased it at the upset price, and the consternation of the occupiers when receiving notice to quit was supreme.

The Government, by way of retaliating for cessation of payment of rent, stopped our mail service, and for a considerable period we had to get our mails the best way we could from the Cape river goldfields one hundred miles away. However, as

most of us were hard up, it was not an unmixed evil, because unpleasant letters from banks, etc., calling attention to the state of our banking account did not necessitate an immediate reply.

Carriers in the early 'seventies were doing a good business, as they obtained £23 to £30 per ton for loading as far out as Hughenden, and much higher rates to the various gold rushes as they were opened. Some of them bought stations when at a discount; others went into mining or opened hotels either on the goldfields or in Townsville, and some of them are 'well to do' men at the present time.

To return, however, to the year 1870. Having succeeded by the end of the year in getting our herd of cattle fairly well in hand, though still considerably short of our number, towards the end of December we drafted out all the old bullocks to the number of seventy-five or eighty, and taking with me a North of Ireland man named Bell, and a few spare horses, I started with them by way of Mount Emu for Ravenswood, hoping to sell them at the new goldfields which had been opened there.

The weather was hot and showery, but the cattle were quiet and it was fortunate they were so, as we had some heavy thunderstorms which often came on after dark; one night at Talavera gully, a tributary of the Burdekin, whilst

I was on watch, sitting on my horse near the cattle a terrific storm broke over us. With each flash of lightning each beast could be seen as distinctly as in the daytime, many of them chewing the cud; but the darkness succeeding each flash was intense. Had they broken away it would have been difficult to stop them amidst the driving rain and deafening thunder. Fortunately not a beast moved, and when the storm passed over every one was standing in his place. Had a tree been splintered close to them, the result would probably have been different, and as there were plenty of cattle in the neighbourhood, we might have had much trouble in recovering them.

We arrived at Ravenswood about the 17th January 1871. The butchers, of course, asserted that they were well supplied. However, after I had made some preliminary arrangements to slaughter the cattle on my own account if I could not dispose of them in any other way, Mr. Barton, who although engaged in mining had also a butchering establishment, agreed to inspect them, so telling Bell to water the cattle, about lunch time I took Barton out to see them, just as they were drawing out from water looking very full and contented. As generally happens on such occasions some of the worst of the bullocks were nearest to him. I was relieved when he said,

'Yes, I see those; now let us see some of the worst,' feeling pretty certain that if he considered the tail end of the mob to be passable bullocks, the sale was as good as made. After some haggling he bought them for £4, 10s. each, and Symes, his foreman, told me afterwards they weighed as heavy as lead.

In those days droving was done with a few hands. Two men would frequently take a mob of bullocks several hundred miles, watching them turn about at night, a pack-horse carrying their rations and blankets, and a spare horse or two travelling with the cattle. In this way the cattle became accustomed to the men and horses. At night when the last beast had given the long puff of breath which denoted that he had lain down, I used sometimes to dismount from my horse, and putting the stirrups over the saddle so that if the horse shook himself there would be but little noise, I was soon asleep holding the reins, almost in reach of the nearest bullock's tail, knowing from experience that if any of them made a move I should be awake at once.

In later years, however, a drover would require a staff of men, including a cook, a cart to carry tents, blankets, and rations, even with a comparatively small draft of cattle going two or three hundred miles, and also would probably ask for a black fellow to drive his spare horses;

all which, of course, is necessary on a long trip with a large number of cattle, but a good deal depends upon the condition of the country and whether grass and water are plentiful.

I remember the late Walter Hays passing Hughenden with a mob of fat cattle from Richmond Downs station, a black driving the cattle and he driving a buggy. These cattle he took in safety to the Cape river, and I remember a mob of fat cattle taken from the Flinders to Adelaide topped the market when the country was unfenced, and the rule by which drovers are restricted to half a mile on each side of the road was not much adhered to.

The day for droving fat cattle long distances has passed away. Moreover, the cattle which used to make these journeys were of mature age. Since the time to which the above mentioned incidents belong, freezing-works in Queensland have brought in more prosperous times.

After the delivery of the cattle referred to above, as no further work could be done until after the wet season which was now setting in, I took the opportunity of joining my wife in the south. Leaving Townsville in the s.s. *Boomerang*, on the 4th February, we encountered heavy weather, and did not reach Sydney until the 14th.

I left that evening for Goulburn, and I remember the late Sir Charles Cowper as he stepped

into the train remarking, 'Paris bombarded and France at the feet of Prussia.'

After enjoying a few weeks of the Goulburn climate, my wife and I were back in Townsville on the 13th April 1871. Mr. Gordon was the local Commissioner of Customs, and the Rev. J. Adams, Church of England clergyman. I arranged with one of the local butchers to take a mob of fat bullocks, and having engaged Mark Beswick and his wife for the station, we were soon *en route* for Hughenden.

On reaching Torrens creek we debated whether we should cross or not that night. However, there had been some misty rain, and we went over. It was as well we did, because as on a former occasion, the creek came down, this time two hours after our arrival on the 27th April.

On our arrival at Glendower, my brother was out mustering, so on the following day I rode down the river to meet him. He had much to relate with reference to the trouble the blacks had been giving during my absence. However, the cattle were looking well, and he said he thought he could muster the mob required for Townsville.

At Hughenden the lambing was on, and I arranged to stay and look after it, if my brother Mowbray would take the cattle to Townsville. This he agreed to do, so accompanied by the same

man I had with me on the last trip, he delivered them safely at their destination.

It was now the month of May, and three thousand ewes were lambing. The kanakas were good at this work and very patient with the sheep, the weather was mild, there were occasional showers, grass and water were abundant, and the business proceeded comfortably. Old Mr. McKinlay, from whom I had purchased a couple of South Australian rams (C. B. Fisher's) some years previously, stayed with us for a time giving his assistance.

About the middle of June, when the weather had turned cold and frosty, Mr. George Brodie passed with cattle, I think to take up country in the west. Our lambing had been completed, and we marked about ninety per cent. I remember on one occasion marking as high as one hundred per cent. when lambing by hand, but this was exceptional.

Our time for the next few months was expended in attending to the sheep, making sheep-yards, poisoning dogs, breaking in milking cows, and occasionally assisting in mustering cattle and branding calves. Beyond reading a few papers and periodicals, and any details which reached us concerning the French and German War, we troubled ourselves little about the outside world. Whether the flocks would count out right, or

whether we should have to spend Sunday looking for lost sheep, or not, was of more immediate consequence.

In the early part of July, a light drizzling rain was followed by more frost. In August we were visited by the Rev. J. Adams from Townsville. He held divine service on the Sunday after his arrival, all available hands being mustered for the occasion. Towards the end of August the weather warmed up considerably, as it usually does at that time, and the glow of bush fires was visible in the sky.

Towards the middle of September the weather was fresh and windy. Roger Sheaffe came in on his way from the Cloncurry, and as at that time the Post Office was at our station, travellers used to call for letters. On the 19th the mailman left in heavy rain. Our creek was running as early as 8 A.M. and we had a delightful rain. Frank Hann passed through the run with cattle bound for southern markets, and on the 14th October my brother returned in a heavy thunderstorm from his trip with the cattle to Townsville. We had several good storms in the latter part of this month, and the Downs being once more green, the sheep improved rapidly in condition. Bobbie Smith passed in with a magnificent lot of fat bullocks from Burleigh, all five or six year old bullocks of great size and condition, such as are

seldom seen nowadays, when younger cattle are more in requisition.

Early in November, Edkins senior, commonly called 'Daddy Edkins,' passed with a large mob of cattle from the Gulf country. He was a brother of Mr. E. R. Edkins of Mount Cornish, and had been one of the Port Essington settlers in the earlier days. He had none but kanakas with him driving his cattle. Men were scarce at this time; fever and ague had driven many away, and except myself and my brother, we frequently had no white men on the station.

T. Christison, who had been with me during my brother's absence, returned to Lammermoor. The weather set in intensely hot and sultry with rain threatening and light showers, accompanied by tremendous wind which carried off the roof of the wool shed. However, we soon had it on again, and commenced shearing. We were much interrupted by rain in the early part of December, but having plenty of water we washed the sheep; carriage being very scarce and expensive it was an object to get rid of the dirt in the wool. So much were we delayed by rain that it was not until the 5th February 1872 that we finished, and through the whole of this month we had much rain. My brother Charles and his wife, who before the wet season set in had returned from a trip south, came down from Glendower about

this time, and we discussed our plans for the future. The native police, when not on duty, were as before mentioned camped in our neighbourhood, and the blacks knowing they were about had to be careful.

I had at this time an old overseer, Willie Muir, shepherding eight miles down the river. He had been with us at Mount McConnel and had before that time been at Rosenthal station, and was an excellent man amongst sheep. He had an old man shepherding with him, there being two flocks down there. This old man was peculiar. He carried an assortment of bottles containing essences, and was commonly alluded to as the chemist. Willie Muir came up late one night and said the old man was very ill. I sent a cart off early in the morning to fetch him, and rode down to see him. However, the man was dead. I returned for a Prayer Book, and read the Church of England burial service in the presence of old Willie Muir and Beswick, who dug the grave, and we buried him in the hard clay flat. There were no papers to show who he really was, though he was entered under the name of Cook in the station books.

Some time subsequently, most of the kanakas having returned to their islands, I had a Chinaman shepherding two miles nearer the station, the sheep-yard and humpy being on a high ridge.

One morning he came to me and said the place was haunted and he would not stay there. After he had left I sent another Chinaman to take the flock. In a few days he came in saying he could not remain there because a Chinaman had come into his hut at night with his throat cut.

During the first half of the month of March we had a good deal of rain. I may mention that on the night of 4th February 1872 we saw what we took to be the Aurora Australis in the southern sky. I was under the impression that this phenomenon was never seen in the tropics. It certainly could not be attributed to bush fires; there had been too much rain and the grass was too green to admit of such a supposition. About this time a cousin of my wife's, Herbert Stansfield, joined us, having travelled up with the mailman from Townsville, and as we had some sheep-yards to make, it was desirable he should be initiated into the art of constructing them. So taking the married man we had in the kitchen with a draught-horse and chains to draw in the timber, we set to work.

Sheep-yards had to be made periodically in those days of shepherding. Cutting and laying some good logs for a foundation, we topped them up with lighter stuff and sandalwood, which is about the only timber sheep will not eat their way out of. Permanent yards we only made in

a few places. My wife would sometimes accompany us on these expeditions, taking some work with her, and letting us know when it was time to boil the billy for lunch. We were not particular about working overtime, and sometimes left barely time to hurry home before dark.

Jobs of the above description, varied by looking for lost sheep or horses, repairing harness, doing a little building, thatching, blacksmith's work, or rough carpentering, made up in those days our ordinary routine of work on an outside station, where if anything had to be done we had to lend a hand ourselves, including in our work, of course, the ordinary station butchering. A man had to shoe his own horses in those days when they required it. Now a boundary rider cannot tack a shoe on, but expects to have a blacksmith to do it for him. Fortunately on the western plains of Queensland there is not a great deal of shoeing necessary.

In April we again had some showers and a heavy fall of rain early in May. The detachment of mounted police was relieved by a detachment under Sub-Inspector Carr; they were kept very much on patrol duty, the blacks continually giving trouble on stations on the tableland and in the neighbourhood of the dividing range. We sent off a mob of fat sheep to Ravenswood, a Mr. Spencer in charge, but the Burdekin was

always a difficulty, as sheep had almost invariably to swim that river at the Dalrymple crossing, and sometimes they required a good deal of manœuvring to persuade them to tackle it, and we were always somewhat relieved when the mailman was able to report them safely over.

Mr. Greig, who was at this time one of the partners in Cambridge Downs, arrived at our station one morning from Townsville. He had a cart loaded with rations; his daughter also was with him. On crossing the creek three miles before reaching the station he managed to capsize his cart. His daughter falling beneath it had a narrow escape; the guard on one side falling on a bag of flour instead of on her chest, she was saved from a terrible fate.

