Dr. Mitchell.
L.C. 994.36
NOR

SKETCH OF A RESIDENCE

AMONG THE

ABORIGINALS OF NORTHERN QUEENSLAND

FOR

SEVENTEEN YEARS;

BEING A NARRATIVE OF MY LIFE, SHIPWRECK, LANDING, ON THE COAST, RESIDENCE AMONG THE ABORIGINALS, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR MANNERS AND CUSTOMS, AND MODE OF LIVING;

TOGETHER WITH

NOTICES OF MANY OF THE NATURAL PRODUCTIONS, AND OF THE NATURE OF THE COUNTRY,

BY

JAMES MORRILL.

QUEENSLAND:
PRINTED AT THE COURIER GENERAL PRINTING OFFICE, GEORGE-STREET.

1863.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Parentage—Education—Choice of Profession—Apprenticeship—My first long voyage in the Ramalees—Voyage to New Zealand and back—Shipped on Board the Peruvian.

I, JAMES MORRILL, was born on the 20th May, 1824, in the parish of Abridge, near Maldon, in the county of Essex, where my mother and father where also brought up from childhood before me. My father was a millwright and engineer by profession, and carried on his business in Swan Yard, in connection with an uncle of mine (James Hays.) I had one brother, older than myself, and three sisters, who were younger. When old enough, I was sent to the National School in the village; an old soldier was the schoolmaster, Mr. George Bridge, who, among other things, taught us the manual exercise, and frequently put us through our facings. Nothing particularly marked my school course worth mentioning: I was as often as most boys of my age ready for a fight or a game.

When I was about 13 or 14 years of age, and had acquired an ordinary education, such as was generally given in those days, and was old enough to be of use, I went with my brother to work in my father's shop. But I was of rather a restless disposition, the workshop was too confining for me, I was always glad of an opportunity to get away from it, if it was only for a day; I was particularly pleased if I could get amongst the shipping, the facility for which was great, as we lived so near the coast town, and so many small craft used to come up the River Blackwater, close to where I lived. Among the friends who used to visit my father's house was a Mr. James Firman, a pilot, who used to pilot the craft down the Blackwater River, at Maldon; I used frequently to go with him on the vessels he used to pilot out, and return with him in the pilot boat. Of course, I was only allowed to go in fine weather; the fine white sails and the beautiful sea used quite to ravish me—I was always wishing I could be a sailor—which I make no secret of. My father and mother used often to tell me that I should be glad to be at home again, which I found true enough in my after experience.

On one of those trips with the pilot the captain seeing me, a smart lad, enquired who I was, and asked the pilot whether I would like to go to sea, to which he replied that was just what I had wanted to do some time. He asked me if I would go with him, and on promising to buy me clothes and what I wanted in Shields, the place where he was bound for, I was only too willing to go. So without further consulting my father and mother, away I went on my first voyage, in the brig Royal Sailor, belonging to the Maldon Shipping Company.

The Captain was a very good man, he was a Wesleyan, and when on shore a local preacher of that body. Every night at eight o'clock, weather permitting, he used to call all hands together and read the Bible to us, after-

wards we sang a hymn, and he used to lead the prayers. He was a very kind man. I was engaged in the Cabin and about the decks doing duty as a cabin boy.

Everything went on right that voyage, and my ardour was not in the least abated to be a sailor. I went several voyages in her, and when I was 16 years old, I was bound apprentice to the Company, for four years. I served a part of my time in the Royal Sailor, and part in another of the Company's vessels, called the Duchess of Kent, a schooner. Nothing particularly happened while I was serving my time. We were once driven in bad weather to leaward of our port, and went into the Firth of Forth for shelter.

After I finished my apprenticeship, I joined my old skipper, Mr. Harlen, and went four voyages with him. But I became restless again, and began to wish I was on a larger ship, and that I could go a long voyage. I made known my wish and my determination to get a larger ship, and Mr. Henry May, who was agent to the Company gave me a present for good conduct, my discharge, and three letters of recommendation—one to the Sailors Home in London, and two to large shipowners With these I started by rail to London, and arrived there late in the afternoon. I gave a man 5s. to show me the way to the Sailor's Home, where I saw several notices on the notice board, among others a carpenter's mate was wanted for the Ramalees; I said carelessly that I would take it—having no intention of doing so—and some time afterwards went to bed. In the morning I heard some one asking for the man who was going as Carpenter's mate on the beforementioned ship. I said I did not mean it, that I had letters to certain gentlemen which I had not yet delivered, and they would get me a ship; but I was induced to give up my shipping ticket and consent to go. So without presenting my letters, I returned home to make up my outfit of clothing and tools. Everybody was very angry with me at home for acting so hastily, and told me it was a troop ship, and that I should be anything but comfortable in her. However having given up my shipping ticket there was no alternative, for the maritime laws affecting seamen were very severe.

All being ready, I left home and joined the ship at Deptford on a Friday. The following day we dropped down the stream and anchored at Gravesend. The next day Sunday we shipped the 11th Regiment of foot for Hobart Town, whither we were bound; and a detachment of the Royal Artillery, for Sydney, which was intended for New Zealand—the war having broken out in the Bay of Islands. We started on our voyage some time during the week, which we were six months in accomplishing.

All troop ships were forced to carry a double compliment of hands, so when arrived at Sydney one half of us were not wanted, I obtained permission to leave the ship, for I had not been long enough from home yet, and I was anxious to see and gain as much experience as possible. I then shipped on board a little schooner lying in the Cove, called the Terror, bound for Auckland, New Zealand; I made a successful trip in her to Auckland and back—we brought copper ore back with us—but its not being an easy job to get a cargo in those days, some of us were discharged—myself among the number.

There were several vessels in the harbour laid on for home, but I thought

I would not go home yet, so I shipped on board the ill-fated ship, Peruvian, bound to China, with a cargo of hardwood, with what result my readers will see.

CHAPTER II.

Voyage from Sydney to China—Shipwreck—42 days on the Raft—Reaching the land—Kind reception by the Natives—Death of Mr. Wilmott and a Seaman—Life amoung the Natives—Death of the Apprentice Boy, the Captain, and his Wife—Restoration to Civilised Life.

On Tuesday, the 24th February, 1846, I shipped on board the ill-fated ship Peruvian, Captain George Pitkethley, with a full complement of hands, and passengers, as follow:—Passengers—Mrs. Pitkethly, Mr. and Mrs. Wilmott, Miss Wilmott (an infant), and a young nursegirl; Mr. J. B. Quarry, and daughter, about six years old. Ship's company—The captain, the captain's brother (first mate), John —— (second mate), the carpenter, John Millar (sailmaker), the cook, James Dicks, James Gooley, Jack ——, and myself (able seamen); James Wilson, William ——, James ——, and another (apprentices); and two black men; the captain, officers, and apprentices were all of Dundee. I give the names as far as possible from memory, as there are no records in the Sydney Custom House of any but the passengers, and they are two short—the child of Mrs. Wilmott and nursegirl.

