

To the Desert with Sturt

This is a copy of Daniel Brock's accounts of interaction with Aboriginal people during the Central Australian Expedition, 1844-1846. The entire record can be found in the book "To the Desert with Sturt", first published in 1975. It is recommended that the book be read in full.

The expedition left Adelaide on August 14th 1844.

Along the Murray River to Moorundie

16th August 1844

We moved away—two natives accompanying us—these fellows belong to a tribe further up the river who in times past were very troublesome to the overland parties from Sydney. These men go as guides and protectors. They are two fine muscular fellows, one called "Nite-book" the other "Ca-ree-na

26th August 1844

Having received instructions to commence my work in securing birds, I passed away from the drays having the Captain's double gun, but I found a remarkable scarcity of the feathered tribe—what birds there are, are of a common kind, not worth powder and shot.

The native, whom we naturally expected to be brought in contact with, is nowhere to be seen. Have the tribes been blotted out of existence which not many years ago so numerous lined the banks of this truly noble river? A river abounding in fish, and the adjacent scrub abounding in game.

The white man has been here cruel, more cruel, than any savage. As I passed on, anxious at every chirrip I heard, hoping to get a shot I descended into one of the flats, which not many years since was the scene of strife and blood, between the natives and an overland cattle party.

7th September 1844

Natives are becoming more numerous, and remarkably friendly. Mr. Eyre's influence is strongly felt. I am sorry to see disease exist among them as it does, and this too through intercourse with Europeans *an Englishman* is a curse to the Aborigines of any country. One poor fellow especially came under my notice—his thighs were dwindled away to a mere shadow.

In accordance with Mr. Eyre's wish, when the night came on, the natives amused us with dancing—men had striped themselves with white in various parts of their bodies, and had made themselves appear as formidably hideous as anybody could have wished—the women sitting behind some small fires, which ever and anon, would throw a fitful glare upon the scene, revealing the dancers who were capering away, flourishing their waddies over their heads at a most ferocious rate. The music which accompanied their gestures was produced by the women beating an extended skin with a stone, at the same time chanting with their voices.

During the latter part they were enacting the death of the Kangaroo—three men, personating the Kangaroo, being surrounded by the others with spears and green boughs, sometimes as

in the act of killing, then retreating, waving the boughs and shouting—a most ludicrous effect was produced on them, in consequence of our throwing up a rocket; it sadly frightened them.

Rufus River

10th. September 1844

After a short journey we were encamped upon the Rufus at its junction with the river. This locality has been the scene of one of the most determined and bloody encounters with the natives which lie impaged in South Australian history—party after party, coming overland with sheep, were attacked by the natives, and if it had not been for the timely arrival of some of our police the last party would have been all destroyed, as the fight had been continued so long that all the ammunition was nearly expended.

It had been generally the case in all such previous attacks, that after a few rounds being fired, and the consequences following of the poor natives falling dead or wounded, the body generally broke up, and after securing as many of their fallen friends as they could, they retreated, but at this time such was not the case; as one fell another took his place. Having been formed in half circle, before actual war commences, they crouch one behind another holding one another by the hips—the yelling is most fearful.

With the addition of the police force, they were shot in all directions, their bodies lying in heaps. Several of the whites were wounded in all of the attacks. In the last Robinson, the leader of the overland party, was very badly so, it seems he fearfully revenged himself—when *mercy*, it is not found in the vocabulary of parties coming overland from Sydney with stock.

Since these occurrences, we are the first party to have visited these tribes, save and except a journey Mr. Eyre took on horseback. Our two native guides, "Nite-book" especially, were deeply engaged in the affrays; but they are now become quiet, good-natured fellows, and most useful auxiliaries to our party.

The natives which have visited us, however, are a morose savage-looking set, and perhaps if they thought they had any chance would endeavour to be revenged—they are all afraid of Eyre, whose influence over all the tribes we have passed is most astonishing—he is known amongst them as the "Uu-cu-matta", or great chief.

16th September 1844

On returning to the camp we passed the "wurleys" of some natives. I counted 10 females, and 11 children. They were all coiled in 2 small "wurleys" or huts save an old hag who was seated outside by an oven busy in brewing roots and beating them between two stones till the beaten root became formed into a consistency not unlike an oatmeal cake. I tasted some of it, really it was not bad.

The preparation is simply this, the root is poured over with some hot ashes for a short time, which then finally separates from its pith. The pith is thrown away and what remains is only used. The oven is a hole dug into which are placed stones; a fire is then made and when the stones are become sufficiently hot, whatever fibrous things they eat, or animal, is put into this oven and covered over and a fire made over it, where it soon gets cooked. Our guide "Nite-book" claims this locality as his territory, he has here several wives, and not a few children.

28th September 1844

During the early part of our journey, a considerable body of natives were observed on the opposite bank with bundles of spears. The sheep attract more attention than aught beside; they were, however, brought more in a body, the fire arms were all prepared and ready for immediate use. Our friend "Tuando" approached opposite, and began jabbering away-

it was a dropped and one after another came across the river, to the number of 50. Old Mr Nitebook and Tuando, on their getting up on the bank joined them. The first movement was deep and earnest whispering, then the arms were thrown over the shoulder, when a perfect understanding arose, and all suspicion gave way to curiosity. We of course had kept traveling; the strangers were soon with us, very few had ever before seen a European.-

They were principally growing young men with a few more staid and elderly. After we had encamped, they came, and were exceedingly friendly. We had been expecting bloodshedding from these fine looking men; it all seems to breathe of peace and kind feeling.

Mitchell, in his account of the Darling native, speaks of them as the most daring, bloodthirsty fellows possible; this tribe at all events appear altogether different.

4th October 1844

Among the natives who came to us today I observed some "Lubras" or females who were in deep Mourning—this was neither widows' caps nor yards of crape-their hair had been burnt close to the head with a fire stick, and thick plasters of white clay was stuck on their blocks—they looked very interesting—very.

6th October 1844

Sunday. Last night there being about a dozen of strange natives at the camp, Nitebook earnestly begged that they might be frightened with a sky rocket—after much palaver and entreaty, his wish was complied with, and if a scene of fright was ever complete it was in this instance—it was laughable, to observe the affected indifference which Nitebook displayed, for the mere purpose of impressing them with the idea that he was a very wonderful fellow.

For the first time we are not called upon to travel on this day, in the afternoon prayers were read. We have been visited today by some very fierce-looking natives—these having tomahawks did not surprise us, as we cannot be far from the spot where Major Mitchell formed his last camp, previous to his return.