The mention of flour reminds me that we frequently had a good deal of discomfort in connection with it. In consequence of the difficulty of getting stores from Townsville with regularity, it was necessary in those days to keep a considerable supply on hand. Teams were sometimes not procurable in consequence of the exorbitant rates of carriage to the goldfields prevailing. At other times teams were blocked for many weeks by the Burdekin river; our flour, not always of the best description on arrival, had to be held in store for many months, and became not only unpalatable, but filled with weevils of various

sorts and sizes. It used to be our business in our spare time to sift this flour and put it in tin-lined cases from time to time, with the object of lessening the evil, but we suffered a good deal from summer sickness from eating bread made from nauseous flour. However, we had to eat it or go without any, and until the low level bridge was built by A. C. Macmillan over the Burdekin, we always had to keep a large supply of stores on hand.

As the seasons in this year were turning out favourably, we were not kept so busy as usual. On the 9th and 10th June we had considerable rains, causing the creek to run for several days. Since there were a couple of thousand ewes to lamb, this was most opportune, and having a few days to spare, I went up to the cattle station to see a hundred head of bullocks we were sending off to Ravenswood, the price £5 per head on delivery.

George Smith, or the 'Duke of Conway' as he was sometimes called, took these cattle down. Towards the end of June the weather became sultry, with rain threatening, the thermometer going up to eighty-two degrees in the verandah, which was unusual. With the exception of one or two frosty nights, these winter months were mild, and the country continued to look green. On the 21st September the temperature ran to

eighty-nine degrees in the house, and in October as usual the heat increased, followed by a heavy thunderstorm in the neighbourhood, and a good downpour on the 19th, sending the thermometer down to sixty-eight degrees. Those who have experienced the thermometer rising to one hundred degrees in the shade for some weeks can realise the pleasantness of the change.

Early in November storms fell in the neighbourhood, followed by further rain in the middle of the month.

Leaving Herbert Stansfield to attend to the station, my brother Mowbray having gone to England, my wife and I left to spend a few weeks in the south.

We had a rough trip down, encountering heavy thunderstorms daily accompanied by furious winds in all their tropical strength, and we had to turn the back of the buggy to the wind on several occasions, fearing the hood would be carried away.

At Dotswood, where we spent a night, we found Mr. Hardwick in charge. The station had lately changed hands with thirteen thousand cattle at £3 per head, and sixteen hundred calves given in. On reaching the hotel on the top of the range about noon next day, we were glad to enjoy the cool breeze which generally prevails on that elevated spot, whence there is an extended view over the coast country to the sea thirty miles

distant. The hotel here was then kept by Mr. Randal. His wife some time previously had been bitten by a large black snake, and although by the use of brandy and by scarifying the wound they saved her life, she was for some years utterly deprived of the sense of taste and smell.

The road on this range was a very steep one, and my wife always experienced a feeling of relief when it had been safely passed. It was a pretty sight to see a laden team coming up with thirty-six horses, three abreast, pulling steadily together, hanging in the collars when resting, and starting again simultaneously at a call from their driver.

On one occasion Bill Hann of Maryvale, a rather reckless driver, with Mrs. Hann seated beside him, her baby in her arms, trusting only to the brake of the wagonette, was descending the last pinch, when suddenly the brake gave way. He urged his horses forward, and they went the remainder of the distance at breakneck speed. In the meanwhile Mrs. Hann hastily wrapping the baby in a shawl pitched it on to a bush on the side of the road. Fortunately the horses were able to keep clear of the vehicle, and Mr. and Mrs. Hann reached the bottom unhurt. The baby was picked up none the worse.

In Townsville we found the Rev. James Adams had succeeded in completing a neat church and

parsonage. Cattle at this time were fetching good prices, and Fletcher, the principal butcher, offered me £7 per head for a mob to be delivered at the end of March 1873. In the meantime we left in a steamer called the *Lord Nelson*, reaching Sydney in thirteen days, including stoppages.

In January 1873, in company with the late Sir William M. Manning, I visited the Twofold Bay district, New South Wales, and embarked at Sydney in the *John Penn*, one of the Illawarra S.N. Company's steamers. The accommodation was wretched and the sea rough, causing the captain to put into Jervois Bay for shelter. However, we ultimately landed at Tathra, where the climate is delightful and the country, much of it adapted for agriculture or grazing, undulating and somewhat mountainous. Store cattle from Queensland and elsewhere were fattened in paddocks in this district and afterwards shipped to Melbourne or Tasmania. Dairying also, for which the locality seemed well suited, was then also one of the industries.

Being desirous of seeing some of the Monaro country, my friends having lent me a horse, I started in company with Clement Stiles. The morning was beautifully clear, and the air balmy, the range which we had to ascend looking blue in the distance, the top somewhere about two thousand feet above sea level. Reaching the

foot of the hills about noon, we had a steep ascent for about seven miles. The sides of the hill were clothed with fine timber of stringy bark, tall trees with a rough bark, and other varieties of the eucalyptus, their stems running up straight as a gun barrel for many feet. Parrots fluttered amongst the topmost branches, occasionally a lyre-bird ran across the road, and the hoarse laugh of the 'jackass' awakened echoes in the solitary gorges.

The road at the top was very wet for some distance, and the country somewhat like a badly drained Scotch moor. This, however, soon improved, as the Monaro plains came in sight.

We arrived about sunset at the Bibenluk homestead, prettily situated on the bank of a well-watered creek, its banks lined with weeping willows, where we were hospitably received by Mr. Edwards, for many years the well-known manager of that station. Even on the 15th January the nights were frosty and a log fire enjoyable.

The following day after a breakfast at 6 A.M., we were in the saddle at 7 A.M., the morning cool and a heavy dew on the grass. Passing rich black soil plains with numerous streamlets, and short high undulating downs all available for sheep, we emerged on to level country in the neighbourhood of Nimitybelle, which we

reached at 11.30 A.M., having travelled twenty-five miles. In passing these plains I noticed far away to the westward a white line, which from former experience elsewhere I knew to be snow. Many people unacquainted with Australia perhaps do not know that on some of these mountains, notably in the neighbourhood of Kosciusko, there is almost perpetual snow ; in fact, at Kiandra the inhabitants, I am told, are experts in the use of snow-shoes. This, therefore, was the line of Australian Alps heavily covered with snow at midsummer. After stopping a short time near the racecourse, we ate our sandwiches and gave our horses a feed and water, the sun being intensely hot for some three or four hours. We jogged on to Cooma through an almost treeless district, hardly a stick obtainable to boil a billy of tea. However, much of this country had then been selected by old shepherds and suchlike individuals, and no doubt much of it has since passed out of the hands of the first selector. The climate is a fine one and eminently suited for white people. At Cooma after a hasty meal at Cohen's Hotel, I said 'Good-bye' to my friend, who was to return on the following day to Kanoona with the horses, and taking a box seat on Cobb and Co.'s coach at 5 P.M., rattled along at a good pace through the night in the direction of Queanbeyan, which place we reached at 8.40 A.M.,

after a rough journey. We had only one additional passenger inside, a gentleman who groaned occasionally when the jolting was worse than usual, which seemed to amuse the flash young fellow who was driving. At 10 A.M. I started in another coach, Dr. Macdonald and a Murrumbidgee squatter being fellow passengers. Reaching Bungendore, thirty-two miles, at 12.45 P.M., we dined, and arrived at Goulburn a little before sundown, distance forty-five miles, changing horses all through at distances about ten miles apart.

On the following day the Tiranna races were on. These races were a great institution in those days. People came from far and near to attend them. Since then a new generation has sprung up, and to those survivors of an older generation, the memory alone remains of pleasant gatherings. Those were the days when John Rankin brought the old stock horse 'Prodigal' down from Bowen Downs in Queensland, and won the one and a half mile race, carrying ten stone, and the mile race at the Goulburn races carrying nine stone nine pounds, beating Kelso.

Being anxious to get north again and see how affairs were progressing, I shipped on the 21st February 1873 on the s.s. *Boomerang*, Captain Lake in command. We had a number of passengers—one of the Boyds (of the Dawson),

Graham, Bill Hann, Corfield, Warner, Rudolf Morisset, and other northern men. We had some horses on board and put in at Rockhampton, the weather being intensely close and muggy. The captain soon afterwards cast loose from the wharf at 9 P.M. and anchored below the flats. Going down in the dark we nearly ran foul of a schooner. The rigging caught her in some way and some gear came tumbling on the awning above us, causing a stampede for shelter. Morisset, who was not easily put out, called out 'See it out, boys,' and sat where he was; then looking over the side, asked the skipper of the schooner what he meant by running into a steamer. The wrath of the individual questioned was considerable, and in strong language he explained his views. After getting clear of the river and dropping the pilot, the weather being thick and hazy, the captain proceeded at slow speed through the Northumberland group of islands. At Bowen we found the emigrant ship *John Rennie*, with about four hundred emigrants on board, one hundred of whom we took on to Townsville, all sweltering in their heavy English clothes.

After spending a few days in Townsville and loading up one of Courtenay's teams for the station, accompanied by Morisset, I made a start, taking some pack-horses laden with woolpacks, and a few

things most urgently required on the station. On reaching the Burdekin in due course, we found it in considerable flood, so camped for the night. Next morning putting our packs into a boat, we sent the horses across. They had to swim about three hundred and fifty yards, but they were used to this sort of work, knew where they were going, and followed their leader in single file. After remaining a day at Marks' comfortable inn, putting our packs in order, we pushed on to Southwick. The country was very wet and the black soil plains were regular swamps. However, we reached Southwick before dark. The weather was very sultry and the travelling bad. Starting on the following morning, we continued to make fair stages. After crossing Allingham creek, I met my friend R. Christison on his way down to the coast. After obtaining the latest news from him respecting the floods, blacks, the prospects of the coming year, etc., we pushed on, the weather showery. Between Reedy Springs and Mount Emu we met Steiglitz, with a mob of fat cattle, bound for the Palmer goldfields. On this high tableland the climate was much cooler, the thermometer not going higher than about seventy-one degrees at Mount Emu.

Harry Finch of the native police, whom we met here, sent one of his black troopers to put us on

the marked tree line, leading across country to Glendower, and avoiding a long detour by Wongalee. Leaving at 9 A.M., we struck across the plains encountering heavy rain, and in about twenty miles reached the first gorge, where we found a dry camp, but more rain.

Some years afterwards my friend Robert Stewart and his wife had rather an interesting experience on this same track. They left Mount Emu to visit my brother and his wife at Glendower, and camping one night on this track set fire to a log and lay down on their blankets near it, the night being cold, and dropped off to sleep. The log was alongside a tree which apparently speedily caught fire.

They were awakened in the night by an explosion. The tree was blazing, and somehow the fire had caught a flask of powder which Stewart had. They had no sooner jumped up when the tree fell with a crash across the blankets they had been lying upon, a most providential escape.

Pursuing our journey next morning after thirteen miles we made the last crossing on Sandy creek, and twelve miles farther struck the river opposite Glendower. The Flinders was in full flood and we pitched our tents on a high ridge. On the following morning, the river being too high to attempt with pack-horses, we crossed on our saddle-horses, and lunched at the station,

GLENDOWER—FLINDER'S VALLEY FROM THE TABLE LAND

returning to camp in the afternoon. On the following day my brother came over, and the river being lower we succeeded in crossing the pack-horses; following the river down and crossing Jardine creek, we reached Hughenden at 8 P.M.

Although our previous shearing had been delayed, it was now time to shear again. The country was looking first-rate, grass being of extraordinary growth and water plentiful. As no shearers had turned up and we had some ewes to lamb, which we were anxious to get shorn, the overseer and I began on them. Our supply of flour not being sufficient to carry us through the shearing, and my team not being likely to arrive for some weeks, I sent off E. S. with pack-horses to Mount Emu station to borrow some. During the week we made up our complement of shearers, and the business proceeded more quickly this time. We washed the sheep, though the water was rather cold for washing, it being the end of March. The lambing I let this year by contract to a man named Lapp. It was a common practice at that time to give a man a certain sum for each lamb ear-marked. He undertook the whole business, in partnership with men he knew. As a rule it answered fairly well. On this occasion I obtained a fair percentage, though I do not remember how much per head I allowed him. The price would depend upon the number

of ewes to lamb and the number of men he would have to employ. As a matter of fact the cost of lambing by hand was proportionately more expensive than the present system of handling and marking lambs in paddocks. On the other hand the percentage was better.