On Wednesday we finished loading, and dropped down the stream. On Thursday she was cleared at the Customs, and on the sailor's unlucky day (Friday), the mail came on board, with the pilot, and we started on our voyage, with a fresh leading wind, which lasted during that day and the next. On Sunday, stunsails, main-skysails, and every stich of canvas was set, till sundown, when the weather came on threatening. All the small sails were taken in and stowed, and the wind increased very much during the night. At eight bells on the Monday morning all hands were ordered on deck to shorten sail. We got her all snug. On the following day her fine weather sails all blew away, when we got new ones bent on. The bad weather increased till Friday, when every stich of canvas had to be taken off, and she drove under bare boles. The next day, Saturday, the weather shewed signs of breaking, and the captain got sights, but it was very thick. When it moderated we got a little sail on her, to keep her steady; and at night, during the first watch, the mate made more sail. The captain said that we were in the neighbourhood of Horse Shoe Reef, or the Minerva Shoal, and told us to keep a good look out for broken water. The first watch was relieved at 12 o'clock; I was in the second watch, under the charge of the second mate. I took the wheel from 12 to 2, when I was relieved by the eldest apprentice. Between the hours of 3 and 4 o'clock, we observed what appeared to be land or a dark cloud dead a-head of us. The second mate went down and told the captain, and immediately returned on deck; he had hardly done so, however, when she struck with great force on a rock, and the first sea that struck her

lifted her partly on the rock, and swept one of the boats and the second mate overboard, who was never afterwards seen. The next sea that struck her lifted her wholly on the top of the rocks, where she stuck fast; the first shock knocked her bilge off, and otherwise damaged her, that if she had been in deep water, she must have sunk quickly. The captain and all hands ran on deck in great confusion, most of whom were in their night-clothes, and finding that she was hard and fast on the rock, the sea still running very high, and not knowing where or how we were situated, we took shelter under the lea of the cuddy, till such time as we could see what was best to be done. At daylight a terrible scene presented itself, as far as the eye could reach there were the points of the rocks awash, but no friendly land in view. The captain ordered the jolly boat to be got over the side, as that seemed our only chance of escape. We hung her in the tackles, but no sooner lowered her within reach of the water than she stove to pieces in the broken water, and became useless. We now had only the long boat left, which was old and shaky. The captain ordered us to launch it over the side, which we did, intending to keep her there till we got the passengers and provisions into her, and then cut ourselves away. But no sooner was she put over the side than the spray and broken water filled her as she hung in the tackle. The captain ordered some hands into her to bail her out, but it was so unsafe that none would risk their lives in her excepting the first mate, who was the captain's brother. Before he had got out a couple of buckets the stern post was jirked out of her and left hanging in the tackles; at the same time the fore tackle got adrift; and she was carried away from the wreck with the force of the current. Lines were thrown out, but none reached him. There was a live sheep in the boat beside the mate. He then calmly sat in the bows of the boat, and bid good bye to his brother and sister, awaiting the will of God: presently he disappeared from sight, and was seen no more. He could not have lived long. Our position being now apparently hopeless, the captain called us all into the cabin, where we engaged in religious exercises, and commended ourselves to God in prayer. We then went on deck again, and discussed the propriety of making a raft; our chances of being picked up were so small, and not knowing but that we might be washed off our present resting place with the next sea, decided us in taking active steps in whatever we did. We accordingly set to work and cut away the spars of the ship, and fixed them—first the mizenmast, then the mainmast—but it was very difficult to make use of them, for they came down with the sails all flying, and they got very much entangled. With these and some small spars we had in-board, we had enough for our purpose. The large outside spars we rested partly on the rocks and partly on the wreck; we lashed and nailed them strongly together, and in the centre we fixed a mast and platform of light spars, to enable us to sit and lay out of the water. When finished, the next difficulty was to get it adrift. With great labour we managed to get it first off the ship's quarter on to the rock all safe, and then into the water, this we accomplished by middle day Sunday. We then began to look up the provisions, and to our dismay we found the bread all utterly spoilt with salt water, and the preserved meat, which we had previous piled on deck to put in the boats was nearly all washed overboard, unobserved in our confusion. To add to our

misfortune, there was nothing left whole that would hold water, excepting a small keg. All we could muster then was, a few tins of preserved meat, the small keg of water, and a little brandy. This being carried safely on the raft, and placed under the captain's charge, the ladies and children were got on, also the captain's instruments and charts, and some blankets and clothing. We were at last all on the raft, and it was our intention to stay by the wreck a few days. and if possible build a boat, as there were some boat planks aboard. During the night, however, the strength of the current and the dead weight of the raft caused her to part her moorings, and we were carried to sea. There were on the raft three ladies, two children, two gentlemen passengers, the captain, carpenter, sailmaker, cook, four able seamen, including myself, four apprentices, and two blackmen, stowaways, working their passage —in all 21 souls.

It was agreed that the stores should be given out equally amongst us, and that there should be no lots drawn to take away each other's lives. One tablespoonful of preserved meat a-day was served out, and the water was measured in the neck of a glass bottle, four to each person—the meat about 12 o'clock in the day; the water, one in the morning, two in the middle of the day, and the other in the evening. All went on as well as could be expected under the circumstances, for 22 days. The current and our small sail carried us about 40 miles a-day, at first we caught a few birds which were a great treat, their blood was greedily drunk, and their raw flesh eaten with gusto; but as we neared the land we caught none. The weather was fine throughout; in the daytime there would be a light wind, which died away at sundown. The captain took sights occasionally. On the 22nd day out we saw a sail in the distance, which kept in sight about four hours, but finally disappeared. we having no means of attracting its attention, which greatly disappointed us.

A few days after this the first man died (James Quarry), leaving his child to survive him for a short time; he said the day before that he was dying, and that he should not live long. As soon as he died he was stripped and thrown over, the sharks devouring him instantly before our eyes. The next day or so we caught a fine rock cod fish with a line and hook baited with a bit of white rag, which was cut up in equal parts and served out. We caught another fish smaller the next day, and another the following day. The preserved meat had all run out. It then rained, but the sail was so soaked with salt water that we could not drink what we caught till the salt was well nigh washed out of it. We managed to get enough to eke out our small store before it cleared up again. The sucking child of Mrs. Wilmot was the next to die, and shortly afterwards the other little girl, and next to her Mrs. Wilmot herself died. Her husband then took off what clothing she had on, which was only a night dress, and threw her into the sea, but he told us that if we were men we would not look at her; she remained in company with us longer than the others floating on the water, she was observed near us about 20 minutes. The burial service was read over each. At this time they dropped off one after the other very rapidly, but I was so exhausted myself that I forget the order of their names.

We next began to think how we should obtain food, our only fishing line had been broken and carried away. We had more hooks but no more line. There were plenty of sharks about and we tried to catch them.

The captain devised a plan to snare them with a running bowling knot, which we did as follows :—We cut off the leg of one of the men that died and lashed it at the end of the oar for a bait, and on the end of the other oar we put the snare, so that the fish must come through the snare to get at the bait. Presently one came, which we captured and killed with the carpenter's axe, we cut his head off and flayed him. The sailmaker was looking at its head and eating it, he put his hand in its mouth, which gave him a severe bite; he did not want any of that shark to eat, for he had quite enough by sucking his own blood, which he said had quite filled him, and was both victuals and drink too. The rest of us made a fine meal off him. Three days after that we caught another one in the same way, and with the same bait, which we cut up in strips and dried, which was much better. We then caught another and did the same with it. Our numbers by this time were very much reduced. Shortly after this we made the Barrier Reef; we came down upon it driven by a strong current: we managed after a great deal of trouble to get her clear over it in deep water before dark. Two days after this we came in sight of the land. Which appears to have been Cape Upstart. We were not a long way out at sea, and at night we passed it. Two or three days afterwards we saw the land once more, and were driven towards Cleveland Bay, but just as we were preparing to get ashore in the hopes of getting water, a land breeze sprung up and drove us out to sea again. During the night, however, the sea breeze drove us in shore once more, and eventually, about midnight, we landed on the Southern Point of Cape Cleveland. One or two tried to get water but were not successful, so we laid down on the sand and went to sleep. Presently it came on to rain which filled the holes in the rocks and we filled our tins. While on the raft the Captain cut a notch in a piece of wood every day, and on counting them there were 42; and of the 21 who left the wreck alive only 7 remained—the Captain, his wife, Mr. George Wilmot, myself, James Gooley, the sailmaker, and one of the boys.