These hatchets were worn to the very eye one of them had a piece of iron six inches long fastened into a stick, just as a smith's tool is fastened into a withy - it was part of a dray wheel's tire, it must have cost an immense deal of labor to have fashioned such an implement—its edge was better than the tomahawk's. To show the jealousy which is existing (or perhaps the hate) one towards another, of some tribes-we have had two young men accompanying us from Lake Victoria, and they were anxious to still go with us-but No—they are suffered to go no further. The tribe into whose district we are about passing through will not suffer them-poor fellows are sadly annoyed, but there is no help—Tuando and Nitebook must send them back.

This hook they make out of a piece of a twig, forming it with a muscle shell, and then just pushing it beneath hot ashes to harden it-this is then fastened on to a piece of "Polignum," which grows to a great length and as big as a pen holder. Down the beforenamed hole is the

hook passed, and with little trouble, the gobbish morsel is hooked. Up it comes, and if the native is hungry he does not wait to broil it but down it goes all alive and writhing.

When-ever we saw a native, he had his waddie and spade in one hand, and his hook and gear, thrown over his shoulder, held by the other-with one native I observed a piece of thick hoop iron, which was fastened into a piece of wood, and had been brought to a cutting edge. This must have been obtained through Major Mitchell's party.

Among the natives which visited us today, I noticed three characters. One was an exceedingly aged man, his white hair as the driven snow, and was remarkably active. Another man was tall and well- proportioned excepting his arms, which from the shoulder downwards had no appearance of muscle and no bigger than a gun barrel. The third man was a native whose locality is supposed to be on the River Lachlan or Morumbidgee; this supposition arises from the fact of his having a tooth extracted from one side of his mouth.

8th October 1844

The supply which the native must have in these regions of game must be very scanty, as nothing scarcely ever larger than the bandicoot is seen. The sweet although monotonous note of the dove is heard in almost every tree, it is a beautiful delicate bird of a fawn color. I have all the father in me yet, which I discovered about ten minutes since; in walking some distance from the camp by the lagoon's bank, I observed on the opposite side three or four families of natives, watching and wondering at what they saw. What stirred me was—there were two or three children, about the size of my boy William, perched upon the shoulders of their fathers, their tiny arms encircling the head— what would I give to see my lad and his beloved mother—many long months yet before such a thing takes place.

9th October 1844

Early in our journey this morning many natives joined us, expressing the most lively astonishment, and we presume pleasure, at everything they saw; it puzzled them sadly about the wheels turning round. Mitchell's account of these tribes was that they were regular "fire eaters", the fact is he used them badly, and he had cause to dread them—so much so that had he proceeded further down the river, instead of turning back when he did, he would have never returned. We pursue a course of kindness towards them, and we find them altogether as friendly. The savage is as susceptible of kindness, and perhaps more so, than many Europeans.

11th October 1844

This morning our officer Poole was instructed to examine the country to and beyond the hills. A black fellow who belongs to the Wangarra tribe (or "Hill tribe") with the draughtsman (Stuart) accompanies him. It seems Mr. Eyre came up as far as this but through ill health was obliged to return, and Major Mitchell traced the Darling down as far as this, and this latter gent speaks of ponds near, and gives them the name of "Laidley's" Ponds.

Laidley's Ponds

What these ponds are like Mr. Poole will have to ascertain. It is on the assumption that a water course flows from the NW into these ponds that from this point the struggle to get into the interior is to be made. The natives however give a most miserable account of the country in the direction we want to go.

During the morning word was brought that a number of natives were making for the camp-orders were immediately issued to make all things ready and snug and stand to our guns.

Our alarm was soon suppressed—true a numerous body of natives soon made their appearance, but they consisted of females and children; such a mark of confidence in us was altogether unlooked for. There were two or three men accompanied them. Our guns were laid in their places and we were soon busy in sharpening for their spades, and making them grubbing hooks.

A certain quantity of blankets were given, and these interesting ladies were regaled with tea, the "younger branches" with sugar. The ladies were not black but yellow, and any mortal thing but handsome.

We were visited with a short but very heavy storm of rain, thunder and lightning—but little as it lasted, it has caused us an annoyance, for we cannot move anywhere, but the bottoms of our shoes are at once clogged with the saturated soil. Even under the paws of our dogs it forms into a crust which is difficult to remove. In the wet season, our route must have been impassable.

14th October 1844

About 4 p.m. the camp was put all astir through hearing at some distance a native most terrifically shouting—as the fellow drew nearer, we could distinguish the words "Jacky, Jacky" mixed up with the words, "Tomahawk Flour". Our surprise was not lessened when the native, who was accompanied by two other fellows, ran into the camp holding up in his hand a packet—but nothing could be got out of him but "Jacky-flour and tomahawk". It was a dispatch from the Governor to Sturt, in answer to the dispatch sent from us, relative to the supposed murder.

18th October 1844

The flag that had been stolen was returned, through the prepossessing; a few locks of white hair at the sides of his head and otherwise quite bald; a high fine forehead; his manners are quiet, unobtrusive and dignified. He appeared this morning wearing a very fanciful head the "Pinkoe", netted so as to form a strip of black and a strip of white.

A plume of feathers was fastened on the top, and pendent from behind were a kind of tails, as are the tails from a councillor's wig. Another man accompanied him wearing one somewhat similar but destitute of any appendages—this latter one I obtained in exchange for a cotton nightcap. The old man gave his to Sturt, receiving a knife in exchange. The natives brought us two Pinkoes—I skinned them. Its color was blue fur on the back and white behind; ran like a rabbit; the buck was as large as a hare, the doe somewhat smaller; it had a snout similar to the pig; its feet marsupial; the young are protected in a pouch.

Waterhole in a creek near the ranges (Yanco Glen area)

30th October 1844

Having during the night got into a sweat, I felt this morning better, but still very sick—and dreadfully depressed in spirits; here the lot of the sick man will be deplorable. The article of death has no terrors; although I am an unfaithful, sinful creature, the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin yet the mind recoils in contemplating the passage to the tomb under the present circumstances—the association, the indifference "if you live, you live; if you die, it will be a feed for the wild dogs—but I will not give way to this. God is all sufficient—Oh may I be able to abide in his Love.

About 8 a.m. we again started; the bullocks all right, and having occasionally some good ground to travel over, we got on pretty well. About 12, having kept near the creek the most of the day, we again fell in with water; we here brought up and rested the cattle, and got some

refreshment ourselves. Black fellows had not long left, as there was appearance of a fire, not long extinguished, under the tree where we for the time sat. I picked up a stone tomahawk, without its handle—it was a stone about 6 inches long, 2 wide and 2 thick, in shape similar to an American axe; it is fastened into a stick with gum.