Our shearing dragged on slowly. The shearers in those days washed the sheep as well as sheared them. They did not like it, but they did it, and it was not until the 29th May that we finished the last of them. On the 31st we had rain, and during the next few days we had rain accompanied by thunderstorms, the Flinders coming down in a good stream. The weather cleared on the 5th June, and cold weather set in. On the 9th, however, we had more rain, and the river came down again. On the 14th the country was looking green again, and we rejoiced in a good season. We were getting high prices for fat cattle at this time, up to £6, 10s. and £7, and 12s. for wethers.

Mr. James Gibson, one of the northern pioneers, and his wife arrived on their way in from the west. A drizzling rain having set in they spent a day or two with us. He wanted to buy Wongalee station from us, paying for it in cattle, but we declined.

On the 18th the mailman arrived two hours before daylight, and I received a letter from my

wife, who had arrived in Townsville. I at once prepared to go down and meet her, so taking six horses for the double journey, I crossed the Burdekin a few days later, and camping there with some teams for a night, reached Townsville on the following day.

After joining in some Townsville festivities, including a picnic to the top of Castle Hill, we got our horses in for a start.

The Queen's Hotel was then kept by Evans, who having come overland from the south, passed Hughenden with his family some months previously. He was now doing well as proprietor of this hotel. Having spent the morning arranging the packs, we had everything ready to start after luncheon. The buggy was at the door and young Evans standing at the horses' heads. I had taken the reins and my wife was taking her seat. Unfortunately at this moment the ostler opened the yard gates, and the pack-horses and others came trotting out. My off-side horse, anxious to get after his mates, began to rear. I called out to Evans to let go their heads, but he held on a moment too long. The horse with a plunge brought the other over, and both came to the ground, smashing the pole attachments, and causing a day's delay.

When we reached the Burdekin river, the horse which had caused the accident in Towns-

ville was carrying a pack with the others. The river was running in a good stream, and before they could be stopped this horse led them into the river, and they all swam across one after the other, drenching their pack saddles and everything on them, and marched straight up to Billy Marks' yard on the opposite side.

Marks' hostelry was well known to all travellers in those parts, and a good bed and comfortable meals could always be reckoned upon, while if one wanted to borrow a pack-horse our friend W. Marks had always one to lend, would help to pack, and was most obliging in every way. On this occasion we spent a day and a half at his place drying our things, after which making our customary stages we reached the cattle station, where we found my brother and his wife well, and proceeded to Hughenden two days later.

The winter of 1873 was a mild one, few frosts and a drizzling rain. On July 26th the ordinary routine was continued—looking after shepherds and their sheep, enlarging the woolshed, and making additions to outbuildings. We had a vegetable garden, from which by incessant watering we obtained a fair supply of vegetables.

Early in August the native police were relieved by a detachment under Gough, with ten troopers, and their gins. They had at this time a very comfortable camp at the junction of the Station

creek with the river, amidst some very fine box-trees, which have since disappeared, and had also a good vegetable garden. The quail were more plentiful, however, in those days, and the troopers' gins were much occupied in hunting them out of the garden, as they seemed to think young lettuces were planted for their especial benefit.

Gough was a man of great stature. On his first introduction to us, and stooping when entering the door dressed in police trousers, shell jacket and forage cap, he appeared every inch his height, which was, I believe, six feet seven inches.

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CHAPTER VIII

Scarcity of labour—Demand for beef on the Palmer Goldfields—Tornadoes—Good prices for sheep and cattle—Stock passing out to new country—Dean Sowerby—Revisit England—Return and temporarily reside in Bowen—Bishop Barker of Sydney raises funds for establishment of a Northern Diocese—Commencement of Hughenden township—Pym of the 75th—Plague of rats—Influx of Victorians.

THE kanakas before referred to having returned to their islands with the exception of one who had died from consumption, we had during the latter half of 1873 much trouble in procuring shepherds, most of the working men having gone off to the goldfields. It was necessary, however, to get men or do the shepherding ourselves. Herbert Stansfield therefore went off to the Cape goldfields, to search amongst the Chinese and induce some of them to come over. After an absence of two weeks or more he returned on 17th August, bringing two Chinese with him.

At this time fencing was quite impracticable; none of my immediate neighbours had sheep, and if I had put my sheep in paddocks they would have been much troubled by the wild dogs which were perpetually coming in. In addition to this labour was scarce. Material and carriage par-

ticularly were very expensive in consequence of the high rates ruling to the goldfields. Moreover, the country had not recovered its good name since the general exodus of stock which had taken place some years previously, and it was difficult to obtain money to invest in a district labouring under such disadvantages. I had previously attempted a certain amount of bush fencing, utilising the South Sea islanders, but soon found that with the prevalence of bush fires, it was a waste of labour.

I purchased at this time four stud rams from Davenport at Headington Hill, Darling Downs, and Stansfield went to Townsville to bring them up. He returned on 24th October, having been two months away. He brought them up on foot, and lost one from unavoidable causes.

At this time having a small number of sheep, we had very few hands at the homestead, including a married couple. The woman did the cooking and washing; the man's occupation was milking, drawing wood and water, and assisting at a variety of odd jobs. H. Stansfield and myself looked after the shepherds and sheep, making sheep-yards, putting up buildings, thatching roofs or doing anything which had to be done on the station, generally riding out in the early morning to count some flock of sheep. The butchering we used to do amongst us, slaughter-

ing the beast, cutting him up, and salting. We had at that time a camp of blacks within half a mile of the homestead. We found that they were less likely to get into mischief when they found themselves under our observation. The gins from the camp were always in attendance to carry off such portions of the beast as were not required by us, and the bones, to their camp. Sometimes we killed a few sheep for a change. My wife always had a supply of fowls, so that occasionally we indulged in a pair for dinner.

Our great dread used to be on Sunday mornings, when hoping for a day of rest, a quiet read, and a snooze, that Ah Sin or Ah Foo would show his ugly face at the door and say, ‘ Me lose em sheep.’ All chance of a restful day was then over. Horses would have to be got in and one of us proceed with a black boy in search. Fencing has changed all that. Whatever else a sheep overseer may have to do, the days of lost sheep have departed never to return.

Nevertheless, with the exception of looking for lost sheep, there is much that a twenty thousand acre grazing farmer will have to do himself on a small holding at the present day.

On the 30th August 1873 a mob of cattle passed, with H. W. Hardwick, who was then in the employment of Mr. Rourke at Dotswood station,

in charge of them. These cattle were going out to stock the country now known as Rockwood station on the Landsborough river beyond Cameron Downs, which had been taken up some time previously by the Christisons.

In September a Mr. Cox passed from New South Wales with a fine lot of breeding mares for Port Darwin, the object being, I believe, to breed horses for the Indian market. We heard afterwards, however, that the country and climate there were unsuitable, and the venture was not a success.

The demand at this time for fat sheep was good. One of the Plants from Charters Towers came up to inspect, and I sold a mob at 14s. each. On the 15th September our teams arrived with supplies from Townsville. The wind had been blowing a gale from the west all the morning, bringing up smoke. We knew that the inevitable bush fire of which for some nights past we had seen the reflection, was now coming down upon us with irresistible fury, and whilst unloading the wagons, we could see the flames leaping up from the distant ridge, where the township now stands. Nothing could be done to stop it in the teeth of the gale. We managed to save a few patches of grass, but a large portion of the country was soon as black as a coal. The country to the north of the river fortunately was untouched.

The weather was very hot, and we had a good deal of work in shifting sheep and making yards for them where there was grass.

On the 24th September the mailman arrived from Bowen Downs, and told us a rush had taken place to the Palmer river, where gold had been found, and the newspaper he brought corroborated the statement. In October George Broadley arrived to purchase fat cattle for the Palmer, and Harry Anning turned up one evening to get the native police, as the blacks were giving trouble at Mount Sturgeon, a station about sixty miles to the north of us on the tableland.

About the middle of October, the Steiglitz Brothers arrived overland from Goulburn in New South Wales. These gentlemen had commenced buying cattle, and taking them over to the Palmer goldfield butchers, and as they continued the business for a considerable time I believe they found it fairly profitable.

At the end of October, Sub-Inspector Coward relieved Gough and his detachment of native police. There were indications of rain and light showers early in November, but the thermometer did not touch one hundred degrees until the 20th of this month. From 24th to 27th we got some useful showers. We were visited this month by Ernest Henry and his wife on their way in from the Cloncurry. Roger Sheaffe passed on his way in, and

taking advantage of the change in the weather we planted pumpkin and melon seed.

Early in December we got some useful rain, and not too soon, as the extensive bush fires had left but little pasturage. We were now able to draft the sheep and put them into suitable flocks. The showers also kept the weather comparatively cool, and it was possible to turn our attention to other things which required doing. We had some ewes lambing also during the month, and got some saddle-horses broken in. Broken colts and fillies were worth £10 each at this time.

On 20th December we experienced a heavy storm, preceded by a tornado, which carried off a portion of the roof of our house, and we were drenched with rain in a few minutes. On one occasion one of these hurricanes overturned the shearers' hut. Fortunately no one was in it at the time. They sometimes cut a straight clean track through the bush, seldom more than one hundred yards or so in width, their path presenting the appearance of a line cleared for telegraph poles.

On the 21st my brother Charles arrived during the night for the native police, as the blacks were again giving trouble. The wet season was setting in, affording a favourable opportunity to them for raiding the cattle. The country presented the appearance of a wheatfield, and so closed the year 1873.

January 1874 opened with fairly pleasant weather, which soon changed to heat. We had ten days' rain during the month; in the early part of February we had some good rain on three days, and we made preparations for shearing. On the 25th we began washing the sheep, and shearing progressed satisfactorily. The sheep washed during the day were put into hurdles on fresh grass each night, and another lot ready for the following day's shearing camped in other hurdles, a few dry sheep being put under cover in the shed for the morning shearing. Carriage being expensive and scarce, it was a great consideration to get rid of the dirt in the wool by washing.

On the 18th March, rain began to threaten again, and for several days storms were brewing in the neighbourhood. On the 24th we got heavy rain, causing a flood in the creek, and from that time till 7th April rain interfered with the shearing. However, we finished on the 9th. Reginald Macneil, who had joined the native police, relieved Coward at this time. Lambing having commenced, the shearers were all paid off, some proceeding to Townsville, others to the Cloncurry, Palmer, the Cape and Etheridge goldfields. We obtained a fair price for our clip, averaging 19½ pence per lb., washed on the sheep's back.

As soon as lambing was over, we all went off

to Glendower for a few days; fish were plentiful at one of the Rocky waterholes up there, where we camped and caught a large number.

The weekly excitement was the arrival of the mail, and although we received papers and magazines, we did not take exceptional interest in the Queensland politics of that day. We were a long way from civilisation, and beyond getting a mail service and police protection, we had little interference from any one, so long as we paid our rents.

Our annual draft of sheep and cattle we were able to dispose of at rates which would even at the present day be considered good, bullocks being worth £6 to £7 at the yards and wethers about 12s.

In May, Mr. Rourke senior, an enterprising and successful Victorian, spent a day or two with us. He was following up another mob of cattle which he had sent to Rockwood.

On 10th June we got a little rain, and some good rain on the 12th, followed by cold weather and some frost; on the 1st July a strong wind from the south was followed by heavy rain, the creek coming down strong; the Flinders river followed a few days later in consequence of two or three days' rain. We had six days' good rain during this month, and the month of August was all that could be desired. Some Chinamen came

out from the Cape and gave me 7s. for some old ewes which they sold at considerable profit. The month of September brought more rain; lambing was on, and owing to the excellent season we were enjoying everything went on pleasantly. Mr. Bundock of the Richmond river spent a day or two with us about this time, also Ernest Henry and his wife, who were on their way back to the Cloncurry. We had rain again in October and very little high temperature, the frequent rain keeping the atmosphere cool and pleasant.