In the morning when the sun arose, we washed and dried a piece of white rag; we then took a magnifying glass out of the spy-glass, set light to the rag, and made a fire. We then took some of the dried shark we had left, boiled it in a preserved meat tin, and ate it, with a drink of clear fresh water for breakfast, which we enjoyed much.

At low water the captain being the strongest, sallied forth in quest of food; he shortly afterwards returned for the axe, bringing a few rock oysters, which were very plentiful, sticking in large clusters to the rocks. Some of us managed to crawl and get a few and return to our camping ground, but being so long on the raft without exercise, it was very difficult to move about at first. We continued to do this for a few days, but Mr. Wilmot and the able seaman James Gooley were so exhausted, they lay down by a water hole and died, nobody being equal to provide for more than themselves. The Captain found in his rambles a native canoe and lines and spears of a fishing party of natives who had evidently been there lately in the rainy season. The sailmaker, Jack Millar, hearing of this, determined he would go away in the canoe, which he accordingly did the next morning, but we eventually knew he was starved to death on the shores of the next Bay, for the natives found his body and told us of him.

That same day he left or the next, as I and the Captain were going over a hill into the next bay, we saw a full rigged ship running down the inside channel, but not having the means of signalizing her we could only sit down and cast a longing eye at her, wishing we were on board. She soon disappeared out of sight. We then went and got some shell fish and tried to discover the tracks of the natives, but the rainy season had washed out all traces of them. We then returned with what we had got.

After we had been fourteen days on the shore we were seen by some of the natives. It appeared that for several nights they had observed falling stars in one particular direction—the direction of the rocks on which we were. They also it afterwards appeared have a kind of superstition in reference to falling stars, they think that they point out the direction of an hostile tribe. Something however more than usual possessed the minds of these blackfellows, and they bent their steps in the direction the stars fell, and came on to the coast, where they immediately discovered fresh made tracks, which they followed up till they came to a camp fire at the place where the boy had camped the preceding night. Indeed he had only just left. He had got two large boils on his leg, and he was not able to get to the general camping ground the previous night, but as soon as possible in the morning he came away; and it was a few minutes after he had gone, the blacks came on his track. They followed him up at a distance and saw him, but as there were so many tracks they did not come near nor show themselves, they tracked him down till he came to the Captain's wife—I and the Captain were out. They then arranged that one of them should stay in sight and the other two should go to the camp and bring some more—they brought about 20 or 30. When I returned in the evening, the Captain's wife said she had heard the natives jabbering and whistling; I did not think she had. When the Captain came home she told him, and while we were talking about it—about 10 minutes after the Captain came home—she heard the same noises again. She immediately jumped up and went outside to see what it was, she looked up on the rocks, and there, sure enough, she saw a number of the naked blackfellows. She exclaimed—"Oh George, we have come to our last now, here are such a lot of the wild blacks." We went out to see, and there they were. They were as afraid of us as we were of them. Presently we held up our hands in supplication to them to help us, some of them returned it; after a while they came among us and felt us all over from head to foot. They satisfied themselves that we were human beings, and hearing us talk, they asked us by signs where we had come from. We made signs and told them we had come across the sea, and seeing how thin and emaciated we were, took pity on us; they asked us as well as we could understand where we were going to sleep. We showed them in the rock. They came in with us, we were going to give them some of our things, but we found while we were engaged talking, some of the others had been in and eased us of everything. Eventually about 10 of the old men came in the cave-like hollow rock that we had made our camping place, to sleep with us, and they kept us separated by

laying between us. They kept up a constant jabber among themselves, which led to a second and more minute examination of our persons, to ascertain our sex, which seemed necessary to them on account of our being clothed. The captain's wife strongly resisted, but they persisted, and when they found we were like themselves—male and female—they were satisfied, and did not further interfere with us. They seemed to understand that the captain and his wife bore that relationship by their being always so close together, and they never afterwards troubled us. We got some light sleep during the night. At daylight the next morning, there was great commotion among the blacks, as to what should be done with us. There were present representatives of two different tribes—the boy and myself were claimed as relatives of one tribe who had jumped up white-fellows—they camped about Mount Elliott: and the captain and his wife were similarly claimed by the tribe belonging to Cape Cleveland. Not content with taking all that we brought with us on the raft, they commenced to strip us. They took the boy's trousers off, but he begged to be allowed to keep his shirt and sou'-wester, pointing to the sun, to make them understand that it would kill him; they seemed to understand, and allowed him to retain them. They then took the captain's clothes all off; and when they came to me and the captain's wife, we made signs to them that we were afraid of the sun, so they let us retain them. Presently, seeing that we had our clothes on and that the captain was without his, they gave him them back again. They then gave us some small roots to eat, about the size of small marbles, which we ate, and enjoyed them much—they tasted like nuts. They pointed to our stomachs, to make us understand they knew we were hungry; and to their own that they had plenty. They also pointed to the bush to tell us if we came with them, they would give us plenty to eat and drink. On our signifying our intention to go with them, they were very glad, and wanted us to join with them in a corroboree, but as we could not, we thought we should please them by singing a hymn. I accordingly gave our a hymn I knew—

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform, &c.

to the end, which we sung, and which amazed them much. While we were by ourselves in the cave every night, we read the Bible, sung hymns, and prayed, as we had done on the raft—we had among the few books we took with us from the wreck, a Prayer-book, Bible, and Hymn-book.

Next they began to make preparations to move off towards the camp—they were delighted at our going with them. Seeing the boy was unable to walk, one of them picked him up and put him on his shoulders, with his legs hanging down—the same way as they carry their children when on a journey. And seeing us so week and exhausted, two of them helped each of us along, one walking each side of us to lean on. After we had got a little way, three new arrivals came from the camp; they were told to stay somewhat in advance of us, and wait till we came up—it was on the edge of a plain—where they had made a small fire. When we came up with them they were