About 2 p.m. we again moved away, and about 5 came to a water hole in the creek. It has been a toilsome dusty journey. We at this place fell in with three natives, at first full of fear but after a little they became quite at home. They were fine looking fellows—one of them was the chief of the tribe.

31st October 1844

The botanist would find much here to please him; several flowers of the most lovely hue, but without smell, we found near our camp; the potato in abundance. The range which we have been hugging the bases of runs in NE and SW direction; our present camp is about three miles distant. Our late journey has been about 60 miles—we shall remain some little time on this water till more is found ahead—the creek is wide and no doubt at seasons a great body of water flows down it. It is a sandy bottom generally, but here, where our water is, it is rocky—but it will not retain water very long.

1st November 1844

Mr. Poole and Mr. Stuart are away this morning to discover water, and make general observations in reference to the country ahead of us. We observe here tracks of the kangaroo; the wild dog, which hitherto has been almost a stranger, is frequently seen. Tuando and the other native who has been with us from Lake Victoria are again manifesting symptoms of discontent, and are wanting to return.

2nd November 1844

We now feel the want of vessels which would hold 40 or 50 gallons of water. The Captain is trying to get a machine (out of a tinned bacon case) made—he wants the seams soldered—so as he could take it in the cart, and be as a supply for his horses. I spoke of it as being necessary a soldering iron, with rosin and solder, should be obtained before we left Adelaide "It would be no use," was the reply. The seams of the case were plastered with white lead and putty. It often causes me to smile at the little jealousies which shew themselves among some of the party.

Some of our party on looking after the bullocks fell in with some native females, they are described as being very good looking. One of them had an infant, and it was really a beautiful child for a native; one of our men, wishing to have it to fondle it, caused the mother to be alarmed, supposing that we wanted to deprive her of it.

16th November 1844

During the day we were visited by five natives two of them had visited us at the last camp—but we could scarcely recognize them, their having had their beards plucked off. The three others were miserable looking creatures—I observed the scarifications on their bodies, different from any I have seen before.

The scarification which passed in lines across his belly and stomach were no bigger than a large size thread. One was an old man who was very anxious to see my flesh, to draw a comparison between it and his own. After getting some food they passed down the creek to where their females were.

6th December 1844

By calculations we are supposed to be about 10 miles to the boundary of South Australia—we see no natives, all round us seems a deserted waste. Mr. Flood and Moses who

accompanied him have returned; they have fallen in with a good supply of water; in their journey they saw some native females and some children-water fowl in abundance.

Near Flood's Creek

12th December 1844

The black boy who has accompanied us, Tam-pi-wam-or Bob, is an inoffensive good lad, and has now to look after the sheep when in camp; he, on coming home this morning, informed us of having seen natives. Soon after we observed two females on a spur of the range at the back of our camp. The Captain with Bob went after them to get them to the camp-but it was no go-after many manoeuvres on the part of Sturt he desisted from following them and left it to Bob, who very soon managed to come up with them, and to engage their notice he gave them his knife. Soon after other natives joining them they ventured to come to the camp-we passed out and met them—their party consisted of three women and an infant, also four men. They were emaciated, pitiable-looking objects, half-starved in appearance; they were small in stature.

One of the women was the principal speaker, she was the best condition of any of them, there was some small quantity of flesh about her – she appeared to tell us which of the women was her daughter, which she did by placing her hand to her breast and lifting it, at the same time placing her other hand on the shoulder of the deathly looking female who had an infant at her back. This poor young mother shook and trembled while her child kept up a constant cry.

The two elder ladies displayed signs of age, in their decayed teeth. As for the men, they never opened their mouths as they walked to the camp – I could not compare them to anything more appropriate than to men fettered, and going to the gallows – they had hold of each other's hands and their heads were resting on their breasts. There was no movement with them but what was absolutely necessary to get themselves along with; their eyes rolled about in every direction, in coming in to the camp.

We conducted them to a near gum tree under which they sat. Piesse brought them some mutton—they began to eat it raw as it was—we made them a fire, and signed to them to cook it. It is true the meat went on the fire, but it soon came off again.

One of the women, having on her piece of meat a bit of fat, held it to the mouth of a young man who sat next to her—he tore away at it with his teeth like a first rate tiger. Their shyness after a while in some measure wore off, but they appeared to be surprised at nothing; they were past curiosity—I observed round the waist of one of the men a belt, the thickness of a good sized rope; it was composed of human hair and fur mixed-beautifully interwoven; he presented it to me, but I refused it. The only weapons—I saw with them— was a stone tomahawk-and poor made boomerang.

They were sadly diseased, one could well suppose they were the last of the race. Poor creatures, what is Man in his fallen state, where is the image of their Maker? These people are less enviable than the Brute as to their natural condition.

They left us, signing they would return, busy in repairing the dray wheels; the tires having got loose, we endeavoured to contract them by first heating them and then cooling them with water, but we did not make a very good job of them. No tools.

A grass bearing a grain not unlike the wheat is found here-the appearance is just similar to smutty wheat—it has 4 or 5 grains enclosed in a husk when ripe, and probably farinaceous.

17th December 1844

Sullivan and myself received instructions to again move off in search of birds. We took provisions for three days and were to run down the creek as far as we could find water. It being very hot we did not leave the camp till near sundown. Following down the creek about 5 miles, it lost itself on the plain, and again formed about 3 miles to the westward.

Finding water we encamped for the night. Some little distance we observed the fires of the natives, we had no reason to fear them; coiling ourselves under a peppermint tree, we soon fell asleep.

22nd December 1844

Sunday. The natives have not returned, as they use to understand; I can imagine their pleasure, when they found themselves free from us. I have no doubt on my mind, but they take us to be supernatural beings, similar to the idea entertained by the southern tribes, that the European is a returned from the grave, and in consequence of the change has become white.

On December 28th 1844 the expedition left Flood's Creek camp moving north easterly. The men had to cross numerous sandhills and timbered areas in the Packsaddle Creek area before reaching the east side of Mount Arrowsmith

The country adjacent to this creek is subject to great inundations; in crossing the plains in coming here I observed the foot print of the native inches deep. The country is a barren waste. Some miles to the W of us is a range of hills, trending away to the N. The flow in the creek is from the West to the East. Native fires are seen, but no natives.