In November, Montague Curr arrived with a mob of cattle he was taking down the Flinders. A couple of carriers managed to set fire to the grass near our homestead whilst he was at luncheon with us. We happened to see the smoke before the fire made much headway, and were able to put it out. Having finished lamb-marking on the 9th November, the season being so good the time seemed opportune for taking a trip south, so we harnessed up before the month was out, and my wife and I started. Whilst encamped one night at Homestead on our way down, the mountain there looking pretty in the moonlight, we witnessed the sight of the moon in conjunction with Venus.

We left Townsville in the s.s. *Victoria,* Captain Lake commander. After leaving Kepple Bay we encountered rough seas, head wind and mist

causing us to wait off Cape Moreton until we could pick up the light. However, we reached Sydney on 6th December, and found the weather nearly as hot as in the north.

I having been absent from England for eighteen years, and my wife never having visited that country, and the time being opportune for leaving Australia, we determined upon doing so; but before our departure spent several months in Sydney and Goulburn, enjoying much of the society of my wife's father, who had taken up his residence in Goulburn in the year 1839, as first Church of England minister, and had resided there ever since. He was at this time Dean of Goulburn, a man with an excellent memory, a perfect encyclopædia. He was intimately acquainted with the history of every leading family in England, in which in a great measure is bound up the history of England, and he would discourse at length in a most interesting manner upon every leading event which had occurred in English political history since the year 1745, when his grandmother saw the Scotch marching through Carlisle.

As an instance of his memory, I may mention that he said to me, 'I remember a man who was born in the year 1701 and buried in 1805, who remembered Laurence Sterne, and also knew a man who was a contemporary of old Parr, who was

reported to have been born in 1483, died in 1635, and who also had met a lady who knew the Countess of Desmond, who informed her that Richard III. had no humped back, but was a capital dancer.'

The Dean also told me that residing as he did in the North of England, in order to be ordained he had to travel by coach from Chester to London. The fare was 30s., 'but,' he added, 'it cost me £20 or £30 one way or other, all because the Bishop, who was also Bishop of Llandaff at that day, resided so seldom in his diocese.'

The Dean being what was called at that day a staunch Whig, and as such seeing but little hope of preferment, left a small living in Cumberland, and emigrated with his wife and family to Australia, where for thirty-six years at Goulburn his genial face was known, and his kindly disposition appreciated throughout that part of the country; and when buried in the cemetery where he had read the service over so many, the saying of the old Irish woman, which he used to relate sometimes with a laugh, was fulfilled, 'Sure your Reverence will have the biggest funeral that ever was in the country.'

I have no intention of attempting a description of a voyage to England in a P. and O. ship; one such bears a strong family likeness to another, but even in those days the magnificent steamers of the present day had not made their appearance,

and refrigerating chambers were unknown. The s.s. *China* in which we sailed was probably about three thousand tons, and I remember we transhipped at Ceylon into the *Khedive*, a large steamer of three thousand eight hundred tons. Crossing by train from Suez to Alexandria, we were much struck by the fertility of the soil in certain localities under irrigation, presenting a striking contrast to the sandhills and plains along the route.

At Alexandria I saw amongst other things four companies of Egyptian soldiers drilling under arms, fine-looking men, and going through their work well; but I was informed by a resident that the Khedive was turning freed slaves into soldiers, marrying them to vagrant women and sending them out as military settlers to Dafur. Passing on through Italy and France, we saw at length the white cliffs of Old England, and the remark of the waiter at the Folkestone restaurant, 'Have some more beef, sir,' had a homelike sound.

At this time, June 1875, Richard Daintree, our earliest geologist in Queensland, was Agent-General, and I found him representing the interests of the colony in a small set of offices in Parliament Street, near Charing Cross. Daintree had visited me at Hughenden early in the 'seventies, and spent a day or two in that neighbourhood, taking photographs and examining

the country geologically. He then said to me, 'You will get artesian water on all this western country.' In England I renewed my acquaintance with many old friends, and visited many parts of the country.

Leaving Charing Cross on the 12th February 1876, we joined the s.s. *Pera* at Brindisi on the 20th, Captain Methuen, whom I had known years previously, being commander.

On 10th March we reached Point de Galle, whence the s.s. *Bangalore*, either from Calcutta or Bombay, was to take us on to Australia; but as she had several cases of smallpox on board, the passengers objected to proceed in her with the certainty of being quarantined in Australia, and for other obvious reasons. We all put up at the Oriental Hotel, and the P. and O. Co. paid our expenses. On the 18th, the s.s. *China* having arrived from Australia with our old friend, Captain Brooks, we went on board. The vessel being overcrowded, there was considerable grumbling amongst the more unreasonable of the passengers. We reached King George's Sound on 3rd April, and from Melbourne we proceeded to Sydney in the *Avoca*, arriving there on the 13th.

Amongst our passengers from India we had old Sir George Campbell Brown, of the Indian Army Medical Department, who told me he had been

in the Cabul campaign of 1840, and shut up in Jelalabad, had assisted Dr. Bryden from his horse on arrival there. He said they quite expected to hear of the retreating force, of which Dr. Bryden was the sole survivor, being all cut up. He spoke very unreservedly of the great assistance Havelock and Broadfoot rendered in keeping things straight at Jelalabad, and of the leading part which the latter took on the staff of Sir Henry Smith, at the battle of Aliwal at a later date.

Brigadier Monteith at Jelalabad, he said, was a first-rate soldier, but an old dandy. His servant used to follow him with spare wigs, cosmetics and eau-de-Cologne, etc., and whether on the march or in action was not to be further away than six feet from his horse's tail. When the brigadier was lying under the ruins of the wall, thrown down by the shock of the earthquake, which almost ruined their fortifications, his first exclamation was, when they went to pull him out, 'Don't touch my hair.' On the occasion of the sortie from Jelalabad, he rode in front, saying, 'Any one who dares to precede me, I will cut him down,' and when within proper distance he allowed a volley and charge.

In Sydney on Easter Monday, I went out to the Randwick races. In the race for the St. Ledger, a policeman rode amongst the horses after

the inevitable dog, and capsized his own horse and some of the others.

I purchased a few bulls in Sydney, and left for the north on 9th May, in the *Florence Irving*, W. C. Beattie, Mr. and Mrs. George Clarke of East Talgai, being amongst the passengers.

On reaching Bowen I arranged to take a house there for twelve months, instead of taking my wife up to the station. There were some pleasant people at Bowen at that time, including the Alick Macarthurs at Neustead, Mr. Patrick Macarthur, police magistrate, the Macmillans and others. Capital duck shooting was to be had in the neighbourhood, and the place was not too far from Hughenden.

On reaching Townsville, I met my brother Charles, who had driven in from the Flinders. Owing to the bad state of his wife's health, he was leaving for a time, and as he was desirous of selling out I made arrangements to take over his share.

By the steamer which arrived a few days later, an overseer arrived from Sydney to take my brother's place in the management of the cattle station, and brought up a married couple with him. I started them all off on the following day with a buggy and spare horses, and leaving myself two days later overtook them in fifty-two miles. The next day on reaching the Burdekin we found it in flood, so after swimming the horses over,

we took the buggy off its wheels and sent it over in a boat with the pack saddles, etc.

At Allingham creek we met John Anning going down for his wife, and seven miles beyond Southwick overtook Percy Walsh of the Flinders, and camped with him at Nulla Nulla. Next day we met one of the Broadleys of Burleigh, and old Mr. Greig, and remained that night with the Richard Annings at Cargoon, where they had a comfortable little homestead and a fairly cool climate, the altitude here being probably eighteen hundred to two thousand feet. On the following day the weather was cloudy and rainlike. Stopping only to lunch at Reedy Springs, we pushed on to Mount Emu, leaving the party with the buggy to follow leisurely. We passed a mob of my fat sheep on their way to a Townsville butcher. The garden was looking well at Mount Emu as it generally did, the basaltic soil being excellent for vegetables and fruit-trees. On the following day I left by the marked tree line for Glendower, but missing it on the plains, I was late in reaching the cattle station,—distance forty miles. Heavy showers fell during the afternoon, setting all the small creeks running. I went back along the track the next day to blaze some of the line for the buggy which was following. The weather was sultry and rainlike, very favourable weather for the end of May.

The homestead at Glendower, deserted by my brother and his wife, though picturesquely situated in the valley of the Flinders, wore rather a melancholy aspect, whilst I realised that no more pleasant evenings would be spent on the gravelled terrace in the front of the house, nor should I again ride amongst the cattle with those who had occupied it. It was not until nearly twenty years later that my brother and I rode together over the site of the old homestead, connected as it was with several melancholy associations.

I spent a day or two with Macrae, who was in charge temporarily, inspecting the cattle, though we had heavy showers and the ground was soft for riding. In a day or two the party arrived with the buggy, and we proceeded to Hughenden and found Stansfield looking well, and the sheep also. John Cuthbert Carr and Cooper from the Leichardt passed on their way to the coast, also a gentleman who rejoiced in the sobriquet of the Marquis of Rags, owing to the general scarecrow appearance of his dress.

During the following week I rode over most of the cattle-run with the new overseer, Mr. Holden, returning to Hughenden on 17th June, just as a cold rain set in which lasted over the following day. Jack Brodie was passing with sheep to stock country down the river, and as instancing the value of cattle at this time I may

mention that I sold to him eight hundred weaners at £3 per head. Ernest Henry passed from the Cloncurry, which district he had long been prospecting, and Harry Okeden took up the management of Afton Downs, the country on Walker creek which had long been unoccupied, and was now held by Mr. Shepherd Smith (not the banker of that name) with thirty thousand sheep. Later on he sold out to the Armytages of Victoria, and took to breeding stud sheep in Tasmania.

Having to go to Brisbane on business I was in Townsville in the early part of July, when there was more rain. When we took up our abode at Bowen about the middle of July, Dr. Barker, the Metropolitan Bishop of Sydney, came north, endeavouring to raise funds for the establishment of a North Queensland missionary bishop. He spent some little time in Bowen accompanied by his chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Howard. He preached and held meetings and was fairly successful in getting a fund started.

Having borrowed a buggy and pair of horses from Inspector Aulaire Morisset, the Bishop left for Ravenswood to carry out his project of raising money for the new bishopric. He was, I heard, well received wherever he went. His enterprise in coming amongst them as Metropolitan was appreciated, and the importance of his object met with general recognition.

About the middle of October, being desirous of sending off a large draft of fat bullocks to the Palmer, I shipped with a couple of horses to Townsville. The Northern Supreme Court was at this time located at Bowen, and as a sitting was to be held in Townsville, we had on board Judge Shepherd, Patrick Macarthur, Sheriff, and several members of the Bar. Another passenger was Captain Trouton, with whom I had sailed when he commanded the *Balclutha*, in the 'sixties. When we left Townsville on the 19th October, at Dalrymple, a smart thunderstorm cooled the air ; I overtook Macneil and his troopers at Southwick, and we travelled together for a couple of days. The weather was intensely hot, and we enjoyed a bathe each day in the cool clear water peculiar to Fletcher's creek, which flows through that part of the country. Macneil, who was going farther north, left me at Cuba plain. I passed soon afterwards three hundred fat bullocks of R. Stewart's, and overtook some sixty rams which I had sent up from Talgai. The following day, after passing Anderson's teams, I reached Mount Emu station. Again a heavy thunderstorm cooled the air. There were fat cattle here from Mount Cornish, and the next day came some from a Mr. Fraser, all *en route* to northern goldfields, where good prices were awaiting them.

Crossing the tableland the next day I pro-

ceeded by Glendower to Hughenden. Lambing was doing well, and there was good burnt feed on the Downs. The roof had, however, been again blown clean off the house by a tornado, and everything soaked by a deluge of rain, much to the discomfort of the occupants, including the manager's sister, who had lately arrived from England, and had already formed the conclusion that the country did not come up to her ideal. Somehow in those days we had not learnt the knack of making our roofing secure.

After nine days' mustering we had some three hundred bullocks in hand. Dr. Roberts was ready to take them, and we proceeded to Wongalee where they were waiting. After taking out some strangers and inferior bullocks, he started with them for the Palmer. The heat was again oppressive, and on my way back to Glendower a tremendous storm covered the ground with water, and we made our way over the tableland as best we could.