sitting round the fire—we recognized them as strangers—they were powerful men, and they seemed to be sitting in State, as they did not move when we came up. Great fear seized hold of me, for I thought they were chiefs; and when they came to lead me up to them to satisfy their curiosity, thinking I was going to be led up to slaughter —to be cooked and eaten—I refused and struggled against it. The fire being so small and not observing any weapons with them, it struck me they could not mean that, so I suffered myself to be led up to them, and I sat down. They looked at me, and observing me shake with fear, they warmed their hands at the fire, and put them on my face, and all over my body, to re-assure me, seeing which I took heart again. The captain, his wife, and the boy underwent the same scrutiny. Here we halted for awhile, and they wanted us to join them in a corroboree again, but we could not, so they had to have it among themselves. Some of them dressed themselves after a fashion with the clothes—shirts, trousers, coats, &c., that we had saved from the wreck, and a more ludicrous scene could not be imagined; one with only a sleeve of a shirt on, another with a pair of trousers on, his legs put through the bottoms, and another hind part before—some one way and some another. They also tore the leaves out of the books, and fastened them to their hair and bodies; altogether they presented a most ludicrous appearance. In the meanwhile some were sent on ahead to the camp, to tell them to make haste and get plenty to eat, and prepare for a grand corroboree. From where we were on the sea shore to their camp was from five to eight miles, but it was sundown before we reached the camp. The first thing they did was to lay us down and cover us over with dried grass, to prevent our being seen till the appointed time. They then collected together to the number of about 50 or 60—men, women, and children—and sat down in a circle; then those who discovered us went into the middle, dressed up in the things they had taken from us, with a little extra paint, and danced a corroboree, in which they explained in their rude song, what they had discovered, from whence they had brought us, and all they knew about us, which greatly surprised them. That being over, we were led into the middle of the ring in triumph. The sight of us—being white people, and dressed—produced a panic, and they scampered off in all directions. After a little time, however, being re-assured, they returned one by one, and looked at us, and a few of the more courageous felt us over; by and by they came nearer and examined us more minutely, till all fear was removed. After their curiosity had somewhat subsided they led us to a gunyah, which was placed at our service, and one and the other of them brought us plenty to eat and drink, and frequently came to make enquires about us, whether we wanted anything, and to have a peep at us. They went on preparing their evening meal, but one after the other they gradually disappeared, and went to bed. In the morning they replenished our stock of roots and got us water, and then turned out in quest of their day's wants. As they returned they brought numbers of their relations and friends from the near tribes, and in the evening they had another corroboree, explaining all about us. When they had

done, they came and fetched us into their midst, as on the previous evening, to show us to them. This was continued evening after evening for about six or eight evenings successively, as representatives from the more distant tribes, came in to see the wonderful people, till the most distant known to them had seen us. This was carried on to such a length that we became wearied out, and we expressed our disinclination to go; but they made us understand that they would kill us if we did not, and we thought it prudent not to put them to the test, although we believed they did not mean to do so—only to frighten us. After this things assumed their usual course at the camp. They, would not however, let us go out to get food while we were so weak, but they gathered us sufficient for all our wants. Eventually we went with them, but they dug the roots up for us till we learned to do it ourselves.

After we had been with them about five or six months, and we began to pick up their language, they made us understand that a large tribe, and a great many other tribes were coming to see us, and that they would be there in the dry season, in about four monos' time. We spent our time in wandering about with them on their fishing excursions, and in learning to snare ducks, wild turkeys, geese, and other wild fowls, which I became very expert in after awhile, much more so than the natives themselves, because I took more care in making strong string for the nooses, and in choosing the best places to set them, which made them very attached to me.

Time ran on and the natives began to collect in large numbers—we knew them to be strange. These were the tribes that we had been led to expect were coming to see us. When they all arrived, they numbered considerably over a thousand souls, this was a larger number than I have ever seen since. They belonged to about ten different tribes. We learned that some of the tribes belonged to the country far south of where we were, which determined us, if possible, to go away with them, when they returned, hoping by that means we should be able to reach some white settlement. They had a grand corroboree, which lasted about three days, and they went through the rites and ceremonies of the Boree or making young lads men, and instructing them in their duties towards the women—hereafter described. The tribe I was in, went through their ceremonies by themselves, when about 50 lads were made men; and another tribe by themselves made only about 20. After it was all over, they began to move off to their various districts We stole away, and went with the tribe that was going south. We were then well known to all the tribes, and we got distributed one in one tribe and one in another. The boy went down farther south than myself. The tribe I was in were located on the present site of Port Denison. Nearly two years after we had been living with them, intelligence was brought us that the boy was dead, and that they had burnt his remains, as they do with the remains of their own dead. About six weeks after the boy died, the Captain sickened and died also, I believe the death of the boy prayed upon his mind, and also the degraded state of his wife. Up to this time she managed by dint of great difficulty to keep herself partially covered, but he knew it could not last much longer,

and the thoughts of her having to come so low, and our utter helpless condition, was too much for him—he sunk under it. The sight was too much for me, I almost broke my heart. I was forced to leave and go on a hunting and fishing expedition. I saw he could not last long, and I told them not to burn him, but to bury him in the ground, which they did. As soon as I heard of his death I hurried back, but before I reached the camp his wife had followed him—four days afterwards. Being in a strange tribe, I felt lonely, and I determined to go back to the tribe that claimed me as their own, thinking they would take more care of me. After several months I reached it, and they were all very glad to see me, and asked me about the others; when I told them they were dead, they were very angry with me, and laid all the blame on me, and said I deserved a crack on the head. The tribe that the captain belonged to would have killed me if they dared, but my tribe protected me. It was the cause of a good deal of trouble between the two tribes. I was the first to go away with the captain, and when we got about forty miles the captain went back alone and fetched his wife and the boy, and as I did not appear, they said that it was me who had taken or decoyed them away.

After the misunderstanding was settled, I lived on year after year in the tribe as one of themselves—nothing particularly happening. On one occasion when I was on the coast fishing I saw a barque going to the north in the inner channel, but she was, too far out for me to attract her attention. Shortly after this, while I was on Mount Elliot, looking for honey and bread fruit, which was not quite ripe, a report was brought to me that a vessel was seen on the coast at Cape Cleveland, where our raft had landed, and the people on board had given some of the natives some speckled shirts, which they showed me. This appears to have been Captain Till, who was on a survey expedition.

Some time after this another vessel was seen which was duly reported to me, and the men from the vessel went on the rocks and looked through a glass and brought down the sun to the water. I told them before, if they ever saw white men again to try and make them understand that there was a white man living there with them; well they tried their hardest, but seem to have failed; the white men became alarmed and thought they meant mischief, whereas it was only their earnestness in trying to make them understand. The following quotations from the report of the proceedings of the Government schooner, Spitfire, in 1860, will explain this report.

"Saturday, 15th September.—Having been hove to during part of the night, we bore up at daylight, with Cape Cleveland bearing W.½S. about nine miles distant, and at 9.30 a.m. came to in its roadstead. Fixing on a convenient rocky promontary for making observations for latitude and longitude, we landed, and perceiving a small party of natives, I was in hopes that such friendly intercourse would take place as would enable us to gather information respecting the mouth of the Burdekin. Such hopes, however, were soon blighted; for upon an increase of their party, they suddenly made an attack, which was instantly repulsed; when they retreated with great rapidity.

"Observing a canoe passing round one of the points into a Lagoon, we gave chase; and after it was deserted, we took possession, and broke it to pieces so as to cut off the communication, and prevent any immediate increase to the force of the aborigines, already numerous and violently hostile.

"Sunday, 16th September.—During this day we observed considerable numbers of natives about the beaches and hills, shrieking and yelling most diabolically: finally towards the evening (as we did not land on this day), they retired towards the south."

Nothing is said in the report about shooting the natives, but one raw bone stout able-bodied blackfellow, a friend of mine, was shot dead by some one in the boat, and another was wounded; and the hideous yelling was the noise they usually make over their dead.