Near us are a group of huts extremely well-constructed, being made so as no rain can penetrate them. Sticks being bent in the form of an arch interwoven with twigs, on which is plastered mud and sand, which from the heat becomes hard and durable. The entrance of the biggest hut was 4 feet in height, in the centre it rose about 15 inches, then to the back it gradually declined, the distance from the opposite bases about 9 ft.—altogether it is a snug affair; there were several smaller ones for the children.

7th January 1845

Late in the afternoon we were again on the move, keeping a northerly direction, a range of hills to the trending a parallel course which we were moving on. Some 4 miles travelling brought us on a creek in which we found a good supply of water; the country everywhere as sandy and miserable as the mind can conceive. Sometime after night closed in we encamped on a creek where we obtained a very scanty supply of water.

Evelyn Creek

8th January 1845

At daylight we were on the road—the sandy nature of the ground makes it heavy work for the drays. About 11 in the forenoon we brought up on a creek, where we encamped, with a full supply of water, the flow being from the westward. Terrific torrents must fall in these latitudes, as we perceive in almost all the creeks we pass, left in the branches of the gum trees, some 10 and 15 yards from the surface of the banks, drift timber which has been washed down by the occasional floods.

Native fires were burning near this water, but not a native could be seen. One of their dogs was perceived cooling itself in the water; its masters were not far off, as it frequently stole down to drink to the imminent peril of its life. Master Serjy was lazy, to which it probably owed its safety.

Trapped at The Depot

19th January 1845

Sunday. My sight no better, but having turned out very early, I was less bothered with the flies and got all my birds secured – they certainly look well, it is a great pity I have no paper to place them in; all I can do is to sew a piece of paper round the body to fasten the wings. During the attendance of the black boy on the sheep while they were feeding, five natives came up to him, and were quite friendly, they examined the boy's clothing, and manifested a deal of wonder.

We went where he had left them, but they were gone—however Lewis who had been away getting the bullocks together, on his return home, some six miles from the camp, observed six men and one woman; they tried to avoid him, first laying down their spears and some large flat stones, which they were carrying perhaps to their camp to beat the seeds which they eat into a powder. They were well proportioned and muscular, though short in stature.

20th January 1845

The weather has been very much cooler this last day or two which renders it much more pleasant. We find abundance of feed on the numerous creeks for our tea having been reduced, one of the few comforts we can enjoy, we avail ourselves of a wild mint which is found in the creeks, which does middling. The comet has become invisible. Tracks of emu being plentiful, two of our men started off this morning to endeavour to waylay them, as the birds would be coming to drink. Lying in ambush in the creek some time, they got tired of watching, and on getting up from the creek they surprised two middle-aged natives, a man and woman.

Our chaps came so suddenly upon them that for a moment they could not move for fright—after a little they uttered the most dreadful shrieks, the woman ran to hide herself behind her companion, when he lifted his hands as in the act of pushing back—as much as to say do not come nearer; on our fellows approaching nearer he smote his head and temples with his clenched fist, and as a last resort the woman ran round the man with her fire stick and setting fire to the grass, which burned in a small circle round them, ceasing not an instant in crying and that too most dolefully.

The men still coming nearer they became almost lost, their fright assuming the most fearful aspect, and the woman managing to make another circle of larger dimensions, they hoped they should be more secure.

Out of pity our men left them. The most unquestionable evidence is here given that we are looked upon as beings of another world by these children of the wastes. The conduct of the natives with whom Lewis came in contact yesterday – their fearless approach—evinces much natural courage. We know by the records of the late European Age, what terror our old fashioned fore-fathers experienced when they supposed themselves in presence with a brocaded old Lady Ghost—compare an European with these wild creatures, the one possessed of principles, in a less or greater degree, which would in some measure regulate his passions—the other altogether the creature of impulse and passion. This shews or gives us some idea, in the recited cases, of absolute fear, and marked natural courage.

21st January 1845

Poole in this journey fell in with a considerable body of natives, men, women and children, about thirty. Moses, who was with Poole, being a little in advance first observed them on the opposite bank of a creek which Poole was running down.

Getting off his horse (of which they were extremely frightened) he made signs to them to come over to him, which after some considerable hesitancy they complied with, the men sending over two women. As soon as they came to Moses he squatted down—the females immediately did the same—but the signs which they made, Moses could not understand one of them.

After some pantomimic confab he rose up and taking them by the hand led them across to their party. Moses then got some sugar and damper, and first ate some himself and then offered it them. They came one by one, extending their capacious jaws to get a supply—these mouths of theirs are no small bread baskets then came the ladies, then the children.

Poole on joining Moses expressed terrible fear, he is a rank coward, but perceiving no offensive weapons, he plucked up his courage. Moses wanting a fire stick, four women were sent with it, not one of the men daring to cross over. One of the females was particularly attentive and courteous to Mr. Poole.

When first seen by Moses, these natives were busy in preparing food from a seed which grows on a low grass and is found somewhere in great abundance. They have a large flat stone, on which they pour the seed from their hand, and with a round stone smash it as it falls—it forms an oily kind of food not very unlike linseed would be if it was so bruised.

These natives were in good condition; the men, though small, were well proportioned, as were the women; the children were healthy and robust.

24th January 1845

The Captain returned after a hot struggling journey – he pushed as far N as he could, an immense pine and acacia scrub with no water stopped him—his hopes of an inland sea in this direction are become very low. It is a fearful desert, they experienced the heat to be dreadful—the glass standing 155, in the sun—rather hot. A few natives were disturbed in a scrub; they scampered off leaving everything behind them, kangaroo and wallaby rugs, and baskets; the spears were found stuck in the ground.

In leaving the camp, the Captain hung a knife on one of the spears, and in returning some two days after he again passed the spot—the natives had returned, and had taken their things away which were not very near the spear on which the knife was hung, but everything was left around this fearful object, for there still swung the knife.

25th January 1845

Passing upwards gathering seed, and during the afternoon got to the Depot. We found the Captain and his party had returned; they, it seems, could get but a very little further N than before. The heat was exceedingly great, the glass being occasionally as high as 150.18 According to the arrangement Flood and Stuart had remained at the last water hole, while the Captain with his favorite Joseph, taking the water cart—for so it was but nothing was effected the Captain returned, leaving Joseph at the water hole while he with Flood and Stuart pushed westward, the country everywhere being desolate sandhills.

They, however, fell upon one little spot which from the surrounding country must have been as an oasis, it was a plain surrounded by sandhills five or six miles in length and one or two

in breadth, dotted with stunted gum trees. In this plain terminated a water course, in which they found a small supply.