I now started for the coast through Milchester and Ravenswood and the lower crossing of the Burdekin, which was running knee deep in three streams, and reached Bowen, a distance of about three hundred and forty-five miles. In some places through this country where thunderstorms had fallen, water was plentiful and grass luxuriant, fresh and beautiful in the bright sun, but at times

my horses fared very badly. Where no storm had fallen grass was dry and scarce ; miles of country had been burnt—a scene of desolation. However, in the Flinders country the year 1876 was all that could be desired.

The following year the season being a good one, and the cold season approaching, my wife thought she would like to pay another visit to the station, so we started from Bowen on the 4th July, the weather delightful and grass luxuriant. The first stage was Salisbury station, then managed by Mr. Wilmington. We spent a night there, then on past Inkerman and the Burdekin to the Cunninghams at Woodstock. The Cunninghams had a house erected on high piles. The space amongst the piles they used as a dining-room, very pleasant no doubt in summer, but as the nights were frosty at this time, the delight of it was not so apparent.

At Charters Towers, leaving my camp outside the town, where grass and water were plentiful, my wife and I drove in and put up with the Dickens. Charles Short Dicken, who had been a lieutenant in the 87th, and whom I had not seen since the early 'sixties at Mount McConnel, was police magistrate and gold warden here. Later on he was secretary at the Agent-General's office in London. After spending several days looking all over the country for two of my horses which were missing, we proceeded on our journey. On

our reaching Hughenden in due course, a message came from Glendower saying the two horses had arrived, having travelled the distance, about one hundred and seventy miles, in hobbles. They had evidently missed the two horses I had driven in to be stabled at Charters Towers, and probably thinking they had gone home, determined not to be left behind.

Walter Voss had succeeded Mr. Holden in the management of Glendower, and hearing from him that Mr. Chick, a Towers butcher, had arrived to purchase fat cows, I rode up the river to join him. On reaching the place after dark where I expected to find them camped, I found instead a big bush fire raging, so taking off my saddle cloth commenced beating it out, hoping some one would join me. After belting at it for some time, Voss joined me, and about midnight we ran the fire up into one of the hills, and saved much country by so doing.

I may here mention that some time during the previous year, 1876, I had received a letter from Mr. William Marks, pointing out that in consequence of the large amount of traffic passing through Hughenden, he would be glad if I gave him permission to erect a public-house on my run, and knowing it was no use trying to block the course of events, seeing that the requirements of the travelling public pointed to the necessity

of the rudiments of a township being laid, I had consented. Marks' first idea was to build on the north side of the river, and a reserve was shortly afterwards proclaimed on that side for a township. However, on account of the country on that side being subject to inundation, another reserve had been proclaimed on the south side, and about the 21st August 1877 Mr. Bishop, a surveyor, came to me saying he had been deputed by the Lands Department to survey a township, and asked whether I could let him have a cobweb to put into his theodolite. After ransacking the store I think he got what he required.

The mere fact of a township having been surveyed brought several people to buy allotments. A blacksmith's shop, a store, and two publichouses, a butcher and baker's shop, etc., were soon in full blast. In August the weather set in dry, and I decided to shear, though it was rather early, and sent off fifteen hundred fat wethers for Townsville on 17th September. We got some good showers, and the mailman said nice rain had fallen as far as Telemon, thirty miles away, The rain cooled the air, and the remainder of the month was pleasant in consequence. On 7th October a fire sprang up at 10 A.M. on Mount Walker. The wind was high and we could do nothing with it. Five of us went out in the evening, and working through the night succeeded in extin-

GENERAL VIEW OF HUGHENDEN

guishing it, getting home at 2.30 A.M. on the following morning. We finished shearing on 13th October, the men going off to shear at Afton Downs.

It would be uninteresting to record the events of each year. Enough has been written to show the mode of life on a western station in the 'sixties and 'seventies. Shearing followed lambing, bush fires, hunting for lost sheep, and continued study of the sky in hopes of indications of rain occupied the attention of those engaged in pastoral pursuits with almost unvaried regularity. It will be sufficient to say that the year 1878 was a favourable one. On 6th August I find it noted, 'Weather clear sunshine and cool, grass and water plentiful'; in October and November we had good rain, and again in December. Fat wethers were fetching about 10s., and at a sale of fat bullocks, 110 were sold at £6, 5s. each.

The year 1879 was also a good one. In addition to the usual summer rains we had floods in April. The price of fat cattle, however, fell to £4, 10s., and large mobs were sold for delivery south at £3 per head. In July we had good rain, and heavy rain at the end of August, making things pleasant for shearing in September. On the 16th we heard of the massacre of Major Cavagnari at Cabul, recalling to memory the fate of Burns in former days. At the end of September

we had more rain, and a good deal in October, bringing the river down, and I find it recorded that the thermometer reached ninety-six degrees in the shade on 22nd October, being the highest point reached since the previous summer, and for the remainder of the year there was not much to complain of.

Up to the year 1880, there being so few sheep stations in the neighbourhood, I had found it impracticable to fence, because unless fencing was generally adopted, the sheep on an isolated fenced station would attract numerous dogs. Now, however, the district having been fairly re-stocked with sheep, it was generally recognised that the time had arrived when the system of shepherding might with advantage be replaced by that of paddocking. My neighbours had already put up some sheep fencing, so I made a commencement with a couple of paddocks, continuing year by year to add to their number, until in the year 1897 I had on the two places about two hundred and fifty miles of fencing, subdivided into thirty-six paddocks.

During this year of 1880, an old friend whom I had known as a captain in the 75th in India, came to pay me a visit. The Rev. C. M. Pym having left the army, had been ordained, and at this time was holding a living in Yorkshire. He came out in indifferent health. During the shear-

ing he took the wool pressing. We had then in use the old style of lever press, and being a strong heavy man it was not much trouble to him to wind it up. On Sundays he used to hold service in the Court House. Most of the shearers, by whom he was much liked, used to attend the service and listen to him with great attention, whilst he gave them some plain speaking; and when shearing was completed, he used occasionally to visit the people in the township, and talk to them on serious subjects. He obtained a great hold on the young people. One young man remarked, 'Well, I never saw a parson like that before. He comes down amongst us in a billycock hat, smoking a pipe, and talks to us about our souls. He is the right sort.' My brother Mowbray, who had been some years away in England, rejoined us about this time with his wife, and as she and Mrs. Uhr, the police magistrate's wife, were great horsewomen, they used to beguile us out occasionally for a scamper after the wily kangaroo. My friend Pym, however, who weighed about seventeen stone, was rather handicapped when out on these expeditions. The police magistrate had some very good kangaroo dogs, and we had some excellent runs; a change from the ordinary routine of station life.

Pym and I rode over one day to Afton Downs on a visit to our neighbour there, and to see what

he was doing in the way of improvements. The homestead in those days was very unpretentious. The hut had a mud floor, and as there happened to be a plague of rats the floor was literally covered with their tracks. At night the place was full of them. They ran all over the place and over us in our bunks, squeaking like a lot of guinea-pigs. These rats are all, I believe, marsupial, and whence they come or whither they go, no one seemed to know. We used to hear of rats being plentiful at some place in the west, and in the course of a few weeks a wave of them would suddenly appear, myriads of them. The cats would catch a few at first, but soon they would look on with indifference whilst the rats raced about the floor. No place was safe from them. Anything eatable had to be placed out of reach, and at night the traveller camping out, unless he hung all his saddlery to the branch of a tree, would find in the morning that the rats had nibbled everything to pieces. Since the country in the far west has been more fully stocked this plague has disappeared almost entirely, nor do we see the vast swarms of flock pigeons which used to cover the Downs and rise up, ten hundred or fifteen hundred in one lot. In the evenings these pigeons flying in to water used to afford capital shooting, like grouse flocking in to a stubble-field towards sunset, beautiful birds of a

chocolate and black plumage, and almost the size of a grouse.

We had good rain in November and December, and the year 1880 was fairly satisfactory.

About this time, 1881, a good deal of Victorian capital found its way to Queensland. Afton Downs had been purchased by the Armytages, and having had occasion to visit the Peak Downs district for rams, I found one of the chief stations there had changed hands at 15s. a head for eighty-seven thousand sheep and £3 per head for cattle. The freehold land, of which there was a considerable quantity, went at £1 per acre, and horses at £10 per head. As much as £6 per head was being offered for western cattle stations where the country was suitable for sheep, the enterprising purchasers being in most instances also Victorians.

In the month of August, our new Bishop of North Queensland, Dr. Staunton, paid us a visit, having ridden up from Townsville with my neighbour, R. Christison. Whilst the Bishop was spending a few days with us it happened that a gate on a distant part of the run required fixing, and as it could be done in a short time by driving out rapidly, the manager and myself went to do it, instead of waiting until a man could be sent. The Bishop said he would like to see a gate swung, so we took him out. He was very keen, and we had some trouble in preventing him sinking the whole

of the post hole with the crowbar himself. However, between us we made short work of the job, and the place goes by the name of the 'Bishop's Gate' to this day.

With the object of taking advantage of the good prices being given for stations, I had placed my properties in the market, and received a letter saying they had been sold. However, owing to a hitch which it is unnecessary to explain, the sale was not concluded. Our nearest telegraph station was at Capeville, one hundred miles away, and the railway at this time was only open from Townsville to the Reid river.

We do not appear to have had any winter rain in this year, but good rain fell in November and December.

The year 1882 was favourable. In June after attending the Pastoral and Agricultural Show in Townsville, I went round by Bluff Downs with Fulford of Lyndhurst. We were delayed by heavy rain at Allingham's station, the weather afterwards turning cold with sharp frosts at night. The old stockman at the station told us about a buffalo which he had seen amongst the cattle here, and tried to yard with them. The beast must have travelled hundreds of miles from the Northern Territory, and so far as I know is the only instance of a buffalo having been found so far to the eastward. He was, I believe, shot

afterwards on Dotswood station, and the horns which I saw appeared to be the same as those of the common Indian buffalo. Having closed for eighteen bulls from Albert White, I returned to Hughenden.

About this time a globe trotter, named Stirling, spent a few days at my place. After shooting a few ducks on the creek and lagoons, he departed, and some time later published a book on his travels, severely criticising the class of sheep I had and the style of woolshed.

The ground was so heavy in July from rain, that the coach was running very irregularly, and passengers were delayed in the township, among them Mr. Currie of Lara, in Victoria, who had been up to see his station, Telemon.

We were much troubled by wild dogs this winter, and it was some time before they could be kept under. We continued fencing and excavated a tank or two. In October we again had good rain and the country was soon like a wheatfield.

In the year 1883 we had no winter rain, and only light storms fell in November. Meanwhile the township was growing, and the railway gradually approaching. The year 1884 was also deficient in rainfall.

We were much plagued by bush fires about this time, and we noticed when rats were about fires

were more frequent. Employees riding on the runs would drop matches accidentally when opening their boxes. The rats at night would nibble these matches and ignite them. I saw several fires spring up which could only be accounted for in this way. During one year we turned out to as many as fifty fires. The work was most serious. Frequently after working all day, every one would have to turn out about 8 P.M. and work through the greater part of the night. We had a regular fire brigade organised. Every night horses were stabled until 10 o'clock, vehicles and harness placed in readiness, and waterbags and casks of water filled. From the top of the haystack a look-out was maintained by the overseer.

RESERVOIR IN JARDINE VALLEY, SUPPLIED BY STEAM PUMP FROM RIVER 80 FEET BELOW

CHAPTER IX

Southern buyers for cattle—Introduction of fencing—Bad drought—A troublesome incendiary—Flies—Labour unions and strikes—Lawless state of the country—Shearers, cattle ticks.

HAVING in the foregoing pages recorded some incidents which occurred in the earlier settlement of North Queensland up to the time when the Burke and Gregory districts were in a manner rediscovered by Victorian capitalists, and the incidents in connection therewith being of more modern date, it will be sufficient to pass over lightly the occurrences of a few succeeding years.

In 1885 we had good rain in the early part of the year; the Peak Downs district which I had occasion to visit to procure some rams was also looking well. I sold one thousand breeding cows on the run at two guineas per head to Heydon of New South Wales for stocking western country, and for several years there continued to be a good demand for such purposes and at similar prices. Fat wethers were selling at 7s. 6d. to 8s. 6d.