About three years ago there was a report brought to me by the blacks of a distant tribe, that a white man had been seen with two horses. Some of a tribe were lamenting the death of an old man, and while doing so, this white man fired in among them, and shot the son of the old man, who was lying on his dead body. The rest ran away; but eventually they apparently made friends of each other, and they got him off the horse, but by a preconcerted signal massacred him and tried to kill the horses, thinking they could speak and do mischief as the man had done, but they got away. Mr. P. Somers of Port Denison, told me it would most likely be a Mr. Humphrey, who had left the party he was out with, in search of runs intending to go by a new track. After this, four stray cattle were seen in our district, but I was on the coast with one of the blacks—my brother-in-law, making a possum skin rug. When I came back they showed me the tracks of the cattle, and I recognized them as being cattle. I questioned them about them; they said three had teats and one had none, thus I understood three were cows and one was a bull. I told them they were what we ate, and they chaffed me about their great size, long tails, big ears and horns. That made me uneasy, I began to think that civilized life was not far off, and it considerably raised my hopes of being restored to civilization. Soon afterwards, a report came into camp of a lot of white and black men on horseback, near Cape Upstart, shooting down the tribe that I had been living with, when the Captain died, at Port Denison. They explained to me about the saddles for the men to sit in, the stirrups, bridles, guns, smoke, and the noise it made when fired; and asked me if it was so with us. I told them yes, and explained it all to them, which surprised them much. On hearing this, I travelled south to the Burdekin River, (*Mall Mall*, native name) thinking my chances would be greater on the river than at Mount Eliott—fifty miles further inland. My tribe kept coming backwards and forwards, and they asked me why I did not come back as I had lived with them so long, they began to suspect something. I told them I would by and by, but I told them from the first that I had a wife and two children, knowing they would not think it so strange at my wanting to get away. At last I told them I wanted to see the white men, for myself—to see if they knew my people—and to get clothes, and guns, and old iron, and that I would come back again. They then gave me up, and let me do as I liked, as they saw I was bent on going. From this time forward

I received almost daily reports of the white people. There were two white men and a black boy constantly in the neighborhood where I was —the black boy being a great favourite among the gins. I was about a moon and a half from the place where they were, at one of our fishing grounds (Bokodally), and I left to try and see them, but could not. So I returned to our head camping ground again. I shortly after heard of the cattle being on the river in great numbers, and of a man being on horseback with a stock whip which he cracked, and they thought it was a gun, on hearing which, they got up the trees quite frightened. They saw him get off the horse and drink some water with his hands, but the water being hot, he scraped the sand aside and got some cool, a little black dog was with him lying on the sands. They described to me that there were so many cattle, that they had drunk all the water that was in the hole, they said they would have got the fish out only they were too much afraid. Hearing this, I was very anxious to find out the white settlement, for I felt sure there was one not very far off, but having been with the blacks so long, they were not willing to let me go, telling me I should be mistaken for a blackfellow. And hearing of the blacks having guns I could not make it out, and was afraid myself, lest if I met one of the blackfellows he would not be able to understand me, and I could not tell whether I should be able to make a white man understand me, being away so long. The next news I heard was that about 15 blackfellows of a fishing party belonging to the tribe I was living with, were shot down dead. I told them it served them right: if they would let me go to them and show me where they were, I might be the means of saving their lives. They reasoned among themselves that what I said was true, and they agreed to go on a hunting expedition on a hill called by the natives (Yamarama), which was about half-a-mile from the station. But thinking that the white men were the same as themselves, they were not sure whether they were there. When we got to the hill, we spread our nets and commenced our work, and while we were hunting the old women went down as spies to look for the white men. They brought word back that there was a large hut, and that they had seen red and white blankets hanging on the stock-yard fences, and heard a dog bark, and an old sheep bleeting tied up to a tree; they also heard the report of a gun twice, but could not see where it came from. I then wanted to go and see for myself, but the man I was living with was not willing without somebody was with me. So he made his gin go with me. When we got clear of the hill going down towards the hut, we saw the sheep feeding in the grass, the sight of which so frightened the gin, she not having seen any before, that she ran away back. I looked at the sheep but could not see the shepherd; so I went further on and came to a water hole, where I washed myself to make myself as white as possible. I went on still further till I came to the sheep pens, and saw the blankets and sheep as the gin had told me. I also saw the smoke of the fire in the hut, and heard noises. I stood behind the yard some minutes not knowing what to do, and how best to make myself known. Presently I took courage and got on the fence to prevent the dogs from biting me, and called out so that they might hear me, "What cheer, shipmates."

There were three staying in the hut, but there were only two at home then. They heard me, and knowing it to be a strange noise, one of them came out and saw me there—neither black nor white—naked, and looked surprised; he went in again and told his mate. I understood him to say, come out Bill, here is a red or yellow man standing on the rails, naked, he is not a black man, and bring the gun. But before they had time to use the gun, I said "do not shoot me, I am a British object—a shipwrecked sailor." Of course I meant subject, but in the excitement of the moment I did not know what I said. One said to the other "he says he is a shipwrecked sailor"—one of the men's names it appears was Hatch, the other Wilson, who had been a sailor himself—and they told me to come round the stock yard; which I did—they meeting me half way—they cross-questioned me and I told them when and where I was wrecked, and all about my misfortunes. They asked me whether I knew what day and what date it was. I told them no, they then told me that it was Sunday, the 25th of January, 1863. They reckoned back to 1846, when I was lost and told me it was 17 years, and asked me if I thought it was so long. I said no not half so long. After talking some time they took me in the hut and gave me a piece of bread, and asked me if I knew what it was. I told them it was made with flour, I tried to eat a piece. but I was so overjoyed that it stuck in my throat and I could not get it down. Besides, I was not hungry, for we had caught 20 small grey wallabys during the day, and we had had plenty to eat. They gave me some tea and asked me if I knew what it was, I said yes, but that it was too sweet. I had not been accustomed to sugar, and so they put some water to it. After I had been in the hut for some time they told me to look out and tell them what I saw. I saw a large flock of sheep with their third companion, coming home—he was a Scotchman, named Creek. They then wanted to give me some clothes, but I told then I had better go back to the natives who were on the hills in the distance, where we had been hunting all day, just as I was, to tell them to go away towards the sea coast; and I would return in the morning, which they agreed to, and instructed me to tell them that if they did not interfere with us, we should not interfere with them. They also told me that if I did not come back in the morning they should conclude I had told them a lie, and that they would put the black trackers on our track and shoot us.

When I left them I went back to the hills to the blacks, and they began to surround me and ask me whether I had seen the white people and how many there were. I was obliged to tell them that there were a great many people, many more than themselves, and plenty of guns, and that if they went near they would be killed before they got there. I told them the white men had come to take their land away. They always understand that might not right is the law of the world, but they told me to ask the white man to let them have all the ground to the north of the Burdekin, and to let them fish in the rivers; also the low grounds, they live on to get the roots—ground which is no good to white people, near the sea-coast and swampy. They asked me what I intended to do. I told them I was going to stay that night, but in

the morning I must go back, or they would come and track me up and shoot us all. They said perhaps they are doing so now. I assured them they were not, but that we must go further away. So we went four or five miles and camped. The next morning they all came round me again, and finding I was bound to go, they asked me if I would be back again in a few days. I told them no, I should be away quite three or four moons. They then said you will forget us altogether; and when I was coming away the man I was living with burst out crying, so did his gin, and several of the other gins and men. It was a touching scene. The remembrance of their past kindness came full upon me and quite overpowered me. There was a short struggle between the feeling of love I had for my old friends and companions and the desire once more to live a civilized life, which can be better imagined than described.