The unextinguished fires of apparently numerous body of natives were found here.

Sturt decided to build a house at the Depot.

28th January 1845. The Captain has determined to form a depot on this water—from hence he hopes to be able to finish his work, which will be done with the horses. All we want is rain. As it is likely we shall remain here some months, Mr. Poole is determined to have a comfortable place to pass his time in; nothing must do but it must be an underground affair, so hurrah for picks and shovels, for the spot he has chosen is as hard as baked clay and stones can be it is to be 7 feet deep—16 feet wide and 12 feet long. The men not very particularly engaged were set to work—having birds to skin—I could not be among the number; the thing has caused a great deal of grumbling

29th

Getting up very early I finished my birds, so as it should not appear I did not wish to share in the toil with the other men; although I was under a partial course of medicine, when the work for the day commenced I was with them; I wish if possible to disarm the grumblers of any shew of reason on their part that through my work I unfairly wish to get exempted from the unpleasant work of the camp.

30th

Busy at the house my hands in blisters with using the pick. 31st. The last day of the first month I hope the first day of the 10th month I shall pass with my family. Busy all the spare hands, at the pick and shovel.

1st February. The heat is dreadful, not being the clear out blazing heat, but the close searching burning that enters into and passes through every nerve, which totally unfits a person for any exertion, the wind comes upon us charged as from a furnace ten times heated—it betokens thunder. Poole's house gets on but slowly. .

5th February

Having dug out the hole, we must now provide the roof. It is highly probable the Captain would have had some sort of dwelling place erected, to have freed him from the inconvenience of his marquee during the time we locate here, but such an out of the way concern of which Poole is architect never would have been thought of had not Poole determined to be very comfortable, careless at whose expense. The labor of digging has been great, but 35 trees are to be sawed, some of them more than 2 foot through. At this work we have been these last two or three days and it has right well tired us. 6th. We have laid the timber over the hole, and sufficient it is to bear up 500 tons. 7th. Covered the top over with brush wood and then mixed up mud and well plastered it, after which all the soil dug out was thrown over the whole. I must say it is a very unique looking dwelling house. Poole has been cursed, most dreadfully cursed.

13th February 1845

Busy this morning in gathering seeds—we found here the cucumber and the french bean, both of which were very small, but perfectly similar to the cultivated ones. The sweet jessamine was in full flower, scenting the air around. We perceived a smoke away to the S, indicating Natives.

Having got all things packed, we passed down the banks of the creek, hoping its course would be easterly, but we soon found it trending away to the S—however, still following it down, we found it broke out in a great number of channels spreading over a large plain. The consequence of this dispersion is it leaves a rich and plentiful deposit, causing a luxuriance even now in the feed unknown in the other districts we have visited; here it was quite like a harvest field. The seed which supplies the native with a nutritious food grows here in the season in great quantities. In every hollow we found the remains of the natives' labor in the shape of straw, from which they had beaten out the seed.

Passing in and about the plain we found the creek again formed, but after three or four miles a high sand ridge gives a direct southerly direction to the creek. We still followed it and soon came upon another water hole, the appearance of which caused a pleasing impression on the mind. It was not very large, but the banks were thickly lined with the Box tree, and gently sloped down to the water's edge.

Numerous bodies of waterfowl were sailing about—some were asleep. Seeing so much game and so unexpectedly, the Doctor eagerly got his gun, and all eager, he let fly amongst a lot. The report not only frightened the ducks, but also two native women, which were encamped in a bend of the creek, unaware of our approach. One of the women began to scream and bellow, the other crawled under a skin dragging a child with her. Being afraid to run, they made a virtue of necessity.

The Doctor was of course rather surprised at the scream, but having made himself familiar, and sitting down at their fire, the women became less afraid, and began to talk. No one can tell the pleasure I felt in again looking upon a strange human face, it being so long since any but our own party having come under my notice.

These women were far from prepossessing even for a native low forehead, sunken (remarkably so) eye, and the hair on their head like a brush. We encamped, and Flood having shot a bird, I speedily secured it, saving the fat for the natives, with which they grease themselves. As the day was closing in, two men with more women and children joined us, and we all together were quite at home. The ducks, and other birds which we had, we gave them; this with the roots they had brought would be a first rate meal for them.

Sitting down as we were all together, the various parts of our dress came under notice. Among other parts, our boots were very wonderful, the mysterious lace—one chap was turning over my foot when I drew up my trowsers and shewed him my leg, and the effect of my thus exposing the color of my unexposed limb, which was tolerably fair, upon one of the females was really laughable—every lineament of her face was marked with horror.

Shewing them how the lace was unfastened, the fellow who was dandling my foot as if it was a little baby, at once began and drew the lace from every hole. I then made signs to him how it could be pulled off, which with my assistance he did; then came another poser—the sock—did it belong to my veritable body?

On pulling it off, my foot being almost white, this set the woman (who had been eagerly watching every transition, from boot to sock, from sock to foot) to a most fearful scratching of her head, and at the same time crying a lament over me, for it is possible the color which takes place in any of their dead, is not

dissimilar to the color which was now presented. The man too for a moment in deep wonder, and as he looked he too scratched his poll, and gave two very decent grunts, he then began to pull the sock on again, but could not manage it.

It getting dark, and being no doubt anxious to get their evening meal, for they were pointing to their birds and at the same time patting their bellies, they were presented with a blanket and knife of which they were highly pleased; not but what they had first rate skins, some of the best I have ever seen, so large and so well prepared. We retired from their fire, and soon were coiled in our blankets, where we had not been long before four of the ladies came and sat themselves down at the Doctor's and Captain's feet. Their visit was obvious, and on being sent away they were solely displeased.

Exploration to the east of The Depot

14th February 1845

The Captain being anxious to determine the course of the creek broke away early, and kept its banks. We found it trending to the south. We found the country very sandy, ridge after ridge intercepting us. We pushed on some seven or eight miles, sometimes almost losing the creek, when it opened out into a very extensive lake, I should imagine eight miles or more in circumference. One is led to conjecture, this is one (of which for what we know there may be others) of the reservoirs of all the water which flows down so many creeks, yet it now contained not the least water, and was bounded by sand ridges.

In the creek, which retains its character a very considerable distance towards the centre of the lake, we found a species of the melon, growing on a most luxuriant beautiful vine, not in ones and twos but in thousands. Its size was no bigger than the first joint of one's thumb, its taste a most pungent bitter, the facsimile of the water melon in shape. As the course of the creek was lost, the Captain instructed Joe and I to remain while he and Doctor and Flood examined the other parts of the lake.