We had ·93 of rain in June and a little rain in October, freshening up the grass; during the year we continued fencing and conserving water, but the rainfall was much below the

average, amounting only to twelve inches seventeen points.

The year 1886 also opened badly. We had no rain till April, when sufficient only fell to bring up some young grass which was speedily swept off by myriads of grasshoppers, and so far the year was one of the worst we had experienced. With the exception of a small portion of the run on which I managed to retain some twelve thousand sheep, the whole country presented the appearance of undulating plains, well ploughed and harrowed, and much of Glendower was in the same condition.

Foreseeing what was threatening, I had previously rented some country some two hundred miles down the river from Edward Palmer of Canobie, the season down there having been a good one, so in May I started twenty-one thousand sheep for this place, Herbert Stansfield taking one mob and A. W. Ferguson the other. They had anything but a pleasant time, travelling frequently without any grass and with very little water. On their reaching Donald Macintyre's country (Dalgonelly), where grass and water were in abundance, he very kindly allowed them to spell awhile, otherwise losses would have been heavier.

On the 18th and 23rd June, just after the local races, we had magnificent rain such as had not

fallen for eighteen months, a good soaking four inches, which came up from the west. The sheep returned in August in fine condition, but three thousand short of the original number, and travelling expenses cost from three to four hundred pounds for the three months they were away.

With reference to droughts and dry seasons, water may be conserved, and artesian water may be flowing, but unless rain falls grass will fail. Something in the future may be done by the conservation of ensilage and the storage of hay—entailing, of course, a certain outlay of money—to minimise losses. At the present time some stations do preserve a certain amount of grass in the form of hay, but it is not done systematically or scientifically.

It is very questionable whether any extensive system of irrigation can be effected at a reasonable cost from artesian water in Queensland in consequence of the undulating nature of the ground; in fact, to ensure the annual increase of sheep if the rainfall fails, it is difficult to see how any really efficient plan can be found.

During the remainder of 1886 we fared well for grass and water, but a fatal accident occurred at the cattle station to Percy Favenc, who had been managing there for some years. Whilst he was cutting out a calf on a camp the animal crossed

in front of him, bringing the horse and rider to the ground. We brought him to the hospital, where he died on the following morning without having regained consciousness.

Shortly after the sheep returned, on my coming back one afternoon from a drive with my wife, Herbert Stansfield said to me, 'There has been a man looking round for you with a revolver.' This man I learnt had afterwards gone over to the woolshed. Whilst we were talking a boundary rider who was occupied at the shed came running up breathless, exclaiming that the shed was on fire. We saw volumes of smoke already rising from the side of it. We ran towards it, telling Stansfield to bring any one he could in the buggy with buckets. He soon overtook me, and with very hard work we managed to extinguish the flames. The man who caused the mischief was handed over to the police. He could assign no cause for his action, but had been drinking heavily.

The year 1887 opened with good rain. The flies came in millions, driving the horses nearly mad, speedily turning the smallest scratch on their skins into a painful sore. We adopted the usual plan of making a big smoke into which the horses in the paddock could enter and remain as much as possible out of reach of the flies. When flies are troublesome a horse with a short tail has a bad time of it, none of the others will mate with him ;

he has to stand with his head in a bush. At such times horses stand together head and tail brushing the flies off each other's eyes, and unless disturbed will often remain in this position the whole day. It is a peculiar fact that these annual plagues of flies in North Queensland seem confined to the western watershed. To the east of the dividing range there are no flies of any consequence; cattle and sheep do not seem to be affected by them, but to men and horses they are a perfect pest.

The season during the remainder of this year was good, and the railway was opened right through to Hughenden.

Having been absent from Hughenden during this year 1888, I will only record the rainfall—nineteen inches and thirty points, which was a little below the average. I returned to Queensland in the following year, when the country was looking well and we had a little rain in June and September, followed by good rain in November and December.

In the earlier half of 1890 were seen the first signs of the disastrous shearers' strike which commenced towards the close of the year. Some of the Jondaryan wool had been shorn by non-Union men, and the Union wharf labourers in Brisbane at the instigation of their leaders refused to put it on board ship.

At this time the Labour Union were in considerable strength ; their organisation was perfect, and they had a large sum of money in hand. The Bush Unions, *i.e.* those of shearers and labourers, had for several years past been organising, and were now very strong.

Consequent upon the different rate of wages paid for shearing and labour throughout the pastoral districts, and often in the same neighbourhood for the same class of work, there was no doubt much dissatisfaction amongst the men, who often considered under such circumstances that they were unfairly treated by their employers. The action of individual employers may have been unwise in this respect, and the representatives of capital in their endeavour to enforce economy in the management of stations upon which enormous sums of money had been expended in rendering them habitable for stock increased the tendency towards these differential rates. However, the result was the formation of the so-called Bush Unions.

At the time of the Jondaryan strike there was no question of wages involved. It was simply a question whether an employer should or should not be allowed to employ any non-Union men ; the result was that employers being quite without any organisation or funds to resist a strike had to compromise the matter, the Darling Downs

Employers' Association, I believe, agreeing to employ Union men only.

The upshot of this affair, however, was the formation of pastoralists' unions on a large scale in all the Colonies. Assessments were levied on all sheep and cattle, and within a short time the combination was complete and a large sum was in hand.

When the general shearing began, the action of the Labour leaders became very aggressive. . . . Before I commenced in September to shear at my own place a visitation was made by some of the Labour Union officials. On seeing them about I inquired their business. They replied, 'We are looking round to see if all your men have joined the Union.' They also inquired what wages the cook and her husband were getting and whether the man had joined the Union. On my asking whether they wished to force all employees to join the Union the spokesman said, 'Ah no; we cannot do that, but as you are going to shear, if you want things to go smoothly you had better advise all your men to join the Union.' This I declined to do. Those who had not joined, however, came to me and said that to save any bother they would do so.

This state of things could not last; the delegates were daily assuming a dictatorial attitude, and the man who was paying for work done

was practically without any control in his own shed.

For some reason or other after we had been shearing about a week, during which period the delegates had on several occasions interfered in our business, all shed-hands were called out throughout the country. At the expiration of a week they were as suddenly told to resume work, since a difference of opinion had occurred, so far as I remember, in the south between the Pastoral Employers and the Labour Unions. However, on this occasion we completed our shearing without any further interruption.

Early in 1891, however, the trouble recommenced. Shearing begins early in the Peak Downs district, and the fiat had gone forth that no shearing should be performed on stations where non-Union men were employed. Men on horseback were flocking to that neighbourhood in hundreds, most of them carrying rifles and firing the country in all directions. Fortunately the heavy wet season prevented any serious damage. The rainfall in 1891 amounted to forty-two inches, nearly double the average, and was probably the heaviest rainfall we had experienced since 1870 and 1871.

The Unionists at this time were drilling in their various encampments, and matters assumed a very serious aspect. Fortunately the authorities rose

to the occasion, though not a moment too soon; the disturbers of the peace were met on the Peak Downs by a strong body of mounted infantry and police, and although on several occasions conflict seemed almost inevitable, by the exercise of tact and forbearance not a shot was fired, and shearing was carried through generally throughout that and other districts by men imported from New Zealand and the other colonies.

Similar opposition was offered throughout the western districts, to which, however, strong detachments of police and military of all arms were sent. In Brisbane troops were at the time almost daily marching through the streets *en route* to railway or steamer, giving the place quite a martial appearance. At Barcaldine, the centre of the disturbed central district, a military encampment of considerable strength was formed. Artillery, mounted infantry, Scottish volunteers with their bagpipes and Highland costumes, companies of different regiments—some in khaki, others in blue, grey, and the ordinary red tunic and white helmet—would lead the ordinary onlooker to suppose a large force was represented. The camp was well pitched, discipline maintained, and the Government by their determination and display of force checked a movement which would otherwise have given the country over to the control of the leaders of a large number of excited men

who had by violent speeches been brought to the verge of rebellion.

At a crowded meeting held in Brisbane, when a prominent leader addressed working men in one of the largest halls, I heard him boast that they had five thousand men, good riders well mounted, who could put a revolver bullet into each mark of the five of spades at twenty yards.

The strike cost both the Government and the pastoralists a large sum of money. The men out on strike lost the wages which were paid to outsiders for carrying on their work. Bitter feelings of resentment sprang up which culminated in the strike of 1894.

In 1891, in my own district, we had two companies of mounted infantry and two of infantry besides police, and the country was well patrolled. We used frequently to meet mobs of Unionists in the streets of the township and discuss the situation with them in a friendly way. However, as neither side could convince the other and the men were very loyal to the Unions, we soon gave up the attempt.

To get the shearing done in the district men had to be imported, and gangs of shearers were forwarded from one shed to another under escort.

In order to get the first lot of men away from Hughenden to other stations, wagons and teams had to be procured, the carriers also being on

strike. Desiring that they should leave with as little interference as possible, after some delay occasioned by wet weather, we determined to start on a certain Sunday morning, so late on Saturday evening we put all the draught-horses and bullocks into a small paddock, and had everything ready by 8 A.M. on Sunday morning, when we started in a long procession, eight teams loaded, with men and supplies guarded by infantry, and mounted infantry on each flank.

On reaching the township, where all was quiet, being Sunday morning, we came upon two vedettes from the Union camp, who galloped off to give the alarm. Meanwhile we proceeded and, having left the township a mile or two behind us, we saw the Unionists streaming across the plain some hundred in number towards a gully which the teams would have to cross, their object evidently being to frighten the horses and cause the teams to capsize.

We had at this time H. Gough as police magistrate. He had been sent up to take charge of the district. On approaching the gully, taking the pipe out of his mouth, he read the Riot Act. The troops fixed bayonets, and amidst some uproar and confusion, the teams were brought safely across. We encountered some abuse, in which a lady from the camp took rather a prominent part, but no bones were broken. Some of us remained

a while haranguing the mob whilst the teams were progressing ; the Unionists having been caught napping, had most of them no time to procure their horses, and only a few who were mounted cared to follow.

The strike ultimately collapsed, the men having exhausted their funds, but not before many of them had lost all chance of obtaining work that year.

The summer rains of 1891-2 were insufficient to bring forth a good fresh growth of young grass, and the hot sun soon scorched the older grass, which became dry as tinder in the great heat and devoid of nourishment. Under such conditions a heavy mortality amongst old ewes and young sheep is inevitable ; in such seasons neither ten nor twenty acres will keep a sheep, but in holding a large area of the country it may happen that some portion is not so drought-stricken as the remainder, otherwise everything would perish. It was not until the 31st of May 1893 that really good rain fell; by this time the mortality amongst sheep had been very heavy, and some of the smaller selectors had lost almost everything.

In 1894 the smouldering embers of the late strike broke out again with renewed violence, the bone of contention being that in the shearing agreement the man in charge of the shed was to decide whether sheep were wet or not. It some-

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times happened that it was difficult to decide whether sheep were absolutely dry without shearing a few to examine the wool afterwards. A difference of opinion would exist among the shearers themselves. The employers decided that the only practical way out of this difficulty was to leave the responsibility of deciding to the man in charge of the shed.

My station employees absolutely refused to go out again, and the strike was confined chiefly to the shearers and shed hands.

Fortunately this year the rain was again above the average, amounting to 37 inches in twenty falls distributed fairly well throughout the year. A gang of men led by some individuals of evil reputation burnt the woolshed of Ayrshire Downs. An attempt was made to burn another shed. This was followed a fortnight later by the burning of Redcliffe shed, and twelve days or so after, that of the Cambridge Downs shed, a valuable structure which had been lately erected, and included a large number of shearing-machines. Manuka shed followed suit, and an attack with firearms was made on Dagworth shed, which was burnt in despite of the defence made by the Macpherson brothers, a number of shots being fired on both sides. My own shed escaped, but it was a source of considerable anxiety, as the time for shearing was approaching. In addition to a couple of

policemen who took their turn of duty, we had our own guard at night. At each side and end of the shed were sandbag shelters behind which men slept, taking their turns, however, of sentry duty.