I then left them and came on to the hut. The men were glad to see me and they took me down to the water-hole, washed me with soap and flannel and brought me up and gave me some clothes. That day we tried to cross the river to get to the head station to get their rations but it was too swollen. We came back, and at night they killed a sheep and cooked me a chop of it. I remained a fortnight in case the natives should come to look for me, but none of them ever came in sight. I then gave myself up to Mr. Meyers, who left me in charge of Mr. Salting, of Hiffling cattle-station, until the return of the Commissioner's orderly from the Fanning River, who accompanied me safely into the town of Bowen. I experienced great kindness from Mr. W. H. Thomas and Mr. P. Somers, who gave me clothes and made a subscription for me in my necessities.

CHAPTER III.

The Aboriginals—Nomadic habits—Living in tribes—What they Eat as Food—Language—How the Natives Make Fire—The Ceremony of Making the Lads Men—Relationship—How they Dispose of the Dead—Flax Grown and the Uses they Make of it—Description of the Country—Gold—Extinction of the Race—Appeal for the Natives.

The aboriginals among whom I have been living are a fine race of people, as to strength, size, and general appearance; but like those of other parts of this colony, they are treacherous, jealous, and cunning. They are not black, they are more of the colour of half-castes. When born they are nearly white, but when they are three days old, the gins squeeze their own milk on them, and rub charcoal into their skins to make them black and shine. They have sunken eyes, broad noses—which are made so by their parents in infancy—and broad mouths. The infants are allowed to suck at the breast a long while, indeed, until they are old enough to get their own food. I have seen a child sucking at the breast with its next brother or sister. I have also seen the little things working in the swamps with their mothers, getting roots, and every now and then go and take a suck at the breast. The women have very few children, seldom exceeding four,

and very seldom more than one at a time. I know of about four cases of twins. I also remember that in one case when there was a boy and a girl born to a woman, the father killed the boy and saved the girl—to save the trouble of bringing them up—for they are very lazy. It caused however a great disturbance in the camps among their friends, who thought they ought to have brought them up. The women go in the swamps the next day after their confinement as usual to gather food, as though nothing had happened. The men have several wives—in some instances as many as eight or nine—and it is about their wives that all their wars, fights, and feuds occur; they steal them from each other and frequently lend them, or sell them for a time, for a slight consideration.

They never stay long in a locality, as one place becomes a little exhausted of food they travel to another. In the wet and cold season they put up small gunyahs to live in, but in no particular order. They live in tribes, each tribe speaking a different dialect, it can hardly be called a different language ; I could speak eight of these dialects. They have no chiefs—the strongest is the best man.

They get their living by fishing, hunting, digging in the earth for roots, gathering fruits, &c. They can eat any thing ; among other things sharks, allegators, shrimps, shell fish, and fish of all kinds. Kangaroos, rats, wallabies, snakes, grubs, snails, and all kinds of creeping things. Wild ducks, geese, turkeys, several kinds of roots, one of which grows at the tops of the mountains is the best eating, called *(moogoondah,)* it is white, sweet, firm, dry, and grows in red clay soil. There is another, lower down, on the foot of the mountains, in the scrub, called *(malboon)*, which is soft and more moist, and is very nice eating. There is another root rather of a stickey nature when cooked grown on the mountains, not in the scrub, but in the grass, and white, like a turnip, with a small thin leaf, called *(cornool.)* There is another, smaller and darker in its colour, but in other respects very much like it, called *(cahnan)*. Another, a creeper, which grows on the high banks of the fresh water rivers, with a small green leaf, the leaves very thick, called *(booan)*. There is another, similar to a turnip, but smaller, called *(manoon)*. There is one which runs in and out among the grass with a little blue flower, called *(cardoola or carlmbar)*, and many others more or less like them. They have several kinds of fruits, a plum, very large, but very little flesh on it, all stone nearly, called *(cowan gowan, or oolubba)*. There is a small current, very blue in colour, but nearly all stone, called *(moorgah mudda)*. A wild banana, full of black seed, and very little flesh. There is also a white berry, similar to the white currant, very sweet, called *(walba)*. There is another, which is red, nearly all stone, called *(mooray)*. There is a fruit like an apple, called *(barkabah)*, A red fig, called *(cowarah)*; and a black one, called *(ballamoo)*. The bread fruit grows on the mountains, called *(murgurdah)*. It will not be considered out of place if I publish the following application of information I gave Monsieur Thozet, of some of the natural productions I have here alluded to, written by that gentleman, and which appeared in the *Rockhampton Bulletin*, of the 14th of March. I have no doubt it will be read with interest by botanists and the scientific world. "The importance of Morrill's experience would have been practically illustrated, had his services been at the disposal of the late lamented Victorian Expedition, by the pre-

servation of Burke and Wills' lives, through his knowledge of indigenous articles of food, and the consequent certainty of their ultimate return to relate their own achievements. But Fate otherwise willed it, and Providence appears now to have conferred upon us a means of averting the recurrence of similar disasters. With the above preface, then, we will at once plunge in *medias res*, and commence our botanical recapitulation with the native small plum, aboriginally known as the Bolemo, botanically as the Ficus aspera, R. Br., a shrub occasionally verging into a small tree, and pointed out by Morrill on the northern range of the Fitzroy. This plant can be readily identified by its oval dark green leaves, which, like its specific name, indicates its singular roughness. The milky juice of the young shoots is employed by the natives medicinally, and is represented by Morrill, from personal experience, to be very efficacious in healing wounds. After the application of the milky juice of the Balemo, the scraped root bark of the Ourai, or Grewia of botanists, a genus belonging to the Tiliaceæ order, is employed as a poultice to the wound—it is to be presumed from its emollient properties, as a counterbalance to the acridity of the Balemo. The Ourai or Grewia grows abundantly near Rockhampton, and has a large alternate oval serrated leaf, tementose beneath, bearing as fruit a very small brown berry generally in pairs, on a small axilery peduncle. The Rockhampton tribe call this plant Karoom. the two plants, the Balemo and the Ourai, are the only two Morrill could identify in the Rockhampton flora as in use by the natives both medicinally and as edibles. The following are the other vegetable foods from which Morrill derived a considerable portion of his sustenance The Barkaba, or botanically, Barringtonia Careya, Roxb., occasionally locally denominated the broad-leaved apple tree, very common in our rich alluvial soil, bearing a handsome pink and white flower; the fruit is full of seed, and tasting not unlike a dry banana. According to Morrill the bark of the stem of the barkaba is used by the natives for stupefying fish in fresh water; and, strange to say, the bark of the root for the same purpose in salt water. The Kaourou, or Nymphæa gigantea, Hook, the well known blue water lily, common in our lagoons, is another edible plant, its seed and root forming an important item of aboriginal diet in addition to another aquatic plant termed the Kournabai, may be a Triglochia (?), with a yellow flower and a root considered as a great delicacy. The Kadolo, or Phascolus rostratus, is one of our small, creeping, legumenous plants, with three narrow, long, sharp pointed leaves, upon a common stark, bearing a flower not unlike our cultivated tea, and root compared by Morrill to our carrot, growing abundantly in every plain, valley, or creek bank, and constituting a prominent feature of native gastronomy. The Banganga, or Nargan, is probably Caladium macrorhizon (?) Vent., colonially known as the Creek Lilly, with a large poisonous root, employed as a native food, after a peculiar preparation too long for present explanation. The Ulorin of Morrill is the small, egg-shaped, slightly acidulated fruit of the Carissa Ovata of R. Br., and with the previously mentioned Nargado, palm-nut, or Cycas media, the Taberio, Leichhardt tree, or Nouclea Leichhardtii—Fd-Mueller: the native plum, Owenia cerat sefera—F. M. the large pomegranite fruit Capparis Mitchellii; the Pink Lilly, or Nelumbium Leichhardtii, two