On again joining us we moved back again to our last water hole, where we found more natives had arrived, they were four men, nine women and six children. One of the men belonged not to this tribe, for he was not circumcised, and had his front tooth extracted. Our horses were a source of great dread to them.

Again we shot them birds, and gave the uncircumcised native a tomahawk, hoping if he belongs to any tribe with whom we may yet be brought in contact this gift might cause a favorable impression on their minds.

The Doctor, having studied the construction of the language of the native generally, detected many words similar to the Darling tribes, which may possibly be of the same meaning. It is supposed we are about 180 miles from the river. We were turned in for the night, and all was quiet, save now and again was heard the talking of the natives, who had removed to the other side of the creek to be away from the horses, when all at once we heard the squalling of the children.

This we thought but little of till we saw a lot of fire sticks approaching us across the creek. What could the natives be up to was the question; it boded no harm was evident by their bringing fire sticks. It was six ladies, who were coming on a visit to us; on their arrival, they quietly placed each their fire stick on our fire, one remaining at it, the other five sitting down one at the foot of each of our blankets. At seeing their motive, they were told to be off to their squalling children.

When they knew we would not let them stop, they abused us as roundly as so many Billingsgate Fish Fags. This act of theirs evidently was through fear, their visit to propitiate, for though so free they were in great awe of us.

11th May 1845

Sunday. A new parrot having visited us this morning six were brought me, with a white hawk. While engaged in skinning under my dray, I heard a strange "cooie"—the dogs were alive in a moment, bounding furiously away towards the place where the sound came from. I hastened across the creek, where I found a poor native defending himself from their fury. As soon as I came to him he threw his arm round my waist for protection, and thus linked to me, I brought him to the marquee.

He is all wonder, and terror; of rather a forbidding countenance. However, after a while he became more composed and assumed rather a homelike look, as if he intended to do justice to our mutton, off which he has most enormously regaled himself.

Towards night, he being afraid of moving far away from his fire on account of the dogs, we supplied him with firewood for the night, as well as some sheep skins.

12th May 1845

Sturt, Doctor and Bob the native belonging to us have gone this morning to the eastern water hole. The strange native is becoming quite at home and comfortable. He gives us to understand his name is Pappas—we hope to be able to make something out of him as to the country ahead.

The Captain returned; he had understood from signs which the natives he fell in with made that no rain would fall for some time. After the Captain had refreshed himself, he exhibited to Pappas an illustrated work of the Natural History of New Holland. The black fellow seemed very pleased at the pictures, and with some of the illustrations he seemed to be quite familiar, indicative of his knowledge of the originals, especially some sorts of fish.

This has given a fresh impetus to the Captain's opinion of a large body of water before him. The boat to him, from his gestures and signs, seemed for the purpose of traversing the water, which might be in a large body further ahead. He pointed to the WNW, but what almost counteracted the opinion which was thus formed, that when the fellow was directed to the quarter where we knew no large body was, he indicated just the same as towards the point of which we as yet know nothing.

Building the cairn

15th May 1845

Pappas has become fat; he gets crows, hawks and mutton. Although poor Poole is so very ill, he plans out work for us—today we have commenced to build a pyramid on a hill distant about four miles to the NE of the camp. It is to be of stone, twelve feet high and ten feet round the base. Our boots suffer fearfully through the stones which are as so many knives.

16th

Busy rearing the stone work of the pyramid. 11 " oz. of bread per day gives us but little strength to lift stones in their place of 4 and 5 cwt, which has to be done.

17th

Pappas left us this morning; I never saw in so short a time such an improvement in the species (Homo) as is observable in this fellow—his cheeks from being sunk and hollow are become well filled the paunch of him as protuberant as that of a moderate sized alderman.

We have finished the pyramid; on its SE side we have deposited a bottle, containing our names, the time we have been detained here, the constant absence of danger and alarm, our future destination, when able again to travel

22nd May 1845

Poole gets worse. I should like to be one of the party who will be appointed to return with him, for it is not the inconvenience or danger of our position, but the sad and sickening association which makes me long again for my much loved home and the dear beings who constitute its charm. Contemplating my further absence, the Husband and the Father are rife within me, how dearly shall I value my privileges when I shall be restored to their enjoyment. My companions are most of them shut out from the holy associations of women, and vent their hate to those who are thus blessed by traducing them, thinking they are swayed only by passion and lust—they little know the depth of woman's purity.

The black boy as usual had this morning taken out the sheep. Hour after hour passed on over the usual time of his return, but Tampiwam did not come home.

Parties were sent after him, and when he was found he was up the creek, the sheep coiling around him, and the poor lad was amusing himself with making womeras.

I have often thought of the black fellow Pappas who last visited us. He with his tribe must have water somewhere. When the Captain was returning home from his last trip, the tracks of black fellows were Pappas might have been one; never having seen a horse the observed running the tracks of the horses. impression of its hoof would surprise him; it is possible his curiosity led him to follow it up to ascertain what sort of beast it could be; in doing so, before he was aware, he was on our encampment, and was prevented from stealing away unobserved, by getting surrounded by our dogs. If when he did leave us he could have been tracked, we might have fallen in with water and perhaps we might have pushed ahead – as it

Departure from The Depot, Piesse dies

July 17th 1845

This morning we arrived early at it, it had moved but little more than 3 miles, the travelling was so bad for the bullocks. Piesse's order to return to Adelaide was confirmed; I received orders to pass on to the home party's drays and bring back Serjeant—it was a work of little time ere most of the party moved back again on the Depot where the remains of Poole lay.

I was to get a horse from there, however, when I came I found my dog had returned, and right glad I was to see him. What surprised us was to observe the creek full of water even to the banks, it must now be near 20 feet deep—much more rain must have fallen to the westward, than what we experienced. It was a pleasing sight, such a provision for our future wants.

The painful duty of interring Mr. Poole engaged our attention, a grave had been dug for him at the foot of a honeysuckle acacia, his face towards the interior. His mattress was laid in the bottom; the poor fellow, being sewed up in his sheet, was tearlessly and silently lowered in his wild, wild tomb, the Captain reading the Service. Many of the men manifested such

callousness and indifference as made me sick at the heart. I stood at his foot, and could have wept, but the fountain seemed sealed; he had passed out of life cursing and swearing; it was a melancholy scene.