Around the building and in the yards we had wire entanglements with bells on them, and although on one or two occasions it was evident that strangers were in the neighbourhood, no attack was made. The men at this time were very sullen, and would not take any opportunity of discussing matters in a more or less friendly manner as they did in 1891.

At this juncture, after sundry sheds had been burnt and firearms used, the Government at last enforced an Act declaring the carrying of arms illegal in the disturbed districts. This was strongly resented by the Labour party in the Legislative Assembly, some of whom were suspended in consequence of the violence of their speeches and conduct.

The result nevertheless was immediately apparent; the leaders and more ill-disposed amongst the men 'cleared out,' and the strike soon came to an end. Some of the men who were on the Strike Committee, and consequently knew what was coming, were the first to hurry off and to try for billets.

Shearers as a rule are a superior class of men.

Speaking generally the men who take the wool off the twenty million sheep depastured in Queensland work hard whilst the wool harvest is on, and shearing continues more or less through nine months out of the twelve. As a rule they possess two or three horses or a bicycle with which they travel the country. They are a smart and generally well set up lot of men; when off duty they wear black coats and gold chains, and when in town very often starched collars, a dark felt hat and dark coloured trousers—a habit which in the hottest weather I have often looked upon with wonder.

Individually intelligent men in many respects, they collectively take their ideas with reference to the rights of capital and labour from their own leaders, who too frequently have no special knowledge of the subject, but by profuse volubility and violent declamation against the capitalist and capital generally, have attained prominence amongst them. These declaimers against capital, so far as can be gathered from their own utterances, have no correct conception of whence it comes, or to whom it belongs, and do not realise that banks and institutions of a kindred character are but the instruments through which the savings of other people are laid out for investment. Neither do they seem to think that the investor has as much right to look for interest on his money in-

vested through the medium of these institutions as any other man has a right to expect interest on the £10 he may invest in the local Savings Bank.

The hard-drinking shearer, who after getting his cheque used to be found at full length in the publican's verandah, is now quite exceptional. Some of the men have wives and families in the north, others have their homes in the south, or in New Zealand. Many of the single men when shearing season is over visit Sydney or Melbourne. They put up at one of the less expensive hotels or boarding-houses, and spend their money in enjoyments more or less quiet; others will take a job of droving if they can get it, or go prospecting on one of the goldfields.

The other men employed in the shed are of a somewhat different type. They are generally young fellows who have not yet learnt to shear, or are men past the prime of life, men who are out of regular work, and accustomed to casual employment on stations; men who for one reason or another have failed in retaining permanent employment when they had it. These men are not so highly paid as the shearer, but receive, or did so at the time I am referring to, from 24s. to 30s. per week and their food. The average shearer when at work can make 16s. a day clear of what his board may cost him.

In addition to the men who are employed at

shearing time only, there are the ordinary station hands or staff. On a sheep station carrying fifty to one hundred thousand there are in addition to the manager, overseer, and store-keeper, a man or two to look after the horses and buggies in use at the station, and to assist in butchering, etc. At lamb-marking time the overseer takes a staff of men and mustering each paddock in succession marks the lambs. This is a business requiring care and judgment and occupies several weeks in each year. There are, of course, at the home station a few domestic servants required.

On large stations distant from a blacksmith and saddler, it is necessary to keep tradesmen of this description on the place, and a carpenter also. On a station of any size there are constant repairs necessary to carts, wagons, machinery and plant of one sort or another, gates frequently getting broken by passing carriers or travelling stock, and saddlery and horses requiring attention, all this adding to the working expenses; even where stations have the opportunity to employ local tradesmen, a man or two with a cart has continually to be moving for the maintenance of improvements. On some stations a poisoner also has to be kept to keep down native and other dogs.

All the paddocks containing sheep are in charge of boundary riders who reside in the neighbour-

hood of their work. They each have a hut, and a small paddock in which they keep three or four saddle-horses; they ride round their paddocks each day repairing fences when necessary, and generally supervising the sheep under their care. On many stations each boundary rider is in telephonic communication with the head station, and can report anything that goes amiss. The wages of these men are from 25s. to 30s. per week and a liberal supply of rations of various sorts. Some of them are married men. They keep their goats and fowls and live fairly comfortably. Some of them during the wet season manage to raise a few pumpkins, which are a welcome addition.

For profit the pastoralist depends upon his clip of wool and the price he may be able to obtain for his annual draft of fat wethers. His surplus stock, if he has any, he looks to return him interest on the capital invested, and if possible establish a sinking fund, without which under existing conditions when his lease matures he stands to find himself left with his stock, his country parcelled out amongst other people; and although he may have spent much money in the maintenance of his improvements, their value is decided by the Land Court, with the result that as a rule the incoming tenant gets them at a low valuation.

Since the foregoing was written, the Land Act has been amended, so that the pastoralist at the

end of his lease will have a preferential claim to select a portion of the land he occupied; but there is no guarantee that it will be of any particular size, as the area will be dependent upon a proclamation which will then be issued, determining the area which one selector may hold.

In the meanwhile the increase of the population does not keep pace with the increase of sheep and cattle, and unless the development of the mineral resources of the country brings a mining population, it would appear that the sheep-breeding industry of Northern and Western Queensland will have to depend still further upon the value of wool independently of the carcase.

In 1895 cattle ticks which had been known to exist for many years in the coastal districts of the Gulf of Carpentaria were brought across by cattle travelling to the east coast. The pest running rapidly through the herds carried off a large number of cattle from the Herbert river in the north to the southern tributaries of the Burdekin in the south.

In consequence of the disease engendered by these pests, some pastoralists and dairymen were absolutely ruined; others were left with a loss of 50 per cent. to 70 per cent. of their herds.

On the western slope of the dividing range some two hundred miles inland, the disease spread less rapidly, though during the following wet

season it made itself manifest. Ticks appeared in swarms on the cattle; fever seemed to set up most rapidly amongst fat bullocks, which would frequently drop down and die apparently from an acute attack. As long as good grass and water remained plentiful the cattle as a whole did not appear to suffer seriously, but the latter part of the year was very dry and feed scanty. Such conditions were not calculated to assist the cattle in recovering from the attacks of fever, and during the summer of 1896 and 1897 many herds on the western slopes and basaltic tableland suffered severe losses. At the close of 1898 it was satisfactory to find that the recovering portions of the herds which had been affected did not seem to suffer from the ticks which were still numerous amongst them.

The origin of the tick is uncertain, but the probability is that they were imported with the buffalo into the Northern Territory in the days of the Port Essington Settlement, and attached themselves to cattle when that country was stocked.

CHAPTER X

Some general remarks on Queensland: its area, climate, and capabilities—Land laws, closer settlement—Artesian water—Conditions of life in North Queensland—The Northern Territory—The Aborigines.

In reviewing the progress of North Queensland from the date of its occupation by the flocks and herds of early settlers, and the legislation in connection therewith, the fact should not be lost sight of that the State of Queensland is a territory extending from latitude 11 degrees South to 29 degrees South, a distance roughly speaking of eleven hundred miles. A great variety of climate is consequently encountered. The high upland country extending from Wallangara on the southern border to the extreme north of the Darling Downs, a strip of country about three hundred miles in length of varying width, is in point of climate well adapted for the European race. English fruits are to be found doing well over much of this wide area, and on much of it cereals can be grown to advantage. A large proportion of Queensland, however, is situated in the tropics, and in travelling north after passing Gympie, the waters of the Fitzroy are crossed,

and the tropic of Capricorn is entered. The attractive country of the Peak Downs, also the country along the Central Railway and out to the western boundary of Queensland, is within the tropics and subject to a vertical sun in summer. A plateau varying in height from twelve hundred to two thousand feet extends throughout the length of the State, dividing the eastern and western rivers, until in the neighbourhood of Herberton in the north at the back of Cairns, an altitude of from three to four thousand feet is obtained. Although along the tableland within the tropics the extreme heat of summer is in a measure modified by the altitude, we do not find that this portion of tropical Queensland is the best for carrying on the pastoral or agricultural industries of the country. The eastern sides slope down into the valleys, which are more suitable for depasturing cattle than sheep, with, here and there in the neighbourhood of the coast, land suited for the cultivation of sugar; whereas on the west, on descending from the plateau, the calcareous western plains open to the view, with gently undulating country extending from the borders of New South Wales on the south to the Flinders river on the north, and out to the western border of the State. This area is pointed out by nature as one of the great wool-producing countries of the world. The extremes of heat

and cold are greater in the west than on the eastern slope. Whether this portion of Queensland will be turned to any other use than pastoral, remains to be seen. Land suitable for growing the finer sorts of wool is not available in every part of the world, and it is reasonable to suppose that this part of Australia will, at all events for many years, be best utilised in supplying beef, mutton, and wool, for which it is so well adapted. At the same time the fact should not be overlooked that there are valuable areas containing gold, silver, lead and copper, some of which are being worked, whilst others are awaiting the advent of railways and capital to render them remunerative.

The population of Northern and Western Queensland during my somewhat long experience has been to a very considerable extent a changing one. Those who have been successful have in many cases migrated elsewhere, often further south. The climate though healthy is trying, somewhat similar to that of the Punjab in India, and we have yet to learn whether in a climate where white women physically deteriorate, anything approaching close settlement in the true acceptation of the term can be brought about. Children are nevertheless numerous in the north and west. Schools are liberally supplied by Government, attendance is more or less com-

pulsory, and the pupils also fairly numerous. The girls in most cases on leaving school desire to enter as assistants in shops and millinery establishments, or seek employment as typists, or in other genteel occupations. Domestic service, so-called, is not much in favour with the youth of either sex in North Queensland.

Tropical Queensland in the matter of food is not self-supporting. Flour is all imported from the south; the Chinese, whose gardens are to be seen on the outskirts of most of the townships and stations, supply a large proportion of the vegetables required. The balance is imported from the south, and were it not for the Chinese, fresh vegetables would be quite unobtainable at a distance from the seaports. The white man does not take kindly to agriculture, or even the growing of vegetables in the tropics. A tropical country cannot be run on the same lines as one semi-tropical, and the mistake is made of thinking that it can be done by legislation. Since the deportation of the South Sea islanders, the sugar-cane farmers have had to rely very much upon the exertions of themselves and their families, assisted by gangs of labourers who undertake the harvesting and cutting of the cane, which is hard and exhausting work in the sweltering regions of the north-east coast, and between the increasing scale of wages exacted for this class of labour and

the cost of putting the cane through the mills, the cane grower has much to contend against. A Commission appointed by the Federal Government has been engaged for many months inquiring into the working of the sugar industry, but at the time of writing this, the result of their labour has not, so far as I know, been published.[1]

Unless a change has taken place amongst the men employed at pick and shovel work on the railways, and fencing or the heavier sorts of manual labour, few North Queenslanders will be found. The lighter descriptions of labour are more sought after by them. This, I consider, is owing to the climatic conditions, though I am informed that amongst the miners of Charters Towers, the young North Queensland men are to be found, and it is a matter of notoriety that large numbers of the young men from tropical Queensland were amongst the first to come forward and volunteer for service in South Africa when the Boer War opened.