species of Yam; Dicoreœ and the Morgogaba, native banana, or Musa Jackii, very abundant round Mount Eliott, and, according to Morrill, extending far inland, constitute the catalogue of plants it has been possible to identify. But at the same time to assist botanical research in the comparatively unknown north-eastern flora, the aboriginal names of several other plants are appended, including the Kanoul, Kanane, Boan, Malboun, and Mogondal, whose roots or bulbs were employed by the natives as food."

Some cocoa nuts used to wash ashore sometimes, I suppose from the other islands, as I never saw them growing in my rambles. There is plenty of honey in the hollows of trees, from the native honey bees. They eat honey, combs, bees and all if they are hungry. There is plenty to eat if they are not too lazy to fetch it. Human flesh cannot be considered a part of their food, although they sometimes eat it. They eat young men killed in battle, or if killed by accident, also young women and children, but never those of their enemies. They cut their enemies up in stripes, dry them, and distribute the pieces through the tribe, by which means they think they have their enemies' strength added to their own, and that they will be lucky in hunting and fishing.

They have no written language whatever, and consequently very little tradition. It is very gutteral in sound and extremely limited in power of expression. Of course they have no means of teaching their language but by imitation and memory, assisted by their wants. The different animals are arranged according to the size of their feet, hence the sheep have the same name as their Wallabys *(cargoon)*, all kinds of sailing vessels have the same name as their canoes, because they float on the water *(woolgoora)*. The heavenly bodies are named differently, the sun is *(ingin)*, which they think is a body of fire, because of its warmth, and especially so since they saw us light rag with a burning glass. The moon *(werboonburra)*, they say is a human being, like themselves, and comes down on the earth, and they sometimes meet it in some of their fishing excursions. They say one tribe throws it up and it gradually rises and then comes down again, when another tribe catches it to save it from hurting itself. They accordingly think there is a new sun and moon every day and night. There is a large open space on mount Eliott with not a vestage of vegetation on it, whilst up to the very margin of it is a thick scrub, and they told me it was done by the moon, who once threw his circle stick round it, meaning his boomerang, and cut it off. Throwing the sun and moon up by one tribe and catching them by another will easily be recognized as their explanation of the rising and setting of those bodies. They have no knowledge of the earth beyond the locality they inhabit. The stars and comets are both the same in name *(milgoolerburda)*, They think the falling stars indicate the direction of danger, and that comets are the ghosts or spirits of some of their tribe, who have been killed at a distance from them, working their way back again, and that they come down from the clouds on the coast. We saw one this last dry season which they thought was one of the tribe who had been killed in war. They think all the heavenly bodies are under their control; and that when there is an eclipse, some of their tribe hide it with a sheet of bark to frighten the rest

There was about 6 years ago an eclipse of the sun, nearly a total eclipse, the only one I saw, about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I asked an old man what it meant, and he told me his son had hid it (the sun) to frighten another of his tribe. But they are very uneasy during its continuance. They pick up a piece of grass and bite it, making a mumbling noise, keeping their eyes steadily fixed on it till it passes over, when they become easy again and can go to sleep comfortably. They think they have power over the rain (*durgun*) to make it come and go as they like. The rainbow (*terebare*) they think is the clouds spewing fish in the lagoons, and roots on the hills, or something for their good, wherever the end points. They are very frightened of thunder (*teegoora*) and lightening (*timulba*), although I never knew an instance of any harm being done with the lightening. They have no knowledge of how they came into existance, they think they live and die like dogs, but there is a kind of inate fear of death, and they have some thought that they will jump up whitefellows; the reference before to their friends in the comets point to some undefined hereafter, but the knowledge of the future is nearly obliterated. They told me that their forefathers witnessed a great flood and nearly all were drowned, only those who got on a very high mountain (*Bibbiringda*, which is inland of the north bay of Cape Cleveland) were saved. I understood them to refer to the flood mentioned in Scripture, especially as they say only a few were allowed to go up.

They can only count five (*Woggin*) 1, (*Boolray*) 2, (*Goodjoo*) 3, (*Munwool*) 4, (*Murgai*) 5. For any number beyond these they put up their ten fingers together; beyond that again, the ten fingers of another person, and so on for three or four persons, till they come to a moon; and when they have reference to fish, roots, or things in general, they can only say a few or plenty. They measure time, by moons and wet and dry seasons.

The language is very irregular and seems to me totally impossible to systematise it in any way. The following it a list of the principle words;—

Nannie—earth
Ejugabah—fire
Doongalla—water
Ingin—sun
Wurboonburra—moon
Nilgoolerburda—stars, comets
Durgun—rain
Terebare—rainbow
Teegoora—thunder
Timulba—lightening
Moggoor—clouds
Bundara—sky
Munyah—man
Youngoorah—woman
Mowdruman—boy
Murgunman—girl
Colaman—babies
Deenah—Feet
Tabaray—legs
Toobun—Arms
Cabankabun—hands
Coode—heads
Teeburra—eyes
Deeragun—ears
Weir—hair
Telli—tongue
Tingool—teeth
Moolin—lips
Mooda Mooda—neck
Ugar—breast
Nhamoon—teats
Booloo—belly
Doolga—back
Woolgoora—canoe, ships
Cargoon—sheep, named after small kangaroos on the mountains.

Cockool—cattle, 'named after large kangaroos.
Oombal—horses, named after dogs
Oodra—kangaroo, large, on the plains (male)
Bourgoola—ditto ditto (female)
Coondoola—Emeu
Prorogwan—native companion
Moongun—opossum, or wild cat
Munbrebare—flying squarrel
Cundulmule—wood, or kangaroo rat, because of the hoof of the foot being like a kangaroo's
Kooroongun—common rat
Gungur—iguana, (green, harmless) there are three kinds of iguanas
Coonbinmulla—light dark speckles, short thick tail (harmless)
Coobirangil—all one colour, light brown (rather dangerous)
Carbul—carpet snake, very harmless and good eating.
Carmoomulle—black snake, yellow belly, lives both in water and on the land.
Othubuda—a long thin light brown snake, lives in the grass, to be bit by which is certain death. They have no antedote against snake bites.
Dungaburre—a large brown snake
Bindebudda—a large brown snake, with red spots on his belly, these are all good eating.
Mooraynburra—turkey, named after the red currant, because they are very fond of it.
Booloon—albatross
Noogooral—goose
Yamarah—duck
Waboora—small
Wadoolbil—large
Queearilla—plenty
Enugedy—enough, that will do.