Chaining to the west toward "Lake Torrens"

26th July 1845

Where is the creek is the question; strange in so short a distance they should be thus hobbled. Flood and Stuart were sent off to scour the country in search of it—we remained in camp. As evening drew we heard the "cooie" of the native but he kept away. It must now be their hunting season; we observe continually their tracks. Having water everywhere, they are not confined to the locality of a single water hole. Flood and Stuart returned but have not found the creek.

27th

Yesterday we again entered the Province of South Australia so they say. We are to remain stationary, until the creek is found; the Captain and Flood started early in search of it. Did I not know that the eye of the Lord is over me, I should feel very uncomfortable, for these discrepancies in Sturt's calculations induce distrust.

At last the creek is found—but where? Just 30 miles to the westward of the point which was determined for us to make— a longitudinal error of 30 miles, in a latitudinal distance of 60 miles.

1st August 1845

Friday. We have chained 46 miles from last Monday. No perfect picture can be conveyed to the mind of the desolateness all around us, sand ridges and hollows. With the heavy chain we have often to wade up to our knees in a liquefied mud sufficiently consistent to make it like pulling up a 50 lb. weight at each foot. Very little timber, it being either a stunted acacia or the prickly spinifex. A break in the scene was the sight of an unknown but most beautiful flower, strange to me. Although in full bloom it was a beautiful green color.

Also we disturbed some natives. There were three; two succeeded in getting away, but the third did not. They were dreadfully frightened, however, the one who remained with us soon became familiar, and on our bringing up for the night he encamped very near us. After some time the other two runaways joined him, they really are apparently very civil nice sort of folks—rather well made men.

They were curious and full of surprise. I had my belt and pouch round my waist; they wanted sadly to examine it; on my unbuckling the belt and opening the pouch, the book which it contained at once drew forth an exclamation. My little Bible was handled by them with the greatest care, the turning over the leaves took their fancy most wonderfully, as did a little bit of green leather. When one had satisfied himself, the other overhauled it.

Whenever will these benighted tribes be brought out of their awful mental darkness, and be able to appreciate the blessings of the Gospel? I dare not say never—for God's word forbids it—but their condition staggers one—that ever such a consummation can be. These men are on a hunting expedition, their bags filled with jeboas and bandicoots. One man actually ate 70 Jeboas before he left off, just flinging them on the fire, and burning off the fur, and giving them a squeeze, they were deposited in the mouth, and as soon as it was disposed of another was ready.

2nd August 1845

Today eight more natives joined us. At first they would not come near us; the Captain rode towards them—that made matters worse, but on his dismounting and seating himself they at once came up and sat down too. The horse was however removed some distance—they dread our horses more by far than they do us. A knife was offered them, which after some considerable degree of hesitancy they accepted.

Return to the previous general camp (Fort Grey)

15th August 1845

This creek flows in from the eastward, rising in a range running north. Although the soil is sand, and most probably would grow no one vegetable, it is as much an oasis as can be found in any desert in Africa. Two natives came to the camp, they were very good looking friendly fellows. One of them had an English tomahawk, worn nearly to the eye they must have obtained this through either Mr. Eyre or Captain Frome, who presented it to some tribe they fell in with in making Mt. Hopeless. Very few birds are seen. My occupation is gone and I get kicked.

21st August 1845

Engaged in cutting logs for the stockade and minding the sheep. A native visited us with his wife and two children, the youngest being no more than six weeks old. The mother was far from being bad looking. The man has been before at the camp; the poor fellow seemed very proud of his youngest child, it was a boy. We gave him some mutton fat, and he soon was very busy in reducing it in the frying pan and regaling himself and his wife with the hot fat. We observed with this family a small supply of seed, on which they must so much subsist. It has an acrid taste. They prepare it by dropping three or four seeds at a time from their hand upon a small stone, and smashing it with another stone into a semi flour, it is surprising how quickly they effect this with so small an apparatus. It may be occasionally mixed with water and cooked on the fire. Among the game he had caught during the day was a beautiful animal, in some respects like the "Jeboa" but several times larger, and having a long snout. Mitchell secured one, and represents it in his work with a stumped tail, whereas it has a very long tail, finished at its tip with fine bristles, as feathers grow on the quill. Sturt has been very anxious to get hold of this animal. I nicely secured it.

24th August 1845

Sunday. A few hours of rain – we hoped it would have been of longer continuance, so that Sturt might receive the benefit of it. If the same country continues over which he will have to pass, I question much if he will have a full supply of water, or even sufficient for his purpose. We observe all round us, where we found water on our first coming here, a very rapid disappearance.

Natives in ones and twos visit us but we have but little to give them to eat. Today two young fellows came in to the camp, the best made men I have ever seen since I have left the Darling; they were small but so full of action, eyes remarkably bright and restless

This evening as usual the Church service was read. What a system is Church of Englandism, that such offshoots of solemn mockery are by it recognized—
Papistry is before this!

15th September 1845

During the day several natives visited us but did not remain long. Killed an emu, the bird was very fat, which fat we tried down and got a quantity of oil. It is only at certain seasons of the

year any fat is found on them at all. When it begins to get secreted, the bird soon becomes so fat that when rendered down it amounts to two or three gallons of oil. It is very valuable. Mr. Stuart very unamiable.

16th September 1845

Again visited by natives. On their—leaving us we observed a bulkiness in the covering of one of them, which induced us to suspect they had stolen some of our clothing. It was indeed one of our jackets. The fellow gave it up without imagining perhaps he had done wrong.

30th September 1845

Today several natives visited us, some of them we have seen here before. They are remarkably keen and active, so much so they managed to secure a blanket on leaving us, they must have done it very adroitly as we ever keep a look out when thus visited that we lose nothing. A very little rain fell.

5th October 1845

Sunday. The Church Service read, during which three natives visited the camp—one of them we suspected to have been the thief who stole the blanket. He was given to understand, if he did not bring back the blanket the next time he was seen, he would be shot. He was very mute and quiet.

The Captain is very much cut up that he did not succeed in reaching the desired point—so much so, that he determines to go again. The Doctor has been trying to dissuade him, but to no purpose. There is no one who feels more devoted to Sturt than the Doctor, and was there any chance of success he would be the last man to throw any obstacles in the way.

6th October 1845

Today the blacks returned bringing with them the lost blanket, giving us to understand the thief had been punished for his roguery, they saying he was knocked down twice with a waddie, but they are so able to detect things that are pleasing or otherwise to us, that I believe this is a positive lie. The Captain ordered the thief a knife for bringing it back, no sooner receiving which all his dullness vanished, and he resumed all that liveliness which before the theft he had been so remarkable for possessing.