The whole of the pastoral area of tropical Queensland, generally speaking, is held under lease from the Crown, though there are portions of Queensland which are held as freeholds, notably on the Darling Downs, and some of the southern portions of the State, where the climate being only semi-tropical, a far more settled population exists, and

[1] Published about a month ago.

where one generation succeeds another. A considerable quantity of land has also been alienated on the Peak Downs, north-west of Rockhampton, and a few hundred thousand acres were sold in former days at ten shillings an acre in the western country at times when money was wanted by the Government. Runs in Queensland, though of less extent than formerly, since much of the area has been resumed for grazing farms, vary from one hundred thousand acres to five hundred thousand acres, but there are not nowadays many of the size last mentioned, except in the more remote districts, where there are runs of even larger area, some owned by individuals, others by companies. When it is remembered that large sums of money are expended in stocking the country, on conservation of water, necessary buildings, and plant and machinery, it is obvious that each run represents a large amount of capital invested, and that only by efficient and up-to-date management can sufficient profit be made out of the stock depastured to pay interest on the capital value, establish a sinking fund against a maturing lease and defray taxation and the cost of management. In former days the lessee was at liberty, in order to secure permanent improvements, to purchase land at ten shillings per acre to the extent of two thousand five hundred acres out of each sixteen thousand acres held under

lease, and on many runs throughout Queensland the lessees availed themselves to some extent of this privilege. Owing, however, to the great jealousy with which the acquirement of freehold land is regarded, this privilege was withdrawn. Under the Land Act of 1884, leases of runs were granted for twenty-one years. When the disastrous drought of the year 1900 and of several subsequent years reduced the number of sheep and cattle in the State by about sixty per cent., it was manifest that unless renewed leases were given in order to enable pastoralists to recover their position many would be ruined. Considerable pressure was brought to bear upon the Government of that day, by whom the position was recognised, and Parliament was induced to pass an Act under which new leases were granted for another term of twenty-one years. The runs were placed in several classes, subject to the right of Government to resume certain portions of each run in large or small areas according to the class in which they were placed. In localities where it was considered that a demand for closer settlement, so-called, viz. in proximity to railways or townships, would take place, the areas subject to resumption were larger, but in localities at a distance from railways and townships, notably the Gulf of Carpentaria and the far west, leases were renewed to the extent of forty years.

During my experience of Queensland, since 1863, there have been many dry seasons, more or less severe; in fact, dry seasons predominate, and in some years are sufficiently severe to prevent the natural increase of sheep and cattle making up for losses incurred; but in my experience there has been no other instance of such a long and extensive drought as occurred in 1900 and subsequent years. Neither during the period I refer to has there been any recurrence of the general floods which took place in 1869 to 1870, though there have of course been high floods at sundry times in some localities. The system of artesian water supplies which now prevails in Western Queensland, and which is annually being increased, provides water over a wide area. These bores pour out a large volume of water, though in some of them the water does not rise to the surface, but has to be raised by steam pumps or windmills. The depth of these bores varies from two hundred to three thousand feet. The permanent occupation of the country so far as water is concerned has been rendered safe for man and beast, but obviously these bores will not supply grass, which as heretofore must be dependent upon the rainfall, because if irrigation were attempted, and the water was chemically suitable, which in many instances it is not, the undulating character of the country would make irrigation extremely difficult and expensive under

existing conditions. For some years previous to the Land Act of 1902, which has been referred to as having been passed in consequence of the drought, opportunities had been provided under the Act of 1884 then in force for taking up grazing farms on the resumed portions of runs, and although the maximum area which each individual was entitled to hold was limited to twenty thousand acres, it was soon found that the intention of the Act was by no means being strictly carried out. Aggregations of farms were held by groups of grazing farmers and worked as one property under one manager. In some instances such aggregations equalled the area of adjacent runs. With the object of stopping this mode of 'closer settlement' the Lands Department in recent years have offered farms on resumed areas under the personal residence clause. This entails on the part of the applicant that he shall reside for five years on the farm. Whether this will result in obtaining a permanent class of tenant remains to be proved. The areas of these farms are too small in many instances for profitable pastoral occupation, seeing that it is customary to allow three acres per sheep for breeding purposes. There will always be some settlers who through force of circumstances will remain, but many of the larger grazing farms not held under the residential clause, after being well improved and

stocked, have changed hands. The tendency amongst many owners seems to be to make the thing a paying concern as soon as possible, and sell the property before the term of lease becomes so short that it may be difficult to find a purchaser. The trend of the present land laws does not tend to encourage the investment of capital by individuals with a view to making a permanent home in Western Queensland. The lease, whether for a run or grazing farm, is for a limited period only, varying from fourteen to twenty-eight years. No man can build on these leaseholds a substantial house of brick or stone or make improvements of a costly character, with the assurance that his family will succeed to the property after his time. It is true that the tenant is promised priority of claim to a renewal of the lease, but only of such portions and of such an area as the Government of that day may approve of, and shall then be permissible in each particular locality.

There are other considerations which no doubt influence the tenant of Crown lands. Domestic servants are difficult to procure, coloured labour is prohibited, and domestic duties in a climate where for many months the thermometer for many hours in the day ranges from ninety-five degrees upwards, becomes irksome even to womenfolk who are accustomed to them. The tendency is after a few years to realise upon the property when

an opportunity offers and seek some other climate where the environment is more favourable. I have often thought how much more endurable the life of womenfolk in tropical Queensland would be if each carrier or settler's wife could have a coloured servant to assist at the wash-tub and other domestic duties. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the fact remains that, with the exception of a few localities where the altitude approaches two thousand feet, the climate is a hard one for white women, and those who have resided many years in the country know it to be so, though it is not the fashion to proclaim it, and so long as these conditions continue, it is likely to militate against closer settlement of a permanent character.

The conditions of life in localities such as Charters Towers or mining and coastal townships are somewhat different, and if, with the extension of railways, other valuable mineral areas can be developed, a decided increase in the population of Northern Queensland can be looked for. With the opening up of minerals a township is formed, and to minister to the wants of the miner, the butcher, baker, shoemaker, chemist, storekeeper and tradesman of every description, also medical and professional men congregate, and the women-folk are in a better position to avail themselves of a trip in the summer to cooler latitudes, though

this must always be a tax on the wage-earner. That those who do make such trips are numerous, any one who has travelled by steamers going south in November and December can testify. Many of course are not able to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded.

Much has been said and written about the practicability of filling up the Northern Territory of Australia with white people. I wish I could bring myself to think that it will be practicable to do so. Members of the Federal Parliament take periodical trips to Port Darwin in the cooler season of the year, and return extolling the country and climate, but do not remain there. We do not find any of the South Australians who owned the country for some forty years making their way north. The people in the Southern States do not seem to hanker after going there. It is always some other people who are to colonise it. In the meantime, the white population consists chiefly of employees on cattle stations, Government officials and a few miners; and when we consider that the population of the Gulf of Carpentaria country in similar latitudes is less than it was twenty-five years ago, what prospect is there, or what reason have we to suppose, that white people will be found to take up their abode in the Northern Territory, and invest money without adequate labour to assist in developing

the country or railways to carry their supplies, and without markets to send their produce to, whilst they can also do better in a more temperate climate.

The *Australian Year Book* gives the white population of the Northern Territory in 1881 as 670, and in 1910 as 1212 men, women and children. Under the White Australia policy it is difficult to see much encouragement for the future from these figures. It is generally understood that much of the Northern Territory is capable of producing many tropical products, and amongst other things cotton, and in sufficient quantity to go far towards supplying the requirements of the United Kingdom, but here again the difficulty of obtaining suitable labour comes in. If the same class of labour were obtainable in the Northern Territory as in Fiji, where the Indian coolie is at work, it is quite possible that this portion of Australia under the supervision of white people might be made a wealth-producing country, enabling the country to be opened up by railways, upon which would follow the development of the mineral resources of the country. A more ready access to the south would be obtained, and instead of being an incubus, the country would be profitable, and the possibility of forwarding troops from the south in case of war would be facilitated.

Australia is too big a country, even if conditions were favourable, to be developed by the number of people who are in it within any reasonable time. Taxation is heavy, debt and public expenditure are increasing very rapidly; railways and other public works, whether State or Federal, are all undertaken by the Government, whose policy is to carry out such work at the cost of the people in the country, generally by day labour. Concessions to outside capitalists are not favourably regarded, though under suitable arrangements in the matter of labour, they might possibly be induced to put money into the Northern Territory, and develop it on lines suitable to the tropics. As it is, the country is a drain upon the people in Australia, and a menace to the safety of the Continent, and it is difficult to see how it can become otherwise under existing conditions. Meanwhile the world is progressing, Japan is powerful and seeks an outlet for its surplus population; China is awakening.

The Commonwealth is now apparently committed to an expenditure of some four to five millions towards the construction of a railway to connect Western Australia with South Australia and the Eastern States, and is also under a compact with South Australia to continue the railway from the northern terminus at Oodnadatta to Pine creek, the present terminus of the railway

from Port Darwin. This line of railway would no doubt facilitate the opening up of the interior of Australia and the Northern Territory. It would give a base of operations to work from, and eventually it would probably be tapped by an extension of the lines running west in Queensland, and east from West Australia. It is to be hoped that the agreement made with South Australia will be adhered to. Already pressure is being brought to bear upon the Federal Government to induce them to agree to an alteration of the route, so that trade may be diverted to the eastern coastal towns, which would not be desirable for Australia as a whole, and would be distinctly disadvantageous to Southern and Western Australia.

With reference to the aboriginal population, the *Australian Year Book* for 1911 gives a census return of about twenty thousand aborigines in the different States, but as these are stated to be in the employment of whites or in contiguity to the settlement of whites, a very large number of blacks in Northern Australia would not be included in the above return. For some years past the question of how best to provide for the welfare of these people has been exercising the minds of legislators in Western Australia and Queensland, and the matter has also been taken up by the Federal Government with reference to the Northern

Territory. There are some seven or eight mission stations in Queensland, one being not far from Cairns, and another in the Gulf of Carpentaria, not far from the Gilbert river, and several others along the northern coast. Four of these mission stations I understand are under the auspices of the German Lutherans and Moravians, and in the account of these missions given by the Bishop of Carpentaria I notice he says they have translated and printed the whole of the New Testament into the native language. But so long as the natives in the more remote part are dependent entirely upon hunting and fishing, it is obvious that large and suitable reserves must be retained for their use, if their lives are to be preserved. It is possible that something could be done with the younger generation in inducing them to adopt a more economic mode of life, if suitable employment were available, but a race which has never adopted any method of cultivating the soil is not easily preserved; the wandering habit is so ingrained amongst them, and the development of tropical products by coloured labour of any description is discouraged, if not actually forbidden by law. The difficulty of effecting a change in their mode of life is thus increased, and a race which in itself cannot stand contact with the white people is in any case difficult to preserve.

In conclusion, I would say with reference to North Queensland, that although I have pointed out the drawbacks which exist from a legislative point of view as well as climatic—and what country is without some disadvantages ?—there is much to recommend it. It is a healthy country, and during some five or six months of the year the almost cloudless skies and crisp mornings and evenings are delightful. For the man with capital it presents more attractions for investment than for permanent residence, though at the present time under existing legislation, the incidence of taxation falls heavily upon absentees. For the young man who is capable of adapting himself to the work and conditions of life in the country, wages are good and living is not expensive. The man who is inclined to save money can do so, and in five years should be able to launch out into something on his own account. He will by that time have gained experience, and be in a position to judge what will be best to do with his savings. A man obviously cannot take up land on his own account and turn it to advantage without money, but if he makes money and gets experience openings will present themselves, not necessarily in the place he first goes to. To the young man in England who has no satisfactory prospects in view I would say, 'Go to the offices of the Agents-General of the different States, ascer-

tain all you can about Australia, and go to that portion of it which may seem most attractive.' If he does this he will with energy and perseverance in all probability find himself at the end of ten years or so in a more independent position than he could hope for in the older country of England, where competition is keen.

For the young man with a few thousand pounds, I would say on no account be in a hurry to invest in land or farming of any description, but wait a couple of years, have a good look round, and learn the conditions and peculiarities of the country. For young men desirous of obtaining clerical work or positions in banks or offices, there is no demand. For such billets there are more young men out there than can find occupation.

I may mention in concluding my reminiscences that very few of the men whose names have been recorded in the foregoing pages are now alive, and of my contemporaries in the Hughenden district none remain there. These circumstances seemed rather like a hint to myself to quit. The time seemed favourable for retiring. The sheep, which had been reduced in numbers from fifty thousand to fifteen thousand in 1902, had again increased to forty thousand and the cattle to eight thousand.

In the year 1891, eighty thousand station sheep were shorn at Hughenden, but this was when I held a larger area of country.

I look upon the pastoral life in Australia as being a healthy and enjoyable one, full of interest in spite of its varying vicissitudes. But after half a century of it under conditions above referred to, a man can hardly be considered a deserter if he retires to enjoy the society of his remaining kinsfolk and friends in the old land, and make room for those who are younger.

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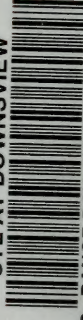
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