The navives get fire by friction, by rubbing two soft pieces of wood together of the same kind, they generally use the wood of the black fig as being the easiest. They take a branch off a little thicker than your finger, split it up and put it on the ground, the flat side upwards, and hold it down with their feet; they then take a sound piece, round and straight, about 12 inches long, and put one end on the flat side of the piece on the ground, holding it up between their hands, and then commence rolling it rapidly between them, pressing it into the piece beneath, so that it begins to make a hole in it, as though they were boring it; after they have done that for a minute or two, they make a notch on the side of the piece at the bottom, so that the fine dust they make while the boring process is going on shall fall down on some dry grass they have there to catch it, they then repeat the rolling process till sparks come, at last pick up the dry grass with the dust in it, and blow it till it lights up.

The ceremony of making the lads young men, takes place about once every six years. I remember there have been four while I was with them. For eight or nine months immediately previous, they have to go in the bush to provide for themselves, during which time they are never allowed to see a female, this is to test their fitness to take a wife; if they do see a female, they think they will waste away. After the nine months are over they are brought into the camp, cane rings are put on their arms and tightened very much, so as to stop the circulation of the blood. Their arms swell very much, which puts them in great agony. They are then left in that torture all night—their cries are terrible to hear. To keep their fingers from contracting and thus deforming them, they sit with their hands and fingers spread out on the ground, with the heels of their feet tightly pressed on them. In the morning they are brought out, in the

presence of their mothers, sisters, and relatives; and just above and below the mark of the cane ring on their arms they make small incisions to let the blood flow and prevent inflammation. While this is being done, their mother, and relatives are crying and cutting themselves from head to foot with sharp stones, in token of joy at seeing them. When this is somewhat subsided, places have previously been provided for them to sleep under, with boughs to shade them from the sun, as they could get no sleep of course during the night. While they are sleeping the old gins go into the swamps and get roots to make cakes for them, by the time they get up in the evening, while the men get all the young men's spears they have been carrying with them during the nine months they have been away, and fix them in the earth on a clear space in a semi-circle, fastening from head to head of the spears grass festoons. In the evening all being ready, they wake up, generally about 80 in number at a time, and they are each seated under a festoon in a reclining position. Then their sisters or female cousins lay with their heads on their swollen arms, to press down the swollen and cut places, and they believe nothing harmful will come of it after that. While they are laying there, a lot of cakes are thrown up and scrambled for by the lookers on, who had gone through the ceremony before them, they then go to their several fires. In the morning they are taken a little way in the bush again, and dressed up with shells, and the down of birds stuck on their heads, painted, and made to look to the best advantage, they are then brought back to choose and take their sweethearts, and the whole ceremony closes with a grand corroboree.

After this is over, there is a good deal of quarelling and fighting among them. They steal the wives of the old and weak men, and daughters from their parents, which leads to fighting, and often extends between two tribes, and then there is a war, which is not, however, of a very sanguinary nature. They often get some terrible blows, and sometimes one gets killed. But they cannot keep it on many hours, for they are forced to go and get supplies in the shape of food, in the swamps, and they seldom renew the conflict.

They are very strict in their relationship. When girls are about ten years old they are not allowed to sleep with their brothers at the same fire. The intended mother-in-law of a young man, is not allowed to look at him, until such time as the before mentioned ceremony is over. And as families they are very distinct. They burn their dead, and carry the burnt remains about in a sheet of bark, tied up, about twelve months, and when tired of it they throw it in a water hole. Their tomahawks (*bullgoo*) are made of stone, and latterly they have got a good deal of iron (*bingulburra*) among them, with which they make a kind of chisel, by fastening a piece between two pieces of wood at the end, with which they make their spears, boomerangs, &c.

There is very fine flax grown there, which they make great use of, in making their fishing and hunting nets. They make very good mesh nets. They place their net for hunting in the most frequented paths of the kangaroo or whatever they are hunting for, and they then go and beat them up and drive them in. They catch a great many birds with snares, merely loose

572.9
M

knots, which are placed in the thick grass and reeds in the swamps, and as the birds go through in quest of food, in the night they get caught.

The country about Mount Eliott, where I have been living, is well watered and grassed. It is very low and swampy in many places. There is abundance of fresh water. At the top of Mount Eliott, there is a never failing spring of beautiful water which finds its way down exactly opposite sides of the mountain. It is such a thick scrub, and there is such an abundance of food in it, and plenty of water, that if the aboriginals were driven from the country all round they would find a safe asylum there. There are a great many Aligators in both the fresh and salt water creeks, and particularly in one large fresh water lagoon. I have seen dozens of natives dragged down and killed by them. I had a scratch from one myself on my knee, the scar of which, I will carry to my grave. I was also bit by a whip snake, which made me swell up for two days. I have seen dozens die from the bites of snakes.

I have frequently been asked if I knew whether it was a gold bearing country. Not having had any experience even by report of such country I cannot tell. I remember once when out, looking for coloured earths,, to paint myself with, I picked up a piece of what I thought to be co loured ochre, but it was very heavy and hard, I was quite surprised. I also remember once when on Mount Eliott, 1 was getting stones for tomahawks, &c, that they were very much like those I have seen in the jewellers' shop windows in Queen-street, with pieces of yellow mettle in them but whether it was gold or not, I never had a thought of. I should think it was not, if it had been, I think it would have occurred to me.

The work of extinction is gradually but surely going on among the aboriginals. The tribe I was living with are far less numerous now then when I went among them. What with the wars, fights, destruction by the settlers and black police, and the natural deterioration in the people themselves, they are fast disappearing. During the time I was among them, I suffered a great deal from rhumatics, which has left its mark on me, so much so, that I have very little strength left, and I feel I should not have lasted long among them if I had not come away.

It will perhaps be pardonable in me if I refer to a suggustion thrown out by a correspondent in the *Courier* newspaper, to the effect that the natives who were so kind to me should be dealt with in a similar manner, as those who succoured Burke, Wills and King. I would just call attention to what I previously mentioned, almost their last wish to me was with tears in their eyes that I would ask the white men to let them have *some* of their *own* ground to live on. They agreed to give up all on the south of the Burdekin River, but asked that they might be *allowed* to retain that on the other, at all events that which was no good to anybody but them, the low swampy grounds near the sea coast. It would be no good to send them flour, they would not eat it, not knowing anything about it; nor cattle or sheep, they would run away from them with fear, besides if they once understood the use of them as food it would make it more dangerous to the settlers. And of course they know nothing of the use of tobacco. But as the cold season is coming on, a good blanket would be invaluable, so would some small tomahawks, knives, old iron hoops and fishing hooks.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MITCHELL LIBRARY
813

NOTE.

I HAVE so many invitations to wait on persons for the purpose of narrating my past sufferings, which were painful enough to pass through, without calling them to remembrance day after day, at the wish of anybody who may desire it; and the invitations rather increasing than otherwise, I have deemed it desirable to put on record my experiences in this brief sketchy manner, containing as it does, the principal events and disasters that happened during my forced banishment from civilized life; which will be found to contain too, more thancould be expressed in a single interview, with the desire of affording information to those who wish it, to satisfy the curiosity of the many, and also with the hope that it may yield me what I much need—the means of living. I may possibly, if I am spared, very much extend this small pamphlet; but, under present circumstances I can make no promise. I take this opportunity of publicly thanking His Worship the Mayor of Brisbane for his kindness to me since I have been here.