9th October 1845

Three natives came to the camp, one man with two females, the man we knew having been frequently at the camp before. The women were strangers. The one was an extremely old lady, quite grey headed and I must say one of the most ugly old women I ever saw. The other was her daughter; though you could trace in many points a likeness, yet she was as positively good looking.

She was the handsomest woman I have ever seen in any one of the districts I have ever visited since I landed on the shores of New Holland. They did not stay long, but ere they went the Doctor ordered the male sheep to be killed, part of which was given to them, and the promise of the whole if they liked to come again and fetch it, but the natives appear just now, all of those who visit the camp, to be in good condition which no doubt they will be as long as the waters last, for they now can traverse these wastes anywhere, and jeboas, wallaby, dipus and other game are found in abundance. They no doubt this part of the year live principally on flesh. When, from the want of water, they are tied to one or more localities, seed must constitute their principal food. With the natives here with whom we have been

brought in contact a very pleasing difference is observed, from those we fall in with to the east of the late Depot—these natives manifest much care and attention to their wives and children.

There is even a spirit of jealousy lest other intercourse than what should be, should exist between ourselves and their families. In the character of their food they are very particular. If such should be in the least tainted or fly blown, they throw it away, and on receiving anything from us, they

13th November 1845

Today a female native and two children were observed hanging about the camp, wanting to come to the water, but afraid. On coming up to her, she made the usual sign for water, which is the throwing an open hand to the mouth. This poor thing was dreadfully exhausted, as were the children. We brought them down and supplied the poor thing with what food we could spare, and having filled two skins with water for her husband, who would he too lazy or too frightened to come near us, she pushed off, lugging one of the children at her back, for the poor little thing through walking had become footsore.

The main group return to Depot Glen and wait for Sturt to return from the interior.

Soon after he struggles back to The Depot the expedition retreat begins.

17th November 1845

Our surprise was great, our pleasure greater—the Captain today returned—but it was with extreme difficulty. The scurvy has laid hold of him, most fearfully. This journey of his has, I suppose, been a desperate affair. He has discovered a large creek – he followed it up more than a 100 miles, when it became indistinct. Large, immensely large plains opened out, over which, through the rottenness of the ground, he could not travel. The waters of this creek, when running, pass over those immense flats which Sturt crossed on his previous journey. A very numerous body of natives dwell on this water. They were extremely kind. This creek is the only thing of note to be observed on this journey. Coopers Creek.

Floods Creek area

13th December 1845

Very little water is where we have camped, but there is more further up – but we cannot take the drays nigher to it. We just rested about an hour or so, we then took the cattle and sheep to where the water was more plentiful, distant about three miles. In passing up the creek a numerous body of natives were on the heights above us, they kept up a long shout, but appeared friendly. When I got to the water, I availed myself of it and got some of the accumulated dirt from my body, for travelling in this country as we are travelling is no joke. My duties calling me to the camp I returned home from the water. As I was pushing down the creek I observed the natives drawn up before me. If they were so minded, they could have sorely bothered me, for I was perfectly in their power. I however walked up to them; they received me very kindly, and by signs begged to know if I would permit them to attend me to the camp, which I most graciously permitted. They were a stiff made lot of fellows. My dog Serjy happened to put his nose to a rat hole, he began at once to dig away at his usual ferocious rate. This caused the poor fellows high delight. One of them had a dog on his shoulder, Master Serjy no sooner perceived this gentleman placed on the ground than he pinned him by the throat.

He took it to be what it appeared, a wild dog. It was with great difficulty I could cause him to loose his hold. I almost feared the consequences; the native who owned the dog might revenge the attack on myself, but it turned out contrariwise, they saw what command I had over the ferocious Serjy, and it filled them with wonder.

Barrier Ranges

15th December

It being desirous to ascertain the nature of this creek, this morning the Doctor with myself, instead of accompanying the drays, started, instead of going over the range, to follow the bed of the creek, through the range. It was terrific work, the Doctor having two horses, and I had the sheep. It was a continuous mass of broken rock in the creek, and the sides stood up as walls on either hand.

It was wild scenery, wild as the wildest ever depicted by a writer of romance. What gave an interest to the scene, was the presence of that rare and beautiful animal known as the "Rock Wallaby." One jumped from before me, it appeared to have an iron grey back, black breast and a long sweeping tail. So rare are these animals, but few have ever yet been secured either dead or alive. We saw three who had become disturbed by us spring to the face of a precipice overlaying us, and how they could find a footing to spring as they did up its smooth face we could not account, but up they were, in less than no time, it was most astonishing. We at last broke through the range, and soon joined the drays, who were encamped on the creek which we had been running up.

In this creek we found a native fruit, a small berry. I gathered a great quantity. They proved highly acceptable to Sturt, who is becoming hourly worse. In the creek we passed a good deal of water, but most of it was salt. However, within a mile of the camp we found enough for our use, and within three miles sufficient for our cattle. Flood had been instructed to push ahead, to ascertain about the water.

17th December 1845

This morning Flood returned, he had found below our old camp, "Piesse's Nob," as we had called it, a little water. We started, it was a long and tedious journey, and it was not till daybreak on the 18th we reached the supply. It was brackish.

We disturbed a tribe of natives but they were very friendly; their friendship went beyond all legitimate bounds. We killed them a sheep.

Darling River

25th December Christmas day

We fell in with the natives whose faces we so well remember – especially the old man with so fine a head and countenance, who gave Sturt the head dress when we were encamped here the last time.

Murray River

6th January 1846

We made the Murray. We expected to fall in with old Nitebook, but a native told us he would fetch him. This native was the man who had speared Robinson, in the encounter on the "Rufus," a scene which I have before referred to, though at the time I did not mention that

the man who wounded Robinson was eventually secured, desperately wounded, having no less than five ball wounds.

The poor fellow was heavily ironed and fastened on a dray and taken into town. During this journey he was inhumanly treated, and a deed of daring done by this poor black is worthy of record, which was this: as the dray on which he had been fastened (for the lashings were at the time insecure) was passing upon the verge of the cliff overhanging the river, he quietly threw himself off, irons and all from the dray, and plunged into the river below, and would have escaped, but a native female betrayed him as he was secreted in a thick belt, of rushes, growing at some distance on the banks.

This morning he was telling us all about it and shewed us the ball wounds in the different parts of his body, and emphatically referred to Mr. Eyre as the man who had caused him to love the white fellow. During the day "Tuando" and Nitebook joined us.

28th January 1846
Arrived home